

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON

SEP 04 2008

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BX8955 .A6 1842 v.2  
Presbyterian Church in the  
U.S.A. Board of Publication.  
Series of tracts on the  
doctrines, order, and polity  
of the  
Presbyterian church in the  
United States

A SERIES

OF

TRACTS

ON THE

DOCTRINES, ORDER, AND POLITY

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

EMBRACING

SEVERAL ON PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA :  
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

# CONTENTS

OF THE

## SECOND VOLUME.

I. A Caution against Prevailing Errors; being a Conversation between a Presbyterian Pastor, and his Parishioner; by William M. Engles, D.D. - - - - -	3
II. A Treatise on Justification by Faith; by Archibald Alexander, D.D. - - - - -	39
III. The Necessity of Atonement; by the Rev. Wm. Symington. - - - - -	89
IV. The Nature, Extent, and Results of the Atonement; by the Rev. William Symington. - - - - -	137
V. On the Intercession of Jesus Christ; by the Rev. William Symington. - - - - -	225
VI. Christ's Gracious Invitation to the Labouring and Heavy Laden; by Archibald Alexander, D.D. - - - - -	265
VII. Claims of the Gospel Ministry to an Adequate Support.	277
VIII. The Importance of Doctrinal and Instructive Preaching; by the Rev. S. G. Winchester. - - - - -	293
IX. The Missionary's Wife; or a Brief Account of Mrs. Loveless, of Madras, the first American Missionary to Foreign Lands; by Richard Knill. - - - - -	325
X. A Brief View of the Proper Subjects and True Mode of Christian Baptism; by the Rev. James Wharey. - - -	349

A CAUTION

AGAINST

P R E V A I L I N G   E R R O R S :

BEING

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN

A PRESBYTERIAN PASTOR AND HIS PARISHIONER.

By WM. M. ENGLER, D. D.

PHILADELPHIA:  
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

---

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1836, by  
ALEXANDER W. MITCHELL, M. D.,  
in the office of the Clerk of the District Court for the  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

---

## PREVAILING ERRORS.

*Parishioner.* I am glad to see you, Mr. M., and should be happy if you could afford the time for a little conversation on the present state of our church. During a late visit to one of our principal cities, I found the state of the church to be an absorbing subject, and, as I mingled much with respectable individuals of both parties, I had an opportunity of ascertaining that the points of difference between them, were much more serious than I had imagined. I feel constrained also to confess that the objections, which I have heard urged against the old method of stating the doctrines of the gospel, have, in a considerable degree, shaken my confidence, and reduced me, at length, to doubt what form of doctrine I ought to believe.

*Pastor.* I regret, Mr. C., that your belief in the Calvinistic doctrines, as generally exhibited in Presbyterian pulpits, should, in the least degree, have been affected; for these, according to my conviction, are the doctrines taught in the Holy Scriptures; but I am not surprised, because your reception of them, in the first instance, was probably not so much the result of examination, as of mere education. You believed, because all around you believed; and hence you never felt the necessity of fortifying your position by arguments derived from the word of God. It is lamentably true that many profess *orthodoxy* who cannot render one reason for their peculiar faith. The consequences of this easy credulity are readily foreseen. The first contact with error, if it be advocated with plausibility, unsettles the mind, and unless there be an immediate and careful examination of the grounds of our faith, an entire revolution in opinion may take place.

*Parishioner.* I acknowledge, that I have received my creed too much on trust, and that I found myself incompetent to defend it, when it was ingeniously assailed. My present unhappy state of doubt, however, has made me

sincerely anxious to know in what the truth consists; and I think I shall not be so easily convinced as I have formerly been.

*Pastor.* I commend your caution; but still you must not verge to the opposite extreme, and instead of being too credulous, become proof against argument.

*Parishioner.* My mind is open to conviction, and I can sincerely say, show me the truth and I will heartily embrace it. Since, however, I have heard the doctrines of our church so differently stated by men who have been educated theologians, you will admit that it is natural that I should feel some difficulty in forming a definite opinion. Besides, theologians of both parties appeal, with the same seeming confidence, to the standards of our church as expressing their views. Sometimes, therefore, I am induced to believe that the differences are material and real; and sometimes that they are but different modes of expressing the same thing.

*Pastor.* That there exists a difference of opinion none can doubt, and from a careful examination of the subject, I am fully convinced that it is more than a contest about words; it is a substantial difference of views respecting the cardinal doctrines of the gospel. I am aware that many affirm, that both parties alike admit the great facts of religion, and only disagree in the philosophy of those facts, or in their modes of explaining them; but if words and theories have any meaning, the language and theories of the two parties in the church, convey essentially different ideas.

The Calvinistic system is a nicely adjusted and intelligible system; it forms a whole, each part explaining every other part; the rejection or modification of any portion of it, necessarily leads to the rejection or modification of every other portion; and accordingly we find the innovations of the present day have been thrown into a regular system, which, in all its great features, is distinct from Calvinism. Both cannot be true; one must be false. If it be your desire, I shall be pleased to review the doctrines in dispute, not in the spirit of controversy, but in a meek reliance on the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth.

*Parishioner.* This is precisely what I desire, and while I shall regard your statements with deference, I will freely communicate my difficulties as they arise.

*Pastor.* We will begin then with the subject of man's

**APOSTASY** and the doctrines connected with that event. I need not repeat the terms employed in our Confession of Faith and Catechism, to express these doctrines, as these are familiar to you already; but will state my views of the subject in as simple a manner as possible.

At the creation of Adam, God entered into a covenant with him, regarding him as the head of the race, and suspending on his conduct, the holiness and consequent happiness, or the sinfulness and consequent unhappiness of all his descendants. In this transaction Adam is called a federal head, or representative, from the fact that his obedience or disobedience was to benefit or injure his posterity. Adam failed in the prescribed act of obedience, and thus not only forfeited the favour of God and became a depraved being, but agreeably to the terms of the covenant, brought all his posterity under the curse of God. Every individual of the race is thus regarded by God, as chargeable with the *first sin* of their representative, just as if they had individually committed it themselves. That is, the sin is imputed to them; it is set to their account; and in the eye of the law, they are guilty of it, or liable to its legal consequences. As a consequence of this sin, the whole race have become totally depraved, having lost their original righteousness and become corrupt in their whole nature. Having made this brief statement, I will now wait for your objections.

*Parishioner.* Your view of this subject is precisely the one which I had been accustomed to receive until important objections were suggested to my mind. And first permit me to inquire, what evidence you have that God ever entered into a covenant with Adam? I cannot find the terms *covenant* or *representative* in the whole transaction, neither can I see that God dealt with Adam in any other than a personal manner.

*Pastor.* Well then, let us ascertain what a covenant is. It is an agreement between parties, containing a stipulation of something to be performed, with the annexed conditions of a promise and a penalty. Thus in the present case, God and Adam were the parties contracting; the duty or service required was abstinence from a particular fruit; the promise, evidently implied, was life and happiness in case of obedience; the penalty for disobedience, was death. These particulars evidently imply the idea of a covenant. Whether the terms themselves are found in the record is not mate-



rial, if the idea is evidently conveyed. The word Trinity is not found in the Bible, and yet it is generally adopted by evangelical Christians to express a cardinal doctrine of Scripture. Paul in his comparison between Christ and Adam, proceeds on the assumption of a covenant; and Hosea alludes to it, as might be shown, when he says, "But they like men (in the margin, *like Adam*) have transgressed the covenant." Hosea vi. 7.

*Parishioner.* Permit me to interrupt you. You say a covenant implies an agreement between parties; but where have we the evidence that Adam expressed his consent? And even if he did, how do we learn that this covenant had respect to any but himself?

*Pastor.* As to his agreement, although not in so many words expressed, yet can we imagine any possible grounds on which it could have been withheld? He was a holy being; he had entire confidence in his Maker; and he could not have objected to the difficulty of the terms. God gave him access to all the trees of the garden except one, and merely required of him to abstain from that one. In the nature of things he could not have murmured at such an easy test of obedience. I will not urge, that God as a Sovereign had a right to demand his consent, but I do insist, that Adam could not have objected to a stipulation so reasonable and advantageous. Besides, if his consent had not been freely given, would he not have urged this after his transgression, as a reason why the penalty should not be exacted of him? This he might plausibly have done; yet, instead of thus expostulating, he attempted merely to excuse his disobedience, by pleading the enticement of Eve. Instead of saying, Lord, thou knowest I never consented to this arrangement, he merely urged that he failed on his part of it through strong temptation. So certain therefore was his concurrence, that there was really no necessity that it should be recorded.

But again, you ask, where is the proof that his act was to affect any other than himself! The event proves that it affected his posterity. Thus, since his failure of obedience, the curse threatened against him has been transmitted through all ages, to every individual of his race. The earth was cursed, and all men suffer on that account; the peculiar curse pronounced against Eve in relation to pain in child-bearing, affects her sex; the loss of God's favour, and the depravation of nature, were not confined to Adam,

but fall upon all his posterity. These facts certainly prove that Adam acted in a public character. But still further, the first promise of a Saviour, which was given immediately after Adam's fall, was certainly not confined to him. It had a reference to the race, as ruined by this act of the first man. If God had not foreseen that the whole family of mankind were to be involved in sin and misery, in consequence of this transaction, there would have been no propriety in this early announcement of the advent of a Saviour who was to become a propitiation for the sins of the world.

*Parishioner.* You say, that in consequence of Adam's representative character, his first sin was so *imputed* to all his posterity, that they are regarded as guilty of it; now it appears difficult for me to conceive, how the personal sin of Adam could become my personal sin, or how I could become criminally involved in it.

*Pastor.* You misapprehend my statement. I never supposed the possibility of any such transfer of moral character as you allude to. Adam's personal sin is not my personal sin, nor is his criminality in that sin, my criminality. This is no part of the faith of our church, although many, to serve a purpose, have so represented it. The true doctrine of imputation is, that agreeably to a divine constitution, the descendants of Adam are held legally responsible for his first sin, and are individually answerable for its consequences. The act by which he broke covenant was his own act, and cannot possibly be so transferred as to become the personal act of any other individual; the criminality of the act is also his own, and cannot be transferred; but, as that act was performed by him as a public person, it is legally reckoned to all whom he represented, and the penalty incurred by it, is exacted from them.

*Parishioner.* Still it appears to me that it would be unjust to charge to me the consequences of an act, in which I had no agency, and which was committed thousands of years before I was born.

*Pastor.* With our imperfect and partial view of God's arrangements, there are many occasions in which the charge of injustice may be urged with the same plausibility. Thus you might allege, that God was unjust in electing some to everlasting life, and in passing by others; and you might also say, he was unjust in making such wide dis-

inctions in the worldly conditions of men. Such charges, however, are always rashly made. But let us consider the charges in relation to the present transaction. By a legal arrangement, the justice and propriety of which are not questioned, a child is put under the care of a guardian, often without his consent, and yet he is bound to abide by the consequences of the acts of this guardian. In law, the acts of the guardian are the acts of the ward, and he is held answerable for them. Thus, also, the man who becomes security for another, in relation to a debt, is regarded by the law as answerable for the debt, and in case of the failure of the original debtor, he takes the place of the principal, and is treated exactly as if he himself had contracted the debt. This is illustrated in the case of Paul and Onesimus. (Philemon 18, 19.) An employer also becomes responsible for the acts of his agent; a country becomes liable for the acts of its ambassador at a foreign court; and, in our own land, although comparatively few have the right to vote for representatives in Congress, yet men, women, and children, are held alike responsible for the acts of their representatives. These few representatives may, for instance, declare war, which, in its consequences, may not only affect the lives of many, but the interests of every man, woman, and child in the nation. In all these cases, we have the idea of imputation, in which the acts of one man are reckoned to the account of those whom he represents, and yet we never hear the charge of injustice seriously urged against the law which has sanctioned this principle.

*Parishioner.* I confess that this view of the subject obviates in a great measure the objections which I had conceived against it; yet still, might not our relation to Adam be merely a natural one, such as that between son and father, and might not our sinfulness of character be merely the natural result of such a relation; just as the children of drunkards suffer poverty and disgrace from the intemperance of their parents?

*Pastor.* I have already shown that more than a natural relation subsisted between Adam and his posterity; but suppose your conjecture to be true, how would it alter the case? Would it not be as unjust in this case as in the other, that we should be made to suffer for the sins of another? Nay, would it not be much more strikingly unjust? For in the one case we would certainly suffer innocently, but in the other we would suffer according to a divine, and

Therefore a just arrangement—just such an arrangement as we have already seen is recognized as wise and just, by all legal codes of civilized countries. Besides, this supposition of a mere natural relation, will not answer for want of analogy. Thus Adam sinned and his posterity without a single exception have become corrupt; but a drunkard sins, and yet his children are oftentimes temperate, respected, and prosperous.

*Parishioner.* This seems plausible, and yet I confess I should like additional proof of the existence and effects of this covenant relation.

*Pastor.* I would refer you then to Paul's Epistle to the Romans, chapter v. 12—21, in which, for the purpose of illustrating the doctrine of justification, a comparison is instituted between Christ and Adam, in their representative character; I say in their representative character, for in no other respect, as I conceive, could the comparison hold good; and this view is confirmed by the expression of the Apostle, in which he styles Adam the *figure or type of him that was to come*, evidently meaning Christ; and also to 1 Cor. xv. 45, in which Adam and Christ are respectively styled the first and last Adam, plainly referring to their public character, as standing at the head of their respective races. Adam represented the whole family of mankind, Christ the whole family of believers. As the first Adam brought death and woe, on all whom he represented, so the last Adam, or Christ, purchased life and immortality for all whom he represented.

Keeping this in view, we will now revert to the passage, Romans v. and examine it together. It reads thus:

“12. Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. 13. For until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that is to come; 15. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16. And not as it was by one that sinned so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation; but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. 17. For if by one man's offence

death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. 18. Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. 19. For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. 20. Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; 21. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Such is the passage, and without entering into a minute and critical examination of its several parts,\* you will see obviously presented in it the following points: (1.) That the sin of Adam is regarded as the source of our ruin. This sin is thus expressed, "by one man sin entered into the world," "through the offence of one," "by one man's offence," "by one man's disobedience." (2.) This sin of Adam caused death, that is the infliction of the penal evil which God had threatened as the punishment of sin; "by one man sin entered into the world, *and death by sin.*" (3.) This death or penal evil, affected not Adam alone, but all his posterity; "and so death passed on *all men,*" "through the offence of one *many be dead,*" "by one man's offence, *death reigned.*" (4.) This penalty of death was inflicted upon all because they had become sinners in Adam, "and so death passed on all, for that *all have sinned,*" "by one man's disobedience, *many were made sinners.*" (5.) All men became sinners not merely by personal transgression, (this is not the point the Apostle is discussing,) but by the imputation of Adam's sin; "so death passed on all men, for that, [*or in whom,*] *all have sinned;*" "for until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law; nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned *after the similitude of Adam's transgression.*" Here you will see that the Apostle asserts, that there could be no sin without law, and yet before the giving of the law of Moses, there was sin, and consequently death, and this death reigned universally,

\* A very satisfactory analysis of it may be found in Professor Hodge's Commentary on the Romans.

even over those who had not committed actual sin, or “had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.” Even infants died before the law of Moses, and their death was the evidence of their sin. But they had not sinned actually, therefore it was by the disobedience of Adam that they were constituted sinners; in other words, as the whole drift of the passage evidently shows, they, with all others, were regarded and treated as sinners through the imputation of Adam’s sin. Read over the passage in connexion with these leading ideas, and all appears clear and consistent; and then we can understand the other part of the comparison, in which Jesus Christ, as the representative of his people, is set forth as obviating the evils of the first man’s apostasy. “The free gift” is by him; “many are made righteous” through his obedience; justification of life is by him. As “sin abounded” by Adam, “grace did much more abound” in Christ, and as “sin reigned unto death,” so “grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ, our Lord.” I have but glanced at this passage, and yet how clearly do we see in it the representative character of the first and last Adam, with the respective consequences of their different conduct.

*Parishioner.* I am satisfied on these points, and now, I should feel obliged if you would give me your views on the nature of the penalty incurred by our race in consequence of their legal connexion with Adam. We often hear of men being born with a nature totally depraved. How is this? Are men *physically* depraved? Is the very substance of the soul corrupt? Are they as bad as they can be?

*Pastor.* I perceive that you have been more or less affected by the misrepresentations of those who oppose the orthodox faith. They distort the truth, and then charge their perversions on those who utterly reject them. Orthodox Presbyterians neither affirm that the substance of the soul is corrupted by the fall, nor that all men are by nature as depraved as they can be. We can attach no very definite idea to the expression *physical depravity*, the doctrine with which we are charged; we, however, believe that all men are “*by nature* the children of wrath,” that is, that on account of the transgression of our first father, they are born under the frown and curse of God; and also, that they are depraved in all the faculties of their souls. The penalty annexed to the covenant was death, a term which is used

by the sacred writers, to denote not only the separation of the spirit from the body, but all the penal consequences of sin. When we speak of the infliction of the penalty upon Adam's posterity on account of his offence, we do not mean that any positive evil was infused into them by the Almighty, as this would be an impeachment of his spotless perfections; but we mean, that they are destitute of that holy conformity to the image of God, in which Adam was created, and in which he continued until his disobedience; and that a positive disposition to sin, and universal corruption of the soul, result from the defect or absence of this original righteousness. The first dispositions and inclinations are evil; the understanding is so darkened, that it perceives not the beauties of holiness; the will so rebellious, that it resists the divine authority; the affections so debased, that they exclusively fasten on sensual objects. This corruption is so *general* that none have escaped; "they have all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no not one." It is so *extreme* and *radical*, that we are said to be "dead in trespasses and in sins."

The language of Scripture in portraying the fallen condition of our race is remarkably emphatic, and clearly conveys the impression that the disease of our nature is one of the most virulent character. "Shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin," our conduct proves that we are "transgressors from the womb;" the corrupt fountain is continually sending forth its corrupt streams. The natural tendency of this corruption, is obvious; it estranges us from God here, and if not rectified by grace, inevitably brings upon us the pains of the second death. Thus, original sin consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, or liableness to punishment on account of it, together with the loss of original righteousness and the corruption of our whole nature. This may be an awful picture, and yet in no one lineament is it overdrawn. Look abroad through the world; see the universal spread of vice and misery; behold the triumphs of disease and death, even over the infant of a day old, who not having personally transgressed, could not thus be punished for personal sin; and explain, if it be possible, the painful facts, upon any other principle than that which has been already stated.

*Parishioner.* I admit the depravity of man in its fullest extent, but is it not sufficient to say, without any reference

to a covenant arrangement, that it results in some undefinable way from our connexion with Adam?

*Pastor.* I think not. This is, to say the least of it, an obscure way of speaking, and absolutely explains nothing. For my part, I feel anxious to justify the ways of God to man, and, as the Divine Being has condescended to explain his procedure, I rejoice to know that the calamity which has befallen our race, has not come in an undefinable way, but agreeably to a just divine arrangement.

*Parishioner.* Permit me, my dear sir, to inquire in this connexion, why it is that some, in explaining the nature of sin, seem so strenuously to insist that all sin consists in voluntary action?

*Pastor.* The design is obvious. The opponents of the doctrine which we have been urging, have defined sin to be in every case a wilful breach of a known law; and, according to this definition, they have asserted that there is no original sin in the sense which the orthodox teach. If their definition of sin be exact and accurate, the doctrine of original sin must be abandoned. But their definition is not correct; sin is not merely a transgression of the law, but also a want of conformity to it; and besides, as we have already seen, sin may be *imputed*, upon principles of acknowledged justice. It is not therefore true that every sin consists in voluntary action. It is the dictate of common sense, as well as of Scripture, that before the voluntary act of sinning, there must be a previous sinful disposition. The bent or tendency of the mind is towards sin, and when not resisted and overcome, actual sin must ensue. We are told that "from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts," &c. and this is on the principle that a "corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." Men must therefore be corrupt in heart, before they can be corrupt in action, and it is utterly incredible that all men should become sinners, if it be true, as some maintain, that the heart has no inherent or native sinful bias or disposition.

*Parishioner.* I am satisfied. I find that my difficulties on this important doctrine of the Fall, arose not from any thing in the doctrine itself, but from my ignorance of the manner in which it should be stated and defended. Now sir, if you have no objection, we will converse on the method of MAN'S RECOVERY.

*Pastor.* I am most ready to comply with your request; and first we will consider the provision made for our



recovery by Jesus Christ, the last Adam. The doctrine of Atonement, as I understand it, I will briefly state. The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, being God and Man in one person, offered himself by a divine arrangement, as the substitute of those who were eternally elected to everlasting life, and being recognized as standing in their place, he obeyed the preceptive law for them, and having their sins imputed to him, or set to his account, he sustained the penalty which was due to them. Here you will perceive is a double imputation, as we have explained it; our sins were set to Christ's account, and the law exacted from him the whole punishment that was due to them, and thus we become fully released from the penalty; and Christ's righteousness, resulting from his perfect obedience to the preceptive law, is set to our account, and thus we become entitled to heaven.

*Parishioner.* Before you proceed further I wish to propose a few questions; and first, permit me to ask how it is consistent with our notions of such a relation, that Christ should be the *eternal* Son of the Father as you have just affirmed? I have been led to believe that Christ became the Son of God merely in consequence of his official designation as Mediator, and not by an *eternal generation*, of which I cannot form any adequate and distinct conception.

*Pastor.* I would state first in reply to your query, that the terms Father and Son are correlates; that is, if the first person in the Trinity was a *Father* from everlasting, the second person must have been a *Son* from everlasting; the one evidently implies the other. If we cannot with propriety style Christ the *everlasting* Son, neither can we style the first person in the Trinity, the *everlasting* Father.

Again, the peculiar designation of the second person in the Trinity is, the Son of God; his Sonship is his *proper personality*, and if we say that his Sonship was the result of the divine will, as was his appointment as Mediator, we at once declare his inferiority to the Father, or, in other words, divest him of his divine character. It is in full view of this result that we find the Socinians uniformly denying the eternal generation of the Son; and those who sneer at it in our own church, are just so far preparing the way for the introduction of Socinianism.

*Parishioner.* I see that it is so, and therefore I am not disposed further to object to the phraseology employed, to

express the peculiar relation between the Father and the Son. I proceed therefore to other parts of your statement. You say Christ was the substitute of his people, that their sins were imputed to him, and for them he made atonement. To the doctrine of imputation I have no longer any objection. I can easily conceive, as you have already explained the doctrine, that the sins of men might be set to Christ's account as a surety, while he still remains "holy, harmless, and undefiled." But I am anxious to know upon what ground you affirm that Christ was a proper substitute, and that his atonement was a real satisfaction to the divine law for the sins of his people?

*Pastor.* This is a vital inquiry, and I will endeavour to answer it. Take this view of the case. The sins of men made them answerable to the justice of God; this justice demanded their death unless they could make reparation to the injured law; their character and circumstances, as you will admit, put it entirely out of their power to make such reparation; Christ appeared at this juncture to stand in their place; by assuming humanity he became a proper subject of law, and by the power of his divinity, he was adequate to the great undertaking. He accordingly, in this character of surety, became obedient even unto death, and with his expiring breath, declared that the work of atonement was "finished."

For the truth of this view, I will merely refer you to some of the simple declarations of the word of God. I affirm that Christ was a substitute for others, and the proof is contained in such inspired declarations as these: "Surely he hath borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows." "He was wounded for *our* transgressions, he was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement of *our* peace was upon him, and with his stripes *we* are healed." "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of *us* all." "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." "He bare the sin of *many*." "Even Christ *our* passover was sacrificed for *us*." "He appeared to put away *sin* by the sacrifice of *himself*." "He died the just *for* the unjust that he might bring *us* to God." "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man, some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died *for us*." Such passages might be multiplied, but these will be sufficient to prove the vicarious character of Christ.

*Parishioner.* They are quite sufficient; but were the sufferings of Christ a *special* offering for the sins of the elect? that is, were they exclusively for their benefit?

*Pastor.* Strictly speaking, these sufferings were designed for the exclusive benefit of the elect; and for their salvation alone, the atonement is made efficacious. This is the only consistent view of the subject. Atonement was made for sin; sin can only exist in connexion with a sinner; it is never a mere abstraction. Christ's death therefore must have had reference to the sins of particular persons, and if efficacious, then these persons must be released from the claims of a broken law. To say, therefore, that Christ died or made atonement for the sins of any who shall be finally lost, is equivalent to saying, either that his atonement was so far a failure, or that God had unrighteously exacted from such, another payment of the debt, which had been discharged by Christ the surety. I know it is maintained that Christ made by his death, a general satisfaction to the justice of God, rendering it possible for him consistently to pardon whom he pleased. But this is language without meaning. Justice had specific claims against every sinner, and if it were satisfied at all, it must have been in relation to such claims. If Christ bore the penalty for all, then the specific claims of justice on each and all must be satisfied, and all will be saved; but if he bore the penalty only for some, then on the same principle only some will be saved.

There is another view of this subject which has unhappily gained currency, which represents the death of Christ as a mere tragical exhibition before the universe, to testify God's abhorrence of sin. In this theory, Christ's substitution is denied; he is not regarded as even guilty by imputation; his death was in no wise a sacrifice; nor were any of his sufferings of a penal nature; and the pardon of sin is effected by a mere act of God's sovereignty. This scheme, is not only absurd, but abhorrent and contrary to all Scripture. It can never be explained in consistency with such passages as we have already cited. How the sufferings of a perfectly sinless being, who was not guilty or liable to punishment on account of imputed sin, could prove God's abhorrence of sin, never has been and never can be explained.

Besides, it is evident that in no proper sense, could the death of Christ, under this view, be an atonement; for it had no special reference to sinners. The claims of the law

are still unsatisfied, and if any be saved, it is in consequence of God's withdrawing his just claims, and recalling his threatenings. Indeed, it seems to me that on this hypothesis there was no necessity for Christ's suffering at all, for God, as a Sovereign, could have pardoned the sinner as well without, as with a display, that made no amends to a violated law. Not one circumstance essential to the idea of an atonement enters into this scheme, and therefore it is one, with which even a Socinian could not quarrel. The advocates of it may very well say, that "the atonement secures the salvation of no one," for certainly as they understand it, it *can* secure the salvation of no one.

*Parishioner.* The last scheme of atonement to which you have adverted, I utterly disclaim, as contrary to all just scriptural interpretation; still it seems to me that your idea of a definite atonement is liable to various objections. First, you say, Christ stood in the law place of his people, and becoming by imputation responsible for their sins, bore the penalty which was due to them. Now this penalty was, as you have intimated, death temporal, spiritual, and eternal, and in this latter are included despair and remorse of conscience; now surely Christ did not bear this penalty with the attending circumstances. And then second, if the atonement had not respect to all men, how can the gospel offer be tendered to them, and how can they be blameworthy in their rejection of it?

*Pastor.* In relation to your first inquiry, I answer, the penalty of the broken law and nothing less, was endured by the Redeemer. If this were not so, then the penalty is not yet paid, and justice still has claims against the sinner which will for ever prevent his salvation. This penalty was death, but we are not informed, what is comprehended under that term. If this penalty is exacted of a mere creature, we are aware that it includes temporal death, the loss of God's image and favour, and consequently of personal happiness here, with eternal banishment from his presence hereafter. In this latter condition the sinner will ever despair of recovering from his ruin, and will be overwhelmed with remorse. These feelings, instead of being an essential part of the penalty, may be the mere result of its infliction on a sinful creature, who is conscious of his ill desert. But we are not told that these circumstances may not be materially modified in the infliction of the penalty on such a person as Christ, without at all affecting the nature of the

penalty itself. We do not degrade the subject by an attempt to measure the amount of our Saviour's sufferings, by a sort of arithmetical process; we merely insist that they were of a penal nature, and bore to the law the relation of a sanction; as it is said, "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin;" and again, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Christ it is true, could not suffer eternally, neither could he be the subject of despair and remorse; and yet as God-man, capable of enduring infinitely more than we can conceive, it would be presumption in us to affirm, that he could not have borne the whole penalty, and the precise penalty, in his own person, in a few hours, which would have proved eternally destructive to the whole universe had it been inflicted on it. The penalty of the law is one thing, your circumstantial definition of it may be another. The penalty which made the mighty Redeemer sorrowful unto death for a few hours, may be the same penalty which calls forth the eternal wailings of hell. Thus, for the purpose of illustration; a man justly convicted of an offence against the laws of his country, is punished by imprisonment and hard labour. Conscious of his crime, he may feel the deepest remorse for its commission, while undergoing the infliction of this penalty. But suppose a disinterested friend should, from certain considerations, offer to endure the penalty in his stead, and the law should accept him as a substitute, he would actually endure the penalty of the law, and yet he could not possibly feel any remorse for the imputed crime.

The mistake on this point arises from a failure to distinguish between a mere creature, and the God-man mediator, suffering the same punishment. How will we venture to say, that Jesus could not endure the penalty of the law, when we mark the agony which he suffered? Independently of his excruciating bodily sufferings on the cross, when we observe the blood gushing from his pores in consequence of mental anguish, and hear his piteous cry under the desertion of God, by what rule are we to measure his pains? How can we say he could not endure this penalty, until we can first comprehend what is included in his being *bruised* by the omnipotent Father and made a *curse* for us?

But I come to your second inquiry. You ask how a general gospel-offer can be made upon the ground of a definite atonement; or how men can be charged with crimi-

nality in remaining impenitent? I can perceive no inconsistency between the two positions. Christ has told me, that he laid down his life for his sheep—this is definite atonement; and Christ has instructed me to preach the gospel to every creature; his authoritative command therefore is my voucher. He has not instructed me to say to any particular individual, that the blood of Christ was shed for him, neither has he authorized me to say to all in the mass, that an atonement has been made for them. He has merely told me to preach the Gospel to all; to display the wonders of his dying love; to unfold the ample nature of the atonement for the salvation of all who repose their faith in it; to explain the terms on which the soul may become interested in it; and to give his own blessed assurance, that whosoever believeth shall be saved. This appears to me to be perfectly plain.

But then you say, if there be some for whom no atonement was made, they must be exonerated from blame for their unbelief. This however is a mere cavil. No man is condemned on the ground that there is not a sufficiency in the atonement to save; for, considered in its own nature, it is of unlimited sufficiency, and its benefits are sincerely and affectionately offered to all, with the gracious assurance that “he that cometh to Christ shall in no wise be cast out.” The sinner, therefore, who perishes under the gospel, is justly chargeable with his own destruction. He is righteously condemned, for his wilful and obstinate preference of sin to holiness. “This is the condemnation that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

*Parishioner.* You have cleared this subject to my satisfaction, and I will now revert to another part of your original statement. You said that Christ, by his sinless obedience to the law, wrought out a perfect righteousness which is imputed to his people for justification.

*Pastor.* Yes, I have said so. The imputation of the righteousness of Christ, who fulfilled the whole law, both in its letter and spirit, constitutes the sinner just in the sight of God. Understand me; I do not mean that the personal righteousness of Christ becomes the sinner’s personal righteousness, for that is impossible; but that it is set to his account, as if he himself had performed it, and in the eye of the law, he is regarded as righteous, and is said to be justified. In this righteousness the sinner becomes interested

by an exercise of faith; that is, the sinner upon conviction that he cannot obtain justification by the deeds of the law, makes a believing application to Christ as his surety, whereupon Christ's righteousness is set over to the sinner's account, and the law recognizes it as his, as much as if he had accomplished it himself. Hence we are said to be justified by faith.

*Parishioner.* If we are justified in this way, entirely irrespective of our deeds, is there not a danger that we may feel a diminished sense of obligation to the law?

*Pastor.* Wicked men may pervert the doctrine, but those who believe it truly, are in no danger in this respect. The same Scriptures, which unfold this doctrine, declare the perpetual authority of the law as a rule of life. Our obligations to obedience are in no sense diminished. We do not indeed obey it in the hope of obtaining justification from it, but we obey it because God commands; because faith necessarily leads to obedience; because we cannot be personally holy without such obedience; and above all, because the sinner who is justified, is at the same time *renewed* in the image of God, and therefore loves the divine law, and desires above all things to comply with its holy requisitions. God forbids, and all the circumstances of the case forbid, that because grace is manifested in our justification, we should live in sin that grace may abound.

*Parishioner.* I have heard it affirmed that justification is nothing else than pardon.

*Pastor.* I am aware that this is said, but the opinion must be the result of a very partial and imperfect apprehension of the way of salvation. Justification is a term derived from legal proceedings, and is the act by which an individual is acquitted of a charge on evidence that he is not legally answerable for it. The act pronounces him just. On the contrary, an individual may be pardoned by an act of clemency, when the law adjudges him guilty. In justification, therefore, not only are our personal iniquities pardoned, but our persons are accepted as righteous in the sight of God, on account of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us.

*Parishioner.* With what propriety can it be said that God pardons our sins, if Christ has made a full atonement for them? If he has *paid* our debt, how can God be said to *forgive* it?

*Pastor.* Christ it is true, paid our debt but it was mere

grace which accepted that payment instead of exacting it from us personally; so with propriety it may be said to be forgiven us, although paid by our surety. The very ground on which alone our pardon was possible, was provided by the grace of God. He pardons us therefore, although he exacts from our substitute a full payment.

*Parishioner.* You say a man is justified by faith; is faith ever the proper ground of justification?

*Pastor.* Certainly not. The righteousness of Christ, the object which faith contemplates, is the exclusive ground of justification; and we are said to be justified by faith, because it is the means by which the righteousness of Christ is received and appropriated. To say that the mere act of believing in God's plan of mercy, is accounted our righteousness, and becomes the basis of our justification, is no better than to say, that we are justified by our works; for faith is our own act. This opinion is the necessary result of a denial of the doctrine of imputation. For if our sins were not imputed to Christ to be atoned for, and his righteousness is not imputed to us for justification, then, God must pardon us by a sovereign act, without any satisfaction made to his justice, or he must receive our own act of faith as cancelling our obligations, or we must perish.

In other words, our only hope must be that God will cease to be just in order that he may be merciful. But this can never be. God has no "*darling* attribute" in the way of preference, but all his attributes are equally dear to him, as being equally essential to his nature. Justice and mercy must concur and unite in the sinner's salvation, and this can only be the case on the principle before stated, that Christ as our substitute, has not only endured the penalty of the law in our stead, thus saving us from the horrors of perdition, but that he has obeyed the law in our behalf, thus furnishing us a righteousness for justification, and thereby securing our title to heaven. What is called the New Divinity most fatally errs in this particular; commencing with the denial of imputation, it finally leaves the sinner without any scriptural title to heaven. Whatever others may say, it is my firm conviction, that the doctrine of justification through the imputed righteousness of Christ, is essential to the gospel scheme. Take it out of the system and the gospel is no longer "good news;" attempt to modify it, and the scheme of divine truth is marred; suggest a substitute for it, and God will pour confusion on the impious invention. Thus you may see that the doctrines



of truth so far as they have fallen under our consideration, beautifully cohere; while a system of error, the further we trace it, becomes worse, and more disjointed.

*Parishioner.* I have never seen the importance of the doctrine of imputation in so clear a light as I do now, and I readily acknowledge that the admission of it, is necessary to a just comprehension of the plan of salvation. I am still anxious, however, to have my mind settled respecting the mode in which a sinner becomes interested in the atonement of Jesus Christ.

*Pastor.* I will endeavour to make a plain statement on the subject. Thus we have already seen, that by the fall, men are entirely alienated from God; they are averse to all that is good, they are prone to all that is evil; they are the enemies of God, and unwilling to be reconciled to him on the humiliating terms of the gospel; in a word, to use the language of the Confession of Faith, "man by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation, so as a natural man being altogether averse from that which is good and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or prepare himself thereunto."

This is the situation in which the gospel finds all men, and for the remedying of which it is especially provided. Although all men may hear the gospel, yet only some receive its benefits; and the reason is, that they exclusively are made willing in the day of God's power, while the rest, by a righteous exercise of divine sovereignty, are left to their own guilty choice in rejecting the offered salvation. The Holy Spirit, in such cases, accompanies the word with his almighty energy, and makes it effectual in enlightening the understanding, subduing the will, and renewing the heart. Regeneration is a thorough and instantaneous work of the Holy Spirit, implying a change in all the views, dispositions, and habits of the sinner, which could never be effected by any human power. In it, the sinner who was once blind, now sees; he who was once dead, now lives.

*Parishioner.* Although I admit, sir, that man is depraved, yet I have been inclined to believe that he was not entirely disabled to good. I have supposed that his moral and not his natural faculties were affected by the fall, and hence that his inability referred merely to the will, and was manifested in his indisposition to receive the gospel. And the reference of Scripture appears to be to this kind of inability, when it is said, "we are made *willing* in the day

of God's power," and in that other passage "ye *will not* come unto me that ye may have life." Do not these passages imply that a sinner possesses a natural, but not a moral ability to believe, and that he *can* if he *will* repent?

*Pastor.* If the distinction between natural and moral ability contemplates no more than this, that in our natural condition, we possess all the faculties of mind, which a regenerated man employs in the service of God, I am ready to admit it. The same natural faculties characterize both the regenerate and unregenerate, and the work of the Spirit on the mind does not increase the number of these faculties. But if the distinction implies that these natural faculties are not disabled by the fall, this I deny, as being contrary to fact.

As an example; the understanding is called a natural faculty, and yet we are assured that it may be so blinded, that the natural man is not able to discern the things of the Spirit. And so it is of all the other faculties; they are perverted by the fall, and are just as much disabled to good, as the will, or governing faculty, as it has been called. The distinction under consideration, however, is of no service in the case, which it is intended to relieve. Let us suppose that the natural faculties of men were entirely unaffected by the fall, and possessed all their pristine vigour and purity, are they sufficient of themselves to accomplish true repentance and faith? Is it not, on the contrary, admitted by all that they are not sufficient? Have not the moral faculties an important part to act? If then the inability of the sinner resides solely in his will, is not the inability as complete and insuperable, as if it had reference to every other faculty? If I had but one hand, and a work was assigned me which could not at all be accomplished except by the aid of two hands, my inability would be just the same as to the result, as if I were deprived of both hands.

Besides, faith and repentance are eminently moral acts, and no natural ability, in the sense in which the terms are used, can possibly qualify a man for their performance. I admit that there is an inability arising from a defect of will or disposition, and hence it is said "ye *will not* come unto me that ye may have life;" but the inability refers to all the faculties, and hence it is said, "no man *can* come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him." This entire inability is evidently presupposed in the very nature of the gospel provisions, both in the work of Christ

and of the Holy Spirit. We are dead, until Christ gives us life—we are dead, until the Spirit quickens us into life. I feel therefore justified in saying, that it is deceptive to say to the sinner, “you can repent if you will,” for there is no appropriate ability for the work, but that which is imparted by the Holy Spirit.

*Parishioner.* According to this representation, I cannot perceive on what principle the sinner can be charged with guilt in continuing impenitent. Is God so hard a master, as to require of us that which we are in no sense able to perform?

*Pastor.* You suppose a man’s obligation is to be measured by his ability, and hence that the want of ability cancels his obligation. Now this, if it be laid down as a general rule, is utterly untenable. A man may on this principle at any time escape from his obligations, by bringing on himself an inability to fulfil them. Is not this a strange and dangerous sentiment? The truth is, that in the present case, our obligation arises from the command of God; our inability arises from our sin, and hence is a sin itself, instead of being an excuse for disobedience. We have seen that it was righteous in God to impute to us the sin of Adam. Now our inability is one of the consequences of this imputation and is in itself sinful. The criminal existence of it, therefore, can certainly be no reason why God should relax his claims upon us. It is just then that God should still continue to demand, although we have lost the requisite ability to obey. It is true that the sinner is under a solemn obligation to repent, believe, love God, and obey all his commandments; it is true that God expressly requires him to do these things; and yet it is equally true, that he can meet the requisition only in the strength of God, supernaturally communicated to him. It was in this view of our inability, that a Saviour was provided, who could furnish us with necessary ability, to believe, repent, and perform all holy acts. We have an ability therefore of some kind, but it is solely that ability which God imparts, when he enables us to work out our own salvation, by working in us both to will and to do. We never find Paul boasting of his natural ability, but we hear him exclaiming, “I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.”

If you still say, that there is an apparent injustice in the case, I would answer, that the same difficulty attend:

the scheme which ascribes to the sinner moral inability. You acknowledge, that divine power must remove this moral inability before the sinner can receive Christ; of course until this be done, the sinner is released from his obligations; for a little reflection will show that the inability is just as real and insuperable in the one case as in the other.

*Parishioner.* If this be the condition of the sinner, he is surely to be pitied.

*Pastor.* He is indeed to be pitied as you say, but certainly not as an innocent person, for he is criminal in this defect, as we have already seen. But you may, on the same principle of sympathy, pity the Christian; for in himself considered, even after his renewal by the Holy Spirit, he is entirely dependent on gracious aid for all his ability. He cannot think a good thought, or perform a right action, without a divine influence. He feels this dependence; he recognizes it in all his prayers; and in all his undertakings he is sensible that his sufficiency is of God. Why then should we ascribe an ability to the sinner which does not even belong to a saint? or why should we consider it a case of hardship for a sinner to be wholly indebted to God, for all his ability to obey the law, when God's own chosen and beloved people can do nothing acceptably, but as they are aided by grace and help from on high?

*Parishioner.* I see the force of your remarks, but would it not be wise to insist upon the distinction between moral and natural ability, for the purpose of evincing to the sinner his inexcusableness, and inducing him to exert himself? I have sometimes thought, that to insist on the doctrine of total inability has a tendency to quiet the anxiety of a sinner, and induce inactivity, under an impression, that all he has to do, is to wait God's time.

*Pastor.* As to the propriety of insisting on the distinction for the purpose you propose, I cannot admit it; for first, if it be not a just distinction, it will create a false impression, and induce sinners to believe that they have powers which they really do not possess; and secondly, sinners may be led to conclude, that by virtue of these fancied powers, they have repented and believed, while actually impenitent; thus fatally deceiving their souls and contenting themselves with a spurious religion: or they may be induced under the same delusion, to postpone repentance to a dying hour, in the vain hope, that they may then successfully exert their powers in

preparing themselves for their last change. On the other hand, apathy and slothfulness are by no means the necessary consequences of a belief in human inability. The doctrine it is true, may be abused like any other doctrine of revelation, yet still, a genuine persuasion that we are utterly helpless, that we can do nothing effectively towards our own salvation, is precisely the state of mind in which we can perceive the value and necessity of the gospel provision. When once convinced that we can do nothing for ourselves, our self-righteous notions are dissipated, and we are driven to the Saviour with the appropriate petitions, "Lord, save, or I perish;" "God be merciful to me a sinner."

*Parishioner.* As connected with this subject permit me to ask, in what regeneration consists? I have heard it urged with some plausibility that all that was required of the sinner was, that he should change the governing purpose of his mind; or as I understood it, that he should undergo such an alteration in his disposition, as to incline to the things of religion.

*Pastor.* I have heard this language employed, and under circumstances which made me suppose, that the speaker intended to convince his hearers, that they could at once be religious, by a simple resolution to be so. If we rely for information on the illustrations which are employed, regeneration, according to this view, is a very inconsiderable change. Thus a physician becomes a merchant, and in doing so, he changes his *governing purpose*; and if the illustration holds good, a sinner becomes renewed, whenever he changes his external pursuits from interested motives. If, however, by this expression, something more is intended, and a change in the prevailing disposition of the heart is implied, then I would remark, that this change is beyond human power, and cannot be effected by a mere determination of the will. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, neither the leopard his spots, and there is the same difficulty for him who has been accustomed to do evil, to learn to do well. A man may bring the whole weight of his natural power to bear upon his prevailing inclinations, and yet find them too stubborn in their resistance, to be overcome.

But I have another objection to this phraseology; it does not express with sufficient comprehensiveness the great change which we style regeneration. It is a much

more extensive and thorough work than this phraseology seems to imply. It is described in sacred Scripture as a new birth, a new creation, a resurrection from the dead; these are emphatic expressions and convey the idea of a marvellous transformation. Such in truth it is, evincing in every feature the mighty power of God. Spiritual things are discerned and relished, by a heart once blind and averse from them; love to God succeeds to enmity; alacrity in duty succeeds to indifference and reluctance; holy habits are substituted for habits earthly, sensual, devilish; in a word, old things pass away, and all things become new. The vile sinner who was an abhorrence to all holy beings, becomes entitled to take his place in their holy assembly.

*Parishioner.* Is the change of which you speak effected by a direct divine influence, or by the persuasive and constraining influence of motives presented to the mind?

*Pastor.* God does not work irrespective of means; he presents in his word and providence the most affecting motives; he appeals to a sinner's fears and hopes; to his reason, his conscience, his self interest, his sense of gratitude; and in the use of these means and motives, the sinner is often brought to the foot of the cross; but in none of these means is there any inherent energy. Truth may be presented to the mind without any sensible effect; the powerful appeals of Scripture may prove ineffectual to move it to repentance; and the gospel of grace may become to the sinner the savour of death. The precise condition of the sinner, in his inability to improve the truth without divine aid, is thus expressed by an apostle. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." By mere *moral suasion* therefore, as it has been termed, no sinner has ever yet been converted from the error of his ways; and hence the necessity of a more efficient agency. God by a direct and supernatural influence, accompanies the presentation of the truth, and in that way alone it becomes effectual to salvation. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." So manifest is this in every case of genuine conversion, that it is marvellous that any professing the Christian's hope, should imagine that a work so wonderful should

ever be accomplished by any other agency than the "mighty power of God."

This view will also show the absurdity of that scheme which ascribes *activity* to the sinner in his regeneration. God is the only *actor*, man is the *passive* subject. The only activity which man can display in relation to his regeneration is in *resisting* the Holy Ghost; to aid God in effecting it, would not only be impossible, but unnecessary. Should any active part in the work be ascribed to man, just so far it would not be of grace; but it is by grace alone we are saved from first to last; being "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." While sinners therefore are passive in the hands of God, he creates them anew in Christ Jesus.

*Parishioner.* Do you say that the work of regeneration is completed at once? If so, how do you account for the many imperfections perceptible in the most advanced Christians?

*Pastor.* I say the work is instantaneously performed. There is no medium condition between life and death. A sinner must either be an heir of heaven, or an heir of hell; he must either be regenerate or unregenerate. The Spirit finds the sinner in his enmity and sin, and at once reconciles him to God; he finds him an heir of wrath, and at once makes him an heir of glory. Whatever may have been his preparatory exercises, there is a point at which he is translated from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

While I affirm that regeneration is complete at once, inasmuch as the sinner is thereby radically changed and placed in an entirely new relation to God, yet I have not said that the subject of it is thereby perfected. When regenerated, the sinner is converted or turned from the path of hell to the path of heaven, and as he pursues his pilgrimage, he is instructed, guided, strengthened, and comforted by the Holy Spirit. As he proceeds, he becomes more like God, more inimical to sin, more meet for heaven. Thus while regeneration is *instantaneous*, sanctification is *progressive*; and the latter is never completed until mortality is swallowed up of life.

*Parishioner.* My dear pastor, I cordially thank you for the instruction I have received in this interview. My doubts are removed; the painful state of my mind is relieved; and I now embrace the faith of my fathers with

more intelligence than formerly, and I trust I shall not so easily be moved by every wind of doctrine. The Catechisms of our Church which I learned in my youth, evidently set forth the same doctrines which you have enforced, and I am struck with astonishment that any one should profess to receive these formularies, and yet substantially overturn every principal statement contained in them. Will you oblige me by explaining the remarkable fact that ministers and others, professing to receive the same doctrinal standards, should still be characterized by such discrepancy of views?

*Pastor.* I will endeavour to do so. You are aware that creeds are not designed to supersede the Bible, but as the Bible is subject to conflicting interpretations, a creed is nothing more than a particular interpretation, which is adopted by any individual or class of individuals. Thus any number of persons who agree in what they suppose the Bible teaches, write their creed, which becomes to them a bond of union. It was in this way that the Westminster Confession of Faith was written, and all who could cordially receive it, were permitted upon a declaration of such concurrence, to unite with the Presbyterian Church of which this Confession became the symbol. The question proposed to every minister and elder of the Presbyterian Church, at their induction into their respective offices, is in the following words, viz: "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?" And to this an affirmative answer is returned.

In process of time, however, when the Presbyterian Church had increased and assumed a commanding stand, many felt inclined to enter her communion, who demurred at many of her doctrines. They accordingly began to torture the above form of subscription, to elicit from it a meaning which the words did not obviously express. They at length fell upon an expedient; it was that they adopted only "the *system* of doctrine" contained in the Confession, or, in other words, that they adopted it only "for *substance* of doctrine." To detect the subterfuge here employed, recur again to the words of the formula. "Do you sincerely, (that is, without prevarication or mental reservation) receive and adopt the Confession of Faith." The answer is, "I do adopt the *Confession of Faith*," that is wholly and



entirely, (for there is no saving clause introduced,) and I adopt it *because* it contains "the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures." Hence it is not the mere general system contained in the Confession, which is adopted, but the Confession itself, and that because it contains the Bible system. The evasion resorted to by some is not only unworthy of their intelligence, but it is a blot on their honour and honesty. How men professing godliness, can fail to see the evident and only import of such simple language, is what I cannot explain. It certainly never was designed that any should enter the Presbyterian Church, under the cover of such a glaring subterfuge. I have already said, that a creed is designed as a bond of union, and as a defence against error; but it loses its virtue, whenever it is received merely for "substance of doctrine." Men may differ very widely in their notions of what constitutes the substance of doctrine. The Arminian may give it as his opinion, that the sovereignty of God in election, and the perseverance of the saints, are not essential to the Presbyterian system, and hence he adopts it for substance, with these exceptions. The Universalist may reason in the same way, in relation to the doctrine of future punishments; and the Socinian may follow his example, in relation to the Divinity and atonement of Christ; and they may all enter the Presbyterian Church on the convenient plea, that they embrace what they consider the substance of its doctrines. Every man is left to judge for himself, what constitutes the substance, and the Unitarian is not to be condemned any more than the Pelagian, in making his exceptions and modifications.

Such being the true and necessary operation of this principle, if it receives countenance, what becomes of the unity of the church? I grieve while I say it, this evasive conduct has already destroyed the unity and harmony of our church, by the introduction of many, who not only do not believe in the doctrines of our Confession, but are busy in undermining and subverting them. So many have entered our communion "for substance of doctrine," that there is great danger that the church will eventually lose the very substance of the gospel itself.

*Parishioner.* I confess, my dear sir, I am amazed at these disclosures. Whether the "new divinity" which I was so much in danger of imbibing, be true or false, it is now clear to my mind that it cannot be held by any honest-

hearted Presbyterian. Surely they who are not cordial in adopting the Westminster Confession, should leave our church, and seek one whose doctrines they can embrace.

*Pastor.* This certainly is the dictate of common honesty, to say nothing of religion. As long as they remain, there will be controversy; for those who love the truth, and wish to secure the stability of the Presbyterian church, must, from a sense of duty to their Master, resist the encroachments of errorists, the tendency of whose course, is to subvert, both the doctrine and polity of our beloved Zion. The truth incorporated in our standards, is precious; it is worth contending for; and if the foe comes to destroy, he must be met and resisted. Just in proportion as error prevails, the souls of men are endangered; and how can the faithful watchmen of Zion, who see the danger, fail to give the alarm, or refuse to buckle on their armour?

In reviewing the whole subject, you may perceive that the controversy existing in the Church, involves some of the most precious articles of our faith. The covenant made with Adam, his representative character, and the imputation of his first sin to his posterity, are clearly denied; the representative character of Christ, the imputation to him of his people's sins, his endurance of the proper penalty of the law, and the imputation of his righteousness to believers for justification, are also denied; total depravity, the entire inability of sinners, and the direct agency of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, are equally impugned. They who reject these cardinal doctrines, also assert that men are born free from original sin, that their sin is entirely the result of voluntary action, that the atonement was not a satisfaction to divine justice, that sinners have a full ability to repent and believe, except so far as relates to their indisposition, that their act of faith is imputed to them for justifying righteousness, that men are active in regeneration, and that their regeneration is progressive. Here is not only the denial of some of the principal points of the system of revealed truth, but the assertion of a contrary system, which is but a series of errors.

We are often told, that none of these points affect the essential faith of a Christian, and that as matters of speculation, they may be entertained without endangering the personal salvation of man. This we have every reason to deny; but even if it were true, still the known tendency of error is from bad to worse, until it amounts to a direct

denial of the "Lord that bought us." While we have abundant reason to be alarmed, we should also feel that our hope is in God. To Him should unceasing, fervent, and importunate prayer be made, that through his mighty power, his own truth may be maintained, and the peace, spirituality, and efficiency of the Church restored.

## POSTSCRIPT.

*Parishioner.* Since our last conversation, the state of our church has undergone a remarkable change, by the excision of the erroneous portions. I think we should regard this as a signal interposition of Providence to save the church from the ruin, which but for this, seemed inevitable.

*Pastor.* Yes, my dear Sir, a great deliverance has been effected, which we could scarcely have anticipated, which we did not deserve, but for which we should be devoutly grateful to God. The advocates of error having obtained possession of many Presbyteries and Synods, had the means of strengthening their forces and extending their influence at pleasure. Their connexion with New England Theological Seminaries, and those mighty, but dangerous engines, the voluntary societies for education and missions, gave them unusual facilities for the increase of their ministers, and consequently of their ecclesiastical judicatories. The multiplication of their Presbyteries of course increased their delegation to the General Assembly, the supreme judicatory of the church, until it was found, that when a full representation was sent to the Assembly, they had managed to obtain nearly an equality of votes. Had they succeeded in obtaining a majority, an object to which all their efforts were directed for years, there can be no doubt, from their oft repeated intimations, that they would have revolutionized the whole church; displaced every orthodox man from the management of our institutions; dismissed our venerable theological professors, and committed the whole interests of the church into the hands of those who would have taken a pride in reducing the orthodoxy of our venerated standards,

to suit the erroneous and disjointed opinions of modern heresy. This evil the Lord, in mercy, has averted, and they that digged the pit for others, fell into it themselves. The church has been reformed, and a complete separation has been effected between the two parties.

*Parishioner.* I have heard some say, that the result which has been effected, is desirable, but the means of its accomplishment were of doubtful propriety.

*Pastor.* The result certainly has been happy. The separation was in every point of view better than a forced and incongruous union. Since it has taken place, contention has in a great measure ceased; delightful peace has been restored to our bleeding Zion, and God is now smiling benignantly and pouring out the copious showers of his grace. The church has perhaps never been in a sounder and more healthful condition. As to the means by which the separation was effected, it has been abundantly shown, that they were righteous in themselves, called for by the suffering condition of the church, justified by the soundest ecclesiastical principles, and adopted as the only alternative left by the obstinacy of those who were excised only after all overtures of amicable adjustment had been scornfully refused. It is hardly conceivable, that any other measure, in the circumstances of the case, could have accomplished the desirable end; and had decisive action been delayed a year or two more, the advocates of innovation and error would have acquired the ascendancy, and the most precious truths of our standards would have fallen in the streets. Our opponents who have made such loud complaints of oppression and tyranny, should at length hold their peace, as the great civil tribunal to which they submitted the question with the most entire confidence, has gravely decided, that there was no ground of complaint, and that the General Assembly in its excising acts had not transcended its power.

*Parishioner.* I have no doubt myself on this subject, and am fully persuaded that the Assembly not only did the best thing in the circumstances of the case, but one altogether

right in itself and justifiable on principles of strict equity. It seems to me however, that danger is to be apprehended to the church, from the proximity of a body of men so numerous, so artful in their plans, so indefatigable in their efforts, and at the same time bearing the same name with us.

*Pastor.* There is danger from this source, against which we should not close our eyes. It is of a two-fold character. First, it is to be apprehended, nay, it is certain, that the separatists will employ untiring diligence in attempting to create dissatisfaction in orthodox churches, and in seizing upon any local differences to organize factions against the settled ministry, with the ultimate view of erecting opposition churches. Their success in this method of encroachment has hitherto been very limited, and perhaps this in a measure is to be attributed to their want of pecuniary means to build churches for all the little factions which they might nourish into being. The other evil is more threatening. It is the insidious return of those who ought not to be in the church, because not cordially attached to its principles. Of course none should be prevented from returning who manifest a true and sincere change of views, and who give evidence that they abhor the modern heresies, and the policy which would protect them; but then there is danger of Presbyterians being deceived by plausible and crafty professions. The orthodox have always been distinguished by their unsuspecting temper, and it is to be feared that they have retained too much of that easy credulity which has once proved so nearly fatal in leading them to confide in men who deal in double meanings. Besides, many of the separatists are uneasy in their present position; they are united neither in faith nor feeling; they have had, and must expect to have collisions, among themselves; they cannot long remain in one body, and hence many would be glad to return to the Presbyterian church as a place of desirable refuge. This is to be deprecated. Far better that the church should be small than that it should multiply its numbers by the addition of men who had already attempted to betray its interests.

Could my voice be heard throughout the church, I would solemnly caution the Presbyteries to take heed upon what grounds they admitted a single man, who during a controversy of ten years, had uniformly been found on the side of error. Very strong evidences of a change of opinion should be demanded in such a case. The sin of the church in this generation will be great, if after all the warnings and rebukes it has received, all the suffering it has endured, it shall by its carelessness and unfaithfulness, do the very thing which at a future day will inevitably involve the church in another desolating controversy. We have the gates and walls of the city in our possession, and it must be our own fault if any enemy effects an entrance. Our hope however must be in God. He has been with us in many tribulations, and he will not now leave us. To Him should increasing prayer be made. He can guard the Zion which he loves, and which he has redeemed, and if intrusted to his hands by the prayer of faith, no weapon formed against it can prosper.

THE END.

A TREATISE

ON

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

By ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D.D.

PROFESSOR OF DIDACTIC AND POLEMIC THEOLOGY IN THE THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY AT PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.



---

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1837, by  
ALEXANDER W. MITCHELL, M. D.,  
in the office of the Clerk of the District Court for the  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

---

# JUSTIFICATION.

## SECTION I.

### IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT.

‘How shall a man be just with God?’ is surely the most important question which can possibly be conceived. To be beloved by our friends, to be secure from the assaults of our enemies, to stand well with the world, and enjoy the favour of those who possess power and influence, are objects naturally desirable; and, as these things contribute to our happiness on earth, their pursuit, so far as it does not interfere with higher and nobler interests, is reasonable. But when we consider, that our continuance in this world, and our possession of its good things, is only for a short period, and that we are destined to an immortal existence beyond the grave, and are accountable for our conduct while in the body; so that our future happiness or misery will depend upon our character, and be measured by our conduct in this life, all temporal interests vanish into insignificance, in the comparison with those which are eternal. Of what account will it be a million of years hence, what our condition was here, whether we were rich or poor, honourable or despised, happy or miserable; but then, and through eternity, it will be of infinite importance, whether we became reconciled to God and lived humbly and piously while inhabitants of earth. It may indeed be alleged, that God our Maker is infinitely good, and will not deal severely with his erring creatures; and, therefore, we may venture into eternity, entertaining the confident assurance that it will be well with us hereafter. This is, indeed, a plausible and flattering doctrine; and men are much inclined to believe that which affords them present comfort; and it is by no means an agreeable task to disturb that peace which men seem to enjoy, on this ground, but as it is utterly fallacious, duty demands that we should plainly tell them that this is a sandy foundation. If we were innocent, then might we willingly and boldly appear in the presence of our Judge: for no one of his creatures need ever fear that he will treat them with injustice. But if we are all transgressors, the more holy God is, the more reason have we to expect punishment. The hope of

impunity for our sins is always founded on some unworthy conceptions of the divine attributes, unless it has respect to a sufficient atonement. But it is important that we should know as accurately as possible, what the principles are, on which we shall be dealt with by the Judge of all; or, in other words, it is infinitely important to know, how a sinner can appear with acceptance before God. These considerations are sufficient to show, that the doctrine of a sinner's justification, in the sight of God, is fundamental. On some other points error may exist, and yet the state of the person entertaining it may notwithstanding be safe; he may still be in the right way to heaven. But a mistake, as to the method of acceptance with God, must be exceedingly dangerous: it must mislead the inquirer from the way of salvation. Let every man, then, as he regards his own eternal happiness, beware of embracing a false doctrine on this subject. But a sound view of this point is intimately connected with correct opinions on all other articles of primary importance; and an error here, cannot but vitiate the whole system of theology, of which it forms a part. This is a central and a cardinal point in theoretical, as well as practical religion; and the degree of error on other articles, may be inferred, from the degree of departure from the truth, in regard to this. The history of the Christian church, from the days of the apostles, confirms the statement now given. Was any heretic ever known to hold a sound doctrine on justification? Whenever, and whenever, justification by faith, has been given up, obscured, or neglected to be preached, *then* and *there*, other errors have come in like a flood, and true religion has declined. The history of most Protestant churches, for a hundred years past, will furnish a striking commentary on the statement now made. On the other hand, when a real reformation takes place, in any part of the church, the consequence is, a speedy and cordial return to the preaching of this doctrine. How dear it was to the hearts of the reformers is known to all. Luther may truly be said to have laid the foundation for the Reformation, by embracing the scriptural view of justification. He found the need of it in his own deep conviction of sin; but the doctrine itself he discovered in the Bible. Through his whole life, afterwards, he was zealous and uncompromising in its defence. His pithy and striking declaration, that it was "the article of a standing or falling church," has often been cited;\* but another saying

of this great reformer, equally pithy and important, is less known. "The doctrine of justification being lost," says he "the whole system of Christian doctrine is lost."\* Perhaps, the radical error of Popery from which all the rest sprung, was the proud and unscriptural doctrine of human merit, as the ground of our acceptance with God. However this may be, undoubtedly, it was the great end of divine revelation to make known the method by which a sinner may recover the lost favour of God, and secure the pardon of all his sins. And as this doctrine is radical in the Christian system, so it stands out prominently throughout the Bible; and is more especially, the chief subject of the inspired writings of the apostle Paul. His Epistle to the Romans may without impropriety be called a treatise on the gratuitous justification of a sinner before God, with an answer to the most common objections which have in all ages been made against it. And his Epistle to the Galatians is an earnest refutation of the errors of certain false teachers, who inculcated an erroneous doctrine on this point, and had led away the Galatian churches from the truth. Paul considered the new doctrine taught by these Judaizers, as "another gospel," and denounced a curse upon all who preached it, even if it were an angel from heaven. And the receiving such a doctrine, he considered as turning from the Spirit to the flesh; and addresses those who had forsaken the gospel of Christ, for the sake of this legal system, as "bewitched," or infatuated. He represents those who were seeking to be justified by their observance of the ceremonies of the abrogated law, as having fallen from grace; that is, as having abandoned the gospel system of salvation by grace.

It can, therefore, never be a superfluous work, nor unseasonable, to exhibit the Scriptural doctrine of Justification. And this is the object at which we aim in this tract. It cannot be expected that we should discuss all questions which have been started on this point, but only the most important. And we think a short, and plain treatise on this subject, is now called for; because in the preaching of many it is left entirely out of view.

\*"A misso articulo justificationis simul amissa est tota doctrina Christiana."

## SECTION II.

## NATURE OF JUSTIFICATION.

It seems strange that there should be any difference of opinion respecting the meaning of the word justification. Its common popular sense is exactly the same as its scriptural and theological meaning. When we speak of a person being justified, we never think of an internal change, but a declaration of the condition of that person in relation to some law or rule. So, when a particular action is justified, it is declared and shown to be right, or conformable to law. The word *justify* is uniformly the opposite of the word *condemn*. When a man is condemned no change is effected by the act on his real character, but he is declared to be a transgressor, and obnoxious to the penalty of some law; so when a person is justified, no new moral qualities or dispositions are communicated by that act, but he is merely declared to be acquitted from every charge which may have been brought against him, and to have complied with the requisitions of the law by which his conduct is tried.

In the Bible, the word is used in the same way, almost uniformly. There are few cases, if any, in which it can be supposed to have a different meaning; and these must be considered as exceptions to the general rule, in which the word is used out of its proper signification. The use of the word in Scripture, will be evident from the following examples, "Thou shalt justify the righteous and condemn the wicked." (Deut. xxv. 1.) Here it is too evident to require a word of explanation, that, to *justify* is the opposite of, to *condemn*; and that both are the sentence of a judge declaring the state or condition of persons in relation to the law. Again, "If I justify myself, my own mouth will condemn me." (Job ix. 20.) That is, if I declare myself free from sin, my own mouth will condemn me; where again, to *justify* and to *condemn*, are placed in opposition to each other. But the following example from Proverbs, will serve to show the true sense of this term most distinctly. "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord," (Prov. xvii. 15.) Here, it would be most absurd to suppose, that by justifying the wicked was to be understood, the infusion of justice, or any communication of moral qualities; for that, instead of being an abomination to the Lord,

would be an excellent act: it would be making a bad man good.

The true import of the word when justification is the act of God, may be learned from Paul, where he asks, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth." (Rom. viii. 33.) Here the contrast is between laying a charge against the elect and justifying them. It is, however, the same as if it had been said, who will condemn God's elect, when he justifies them?

Notwithstanding the meaning of this word is so evident, yet the Romanists insist, that its true meaning is, not merely to absolve from guilt, but to *infuse righteousness* into the soul. This is not merely the opinion of some of their writers, but of the whole body. The Council of Trent discussed this subject at great length, and deliberately decreed a number of canons in relation to it, in which they completely confound justification with regeneration and sanctification. They declare that justification is not the remission of sins alone, but the "sanctification and renovation of the inner man;" and they pronounce an anathema upon all who maintain that justification cannot be increased by good works. In support of this opinion, they refer to several passages of Scripture; which, however, when rightly interpreted, bring no aid to their cause. They cite the words of Paul, "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified," (Rom. viii. 30.) The argument is, that in this chain of saving benefits, running from eternity to eternity, it cannot be supposed that the Apostle has omitted the renovation or sanctification of the soul; but if this is included it must be comprehended under justification. But whilst we admit, that this great blessing of the New Covenant is not omitted, we maintain that it is fully included, not under justification, with which it is never confounded, but under "calling" and "glorification." The calling here spoken of, is the effectual, holy calling, by which God by his grace draws sinful men to himself, and which is the commencement of the work of sanctification, and glorification is the consummation of this internal work of grace; for what glory can there be without perfect holiness, without which no man can see the Lord.

Another text on which the defenders of this opinion rely, is, "Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. vi. 11.) But surely

this can prove nothing to their purpose ; for the Apostle here expressly mentions sanctification ; and to suppose that he includes the same under the word justification, is an unnecessary and gratuitous supposition. He does, indeed, ascribe the whole of the great change which the Corinthians had undergone, to the Holy Spirit ; but this divine agent is instrumental in justification as well as sanctification ; for, by his operation, faith is produced, by which justification takes place. There is, therefore, not a shadow of evidence from this text, that justification and sanctification signify the same thing ; or that they should, in any respect, be confounded ; although it is admitted, that these two benefits of the covenant of grace are always conjoined, and are ever contemporaneous ; so that he who is justified, is at the same time renovated ; and he who is renewed is justified ; but they are, nevertheless, perfectly distinct.

But the passage of Scripture on which they place most reliance is, “ He that is unjust let him be unjust still—and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still—and he that is holy, let him be holy still,” (Rev. xxiii. 11.) The phrase, “ he that is righteous let him be righteous still,” might be rendered with propriety, “ he that is justified let him be justified still.” But there is nothing in the text thus interpreted to induce us to depart from the usual meaning of the word “ justify.” Why may it not mean, he that is now justified let him continue in a justified state ? Why should we suppose that inherent holiness is intended, when that idea is strongly expressed in another part of the verse, “ he that is holy let him be holy still.” There is no necessity of admitting, that an increase of justification is here signified. There is nothing said of increase, but only of continuance. There is, however, good reason to believe, that the common reading of this text in our Greek Testaments, is not the correct reading. According to the best authorities, the text should be read, “ he that is righteous, let him do righteousness.” This correction Griesbach has received into his edition of the Greek Testament, which Dr. Owen had defended as the true reading of the passage, long before.

Sometimes the words in Isaiah have been adduced, “ By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.”—But by his knowledge, in this place, we should understand the “ Gospel,” which is the knowledge of Christ, or “ faith which is nearly identical with the knowledge of Christ. By the knowledge of himself, by means of the Gospel, or by the instrumentality of faith, shall my righteous servant justify

many : and the true import of the passage is cleared of all doubt by the reason assigned in the following words, “for he shall bear their iniquities.” The true import of the word “justify” seems to have been corrupted among the Romanists, when the Latin Vulgate alone was taken as the guide ; for the Latin word, from which our English term is derived, taken aside from its use seems to carry with it the signification, not of declaring, but making a man just ; but in the original terms, both in the Hebrew and Greek, there is no ambiguity. The words express uniformly the sense which we have put on them ; that is, they mean, to *account*, to *esteem*, to *declare* a person to be just or righteous, and never to make a man just or righteous by the infusion of grace. Justification and Sanctification should, therefore, be carefully distinguished, although they should never be separated. The difference between these two benefits which arise from union with Christ, is well expressed in the answer to the 77th Question, in our Larger Catechism. “Although sanctification be inseparably joined with justification, yet they differ, in that, God in justification imputeth the righteousness of Christ, in sanctification his Spirit infuseth grace, and enableth the exercise thereof: in the former, sin is pardoned, in the other, it is subdued: the one doth equally free all believers from the avenging wrath of God, and that perfectly in this life, that they never fall into condemnation: the other is neither equal in all, nor in this life perfect in any, but growing up to perfection.”

There is another error respecting the import of the term “justification,” which, while it admits that the word is forensic or declarative, maintains that it means the forgiveness of sin, and nothing more. This error is current among Protestants, being embraced and defended by the Arminians, and Hopkinsians, generally. But as this error will be brought fully under consideration, hereafter, we will dismiss all further consideration of the meaning of the term in this place, and proceed to inquire into the true ground of a sinner’s justification in the sight of God.

### SECTION III.

#### JUSTIFICATION BY THE LAW IMPOSSIBLE.

When we assert that justification by the law is impossible, we do not mean to say, that this was always the case ; or



that this method of justification was not a good and reasonable one. Indeed, to innocent creatures, it is the only reasonable method of justification; and we suppose, that God's creatures, who have retained their original state, have obtained justification in this way alone. And when man was created and placed under a law, his obedience through the prescribed period of probation would have secured his own justification, and that of all those represented by him. While Adam continued in his original integrity, he was free from all condemnation; but it could not with propriety be said that he was then justified; for justification is the sentence of the judge declaring that the law has been fully obeyed; but in his case, the time had not arrived for pronouncing the sentence of justification, before he sinned. When any creature is put on probation, for a certain period, he cannot be justified until that period of perfect obedience is completed. There is a difference, therefore, between an innocent and a justified person. All moral agents are created in the image of God, that is, in a state of conformity to the holy law of God; and it is more than probable, that all such creatures are put on probation as soon as created; and as the goodness of God leads him to prescribe a limited time of trial, a sentence of justification cannot take place until this period is ended, and the required obedience rendered without failure. When justification takes place, either on the principles of law or grace, we suppose that the creatures who have finished their course of obedience are confirmed in a state of favour; they will be forever preserved from falling into condemnation. The angels who remained obedient were once as liable to fall, as those who kept not their first estate; but now their probation is ended; their justification is perfect, and they are no longer on trial, but "elect," confirmed forever in their holy and happy state. And if man had continued in his obedience, he would have obtained not only justification, but confirmation; and that for all included in him, in the covenant of works. And upon the same principles, all who are united to Christ, and justified by his righteousness, are no longer in a state of probation: the trial is over; the justifying righteousness has been rendered, and imputed to them; and they are no more liable to fall into condemnation, but are in a condition of perfect safety, "kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation."

As justification is the sentence of a judge declaring the true condition of a person, in relation to the law, it becomes necessary to inquire, what law it is which is the rule of judgment in pronouncing a creature just; or in condemning him, for

want of obedience. In a human court the judge is bound to proceed in his judgments according to the law of the land, and when a person has been arraigned, and found to have been guilty of no failure of obedience in the matters charged against him, he is acquitted ; or, in other words, is justified. So, when God pronounces sentence upon any one, it will be strictly according to his own righteous law. This is sometimes called the law of nature, as it arises out of the natural relations which subsist between God and the creature ; and because it is written on the heart of man, or interwoven with the principles of his constitution, as a moral agent. This law requires us to love God with all the heart, mind, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves. That is, it requires a perfect exercise of all our faculties and powers, in conformity to the will of God. It binds us to every thing which God commands, however his will may be made known. It is not necessary, therefore, to make any distinction here, between moral and positive laws. The moral obligation extends to all that God commands ; and if he were to institute a thousand positive duties, they would all be morally obligatory on the same principles that what are called moral duties are binding. Every law requires perfect obedience to itself, and it requires no more. This, indeed, is a mere truism ; for it would be a contradiction to say, that perfect obedience was not required by any law whatever ; for if not required, then it could not be obedience. The idea of a law being satisfied by an imperfect obedience is utterly absurd.

Now, if the law be holy, just, and good, and every way adapted to man's constitution, why may he not obtain justification by the law ? Paul has given the reason, " For what the law could not do in that it was weak, through the flesh." The fault is not in the law, but in the fallen sinful nature of man. The same Apostle testifies, in another place, " That which was ordained unto life I found to be unto death." One transgression of the law renders justification by it as impossible as a million. God, who cannot lie, never can pronounce him to be free from guilt and liable to no charge who has, in a single instance, disobeyed. Man fell under the curse by one transgression ; and it is probable that the same was the fact in regard to the angels, who kept not their first estate. Those whom the law charges with sin, it can never justify. To suppose the contrary would imply a contradiction. The Apostle Paul assigns, as the reason why no man could be justified by the law, that " by the law is the knowledge of sin." As though he had said, the law demonstrates

that all men are sinners, therefore, it is evident, that it never can justify those whom at the same time it condemns. His words are, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." That righteousness, therefore, which justifies the sinner, is said to be "without the law;" that is, without respect to our obedience to the law, for in justifying a sinner upon any plan, it is impossible that God should pay no regard to his own law. This righteousness which equally justifies Jews and Gentiles is by faith, not by works. And it must be so, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The apostle then declares that we are justified gratuitously, by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. That which is free or gratuitous, is, without our works; "For to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt." (Rom. iv. 4.) And he reasons, that unless there had been provided some other righteousness than our own, God could not have been just in justifying him that believeth in Jesus. It would be an unrighteous act to pronounce him just, who has sinned, and come short of the glory of God, if Christ had not been set forth as a propitiation for our sins, and thus provided for us a complete righteousness. And this method of justification which God has devised and made known, is so contrived as to exclude all boasting. "By what law? Of works? nay; but by the law of faith." "Therefore, we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." And the method of justification is the same to Jews and Gentiles; "Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith."

#### SECTION 4.

THE ABOVE DECLARATIONS OF PAUL RELATE TO ALL WORKS OF EVERY KIND.

To evade the plain testimonies of Scripture, which have been adduced, some have maintained, that the only works which the apostle excludes from being any ground of justification, are works in obedience to the ceremonial law, or the Mosaic rites, on which the Pharisees depended for salvation; but that it was no part of his design to exclude good works of a moral or evangelical kind.

In answer to this objection, it may be remarked, first, that

what is assumed in it cannot be true, because the inspired writer assures us, that what he said on this subject related to Gentiles as much as Jews; but we know, that the Mosaical rites were not given to the Gentiles, and they, therefore, could not trust in the ceremonial law, or boast themselves in works of this kind.

Again, the sins which the apostle enumerates to prove, that both Gentiles and Jews were all guilty before God, are all transgressions of the moral law, as may be seen in the first and third chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. It was a law which was not to be abrogated, but established by the Christian dispensation, which was not true in regard to the ceremonial law. It was that law by which is the knowledge of sin, and which said "thou shalt not covet," that law which is "spiritual"—which was ordained unto life, but now was found to be unto death, all which things agree to the moral law, but not at all to the ceremonial law, "which was a shadow of good things to come, and was now ready to vanish away." To which we may add, that all works are excluded of which men might boast; but they will be as much disposed to boast of moral, as ceremonial works, therefore the apostle excludes those as well as these. And finally, there is no just ground for this distinction, in regard to an obedience which is to be the ground of justification. Ceremonial or positive duties, commanded by God, are as truly binding until abrogated, as duties of the other class, and when rightly performed, they are as truly acceptable to God. Indeed, in essence, what is called a ceremonial duty, is moral, and the act as really, and truly holy as any other act, when performed, as it should be, from love to God, and with a view to his glory. If, therefore, our own works of any kind, were a proper ground of justification these should be included. And as to imperfection, it cleaves to moral duties as much as to positive. It is evident, therefore, that there is no just ground for the opinion, that when the apostle declared, 'that by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified,' he meant ceremonial works only.

Another evasion is, that the works excluded by Paul from having any part in our justification before God, are "dead works," done by an unregenerate person; or such works as the Papists affirm may be performed by free-will before grace is received. To which it may be replied, that there is not a word in all that the apostle has written on this subject, which gives the least countenance to this opinion. There was no need to asseverate with so much emphasis and so repeatedly that

*dead works*, or those which are not holy, or genuine acts of obedience, cannot procure justification. But as this false opinion is not much insisted on at present, at least among Protestants, it may be dismissed without further discussion, with this single remark, that it will be demonstrated in the sequel, that the most holy obedience of the most holy men forms no part of that righteousness by which they are justified in the sight of God; and this will show that all the works of men of every kind are excluded in the business of a sinner's justification.

### SECTION V.

THE ACT OF FAITH IS NOT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS THE GROUND OF OUR JUSTIFICATION IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.

The theory of justification which considers the act of believing the ground of our acceptance with God is, perhaps, the most plausible of any of the erroneous schemes of justification, for the single reason that it has the appearance of scriptural support. This is pure Arminianism, as held and inculcated by Arminius himself; also by Limborch, and by Whitby. The foundation of this theory is found in Gen. xv. 6. "And he, (Abraham) believed in the LORD, and he counted it to him for righteousness." Which is cited by Paul when discoursing on justification. "For what saith the Scripture, Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." This theory has the advantage too of seeming to agree with those texts which assert that we are justified by faith. The great difficulty in this plan of justification is, that it represents God as reckoning or imputing for righteousness, that which is not a righteousness, commensurate with the demands of the law. This they say he does by a gracious *acceptation*; receiving in favour, *that*, as a complete righteousness, which considered in itself, is not such. That a single act, and that an imperfect one, should be judged to be a complete justifying righteousness, is to ascribe to God an erroneous judgment; or, as grounding his judicial acts upon a supposition acknowledged to be false, which is a doctrine that never can be admitted. It is inconsistent both with truth and righteousness. It is maintained, indeed, that Christ by his death has merited the right of establishing a new covenant upon terms adapted to the present condition of men; for they hold, that the power of believing in Christ was not lost

by the fall, as not being a blessing included in the first covenant. But if the sinner may be justified before God by a single act of faith, instead of a perfect obedience to the law, why might not that have been done without resorting to so costly a sacrifice? The death of Christ, however meritorious, can never render it proper in the divine government, to consider things different from what they really are.

It is also a solid objection to this theory, that while Paul sets up an entire opposition between faith and works, faith according to Arminius, is the greatest of all works, being, in fact, a substitute for all obedience. If faith itself is our justifying righteousness, then it justifies as a work as truly as any other works could. And as the express design of this gratuitous method of justification was utterly to exclude boasting, upon this theory that end cannot be attained; because if a man is justified on account of the act of believing, and that act he can perform by the power of free will, he has as much ground of boasting as he could possibly have, if he had been justified by other works.

It is also an objection that the faith of God's elect being exceedingly different in strength, it would seem to follow, that those believers who exercised a strong faith would possess a more perfect justification than those who had a true but feeble exercise of faith. On account of these difficulties, and to take advantage of what is said in Scripture of justification by works, the modern Arminians have abandoned the scheme so far as it confines the righteousness which is the ground of our justification to faith alone; and under the name *faith*, or in connexion with it, include the whole of evangelical obedience.

## SECTION VI.

### JUSTIFICATION IN THE SIGHT OF GOD IS NOT BY EVANGELICAL OBEDIENCE IN WHOLE, OR IN PART.

By evangelical obedience is meant that obedience which flows from a genuine faith, or those good works which are the fruit of regeneration.

We are ready to admit; yea, we strenuously maintain, that such obedience is connected with justification, and furnishes the only Scriptural evidence that we are in a justified state. But two things may be inseparably conjoined, as blessings of the covenant of grace, and yet, may be perfectly distinct. It would, in our opinion, be much nearer the truth to

say, that evangelical obedience was the fruit and consequence of our justification, than that evangelical obedience is the condition of our justification. The truth is, our persons must be accepted in Christ before we can perform any evangelical works; and these works when performed, can only be accepted as the sincere obedience of those whose persons are already accepted in Christ; that is, who are already justified. Besides the positive testimonies of the word of God, that justification is not by the deeds of the law, nor by works of righteousness which we have done, there are two fatal objections to this theory of justification; the first has already been brought into view; and if justification takes place when the sinner believes, it is manifestly unanswerable. It is, that we are fully justified before we have performed one act of evangelical obedience, except believing in Christ. That which comes after and proceeds from another thing, can never be its cause.

The other objection is equally conclusive, which is, that our evangelical obedience in this life is always imperfect, and an imperfect righteousness never can be the ground of a sentence of justification, pronounced by an infinitely righteous Judge.

To which may be added what has been already observed, that this theory destroys the strong opposition which Paul institutes between works and faith. According to this scheme, justification is as much by works as it can be on any other. Paul declares that it is not by the deeds of the law—not by works of righteousness which we have done. To him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned of grace but of debt.—“We are justified freely, by grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus,” therefore not by our own evangelical obedience. And by this scheme, all boasting is not excluded, as the ground of our justification is, our own works.

The adherence to a covenant of works, under which man was created, is so strong, that it is exceedingly difficult to induce him to seek life in any other way. Reason seems to dictate, that this must be the method of acceptance, to obey and live; and conscience, unenlightened by grace, urges to the same course. Every man, when first awakened, is ready to inquire, “What must I *do* to inherit eternal life?” And it is necessary in order to convince men of their helplessness, to urge the demands of the law; to tell sinners, as our Saviour did the rich, young ruler, “keep the commandments.” We need not be surprised, therefore, that men guided by carnal reason, and whose pride is not sufficiently humbled, turn

themselves every way to avoid the necessity of receiving the humbling doctrine of salvation by grace, without any dependence on their own works, legal or evangelical.

The objections which have been urged against evangelical obedience, as our justifying righteousness, have been at tempted to be evaded by some one of the following methods.

First, by maintaining that there is a twofold justification; the first by faith, when the sinner believes; the second by works, when he has performed them; and especially, when he is judged according to his works, at the last day. But if our evangelical obedience is truly the ground of our justification, what is called the first justification is no justification at all. How can a man be justified until the obedience is rendered which constitutes his justifying righteousness? If a man become truly justified in the sight of God, he needs no second justification. As the sentence of justification includes a full pardon and acceptance of the person, what more in the way of justification can he want, or possess?

There may be, and is, a manifestation of the justified state of the believer, both in this world before men, when he shows his faith by his works; and at the day of judgment, when his works of piety and mercy shall be brought forth to view, to prove that he is one of Christ's brethren; and that his future reward may be equitably apportioned according to the number and excellence of the good works performed in the body. But I repeat it again, there cannot be a twofold justification of the sinner, unless the first should be annulled; because it comprehends every thing, if it be a true justification, which can be included in this act. When a man is pardoned, and adopted as a child of God, and made an heir of the heavenly inheritance, and a joint-heir with Christ, how can he, as to the law, and as to his title to eternal life, receive any thing more by a second justification?

This being a plain case, and not easily got over, some have said that we were justified by faith, and kept in a justified state by good works. But this is a way of talking so foreign to the Scriptures, and resorted to by so few in our days, that we have no need to stop to refute it.

A more consistent method of evading the difficulty is to maintain, as is done by Dr. Macknight, that there is properly no such thing as justification before the day of judgment; and when the word is used in relation to the present state, it is to be understood as not employed in its strict and proper sense. Now this is consistent. The only objection to the theory is, that it is as directly contradictory to the whole



tenor of Scripture, on this subject, as any thing can be. Never for the sake of a consistent theory did any man set himself in opposition to a greater array of plain and pointed texts. There is no system which was ever conceived, that may not as easily be sustained as this. Where, according to this scheme, are the high and glorious privileges of true Christians, of which the apostles speak in terms so exalted? But we will not condescend to reason this point. It carries its own refutation on its front, and therefore needs none from us; and accordingly has had few advocates. Since we have mentioned the peculiar opinion of this learned man, we will further observe, that by *works of law* by which no flesh can now be justified, he understands, a perfect obedience to the law, which none can now perform; but by faith, as opposed to this perfect obedience, he understands, a gratuitous justification, on account of our imperfect obedience; the former would be meritorious; but this being only a sincere but imperfect obedience can give no claim, on the ground of merit; and therefore the counting this as a righteousness, is a matter of grace or favour, because it might have been withheld.\*

The whole force of the objection against a sentence of justification being founded on an imperfect righteousness, lies against this scheme; and the argument need not be repeated.

To obviate this objection, which every one that understands the terms, must admit to have decisive force, two methods have been resorted to; or perhaps, they may both be reduced to one. It has been supposed, and is now strenuously maintained by a large society who deny the imputation of Christ's righteousness as the ground of a sinner's justification, that the law of innocence, or the law given to Adam and to angels, in a state of integrity, is not now in force; but that a milder law, better adapted to the fallen condition of man, has been introduced by Christ, the Mediator: so that now under the Gospel, the old moral law is not the rule of judgment in the justification of a sinner, but God, through the grace of Christ, accepts of obedience to the evangelical law, or "law of liberty." Our first remark on this scheme is, that it is repugnant to first principles in theology. The moral law is in principle and in the nature of the obedience which it requires, immutable. This law arising out of the relations which subsist between God and his accountable creature, can never be abrogated, nor changed; unless you

\* See Dr. Macknight's Essay on Justification, prefixed to his Translation of the Epistle to the Galatians.

could conceive of a change in God. It must remain eternally the same. It is God's published rule of government; and to suppose a change, would be to suppose his whole moral government altered.

The second remark, on this theory is, that we read of no such relaxed or mitigated law in Scripture. Some, indeed, have supposed that Christ added to the moral law, and made it more spiritual and perfect; but this is also a mistake. Christ expounded the law, and inculcated its true nature and spirituality; but every where he recognizes the same law as that given to the people by Moses, and summarily comprehended in the ten commandments. But to suppose that he came to relax the law, so that it might require less love and obedience, is far more revolting. It is, indeed, a refined system of Antinomianism. If the moral law could be relaxed in its demands, it might be removed altogether, and then there would be no need of justification.

But we ask to know precisely, what this new law is? What are its requirements? If we are not bound to love God with all the heart, and mind, and strength, what degree of love and obedience are now required? The answer to such questions has never been given; and cannot be given. It is loosely said, that repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, accompanied with Gospel obedience, are the things required to our justification. But still we ask, must these duties be perfect; or does any man repent as perfectly as he ought, or believe as firmly and constantly as he ought? If not, then we are in the same difficulty as if we were under the moral law; that is, an imperfect obedience to the Gospel is made the ground of our justification. The relaxation of the law, as to this objection, therefore, answers no purpose. We must have a perfect righteousness, to authorize a just judge to pronounce a sentence of justification.

This brings us up to the second method of obviating the objection, which is, to maintain the doctrine of perfection, or pardon from all sin, in this life. This doctrine has not only been maintained by fanatics, but by many others; and, indeed, is essential to this scheme of justification, by obedience to the new law of grace. For if we cannot render a perfect righteousness to this mitigated law, we might as well have remained under the old Adamic law. If an imperfect obedience to the Gospel is sufficient to justify, an imperfect obedience to the law might have done the same. It seems a necessary part of this scheme, therefore, that our obedience, in order to win justification, should be perfect. But though

this inference seems plain enough, there remain some formidable difficulties in the way. As first, even if perfection be attainable in this life, it is admitted that it is the privilege of few to possess it. How then can the many who remain imperfect be justified, by a law, to which they have not rendered a complete obedience? This is not all. When we stand before God in judgment, we must account for the actions of our whole lives, and even those who are supposed to have arrived at perfection, reached this point, after years of sin and imperfection, by whatever law you judge them. If a saint becomes perfect at the last hour of life, will an hour's perfect obedience answer the demands of the law for a whole life? Surely not. Then, we see that even the doctrine of perfection, if all attained it, would not remove the difficulty. The truth is, it cannot be removed.

Those in New England, who claim for themselves, peculiarly, the denomination of "Hopkinsians," but who are more properly the disciples of Dr. Emmons, maintain a doctrine on the subject of justification, as well as on some other points, which among Protestants, is new and somewhat startling. They hold, if we understand their views, that Christ, as Mediator, did nothing else for our salvation, but by his sufferings make an atonement for our sins. They reject entirely his righteousness as imputed for justification, and teach, that while believing penitents receive the remission of all their sins, through Christ's atonement, they acquire a title to eternal life by their own obedience; which they do not hesitate to say is meritorious; or deserves the reward which is bestowed on them. Still they maintain, that all Christians upon earth are imperfect in holiness; but their notion of this imperfection is, that it does not consist in any deficiency in the particular acts or exercises of holiness; each of which they suppose to be as perfect as it can be, but in the intermixture of sinful acts. Their opinion is, that an act cannot be partly sinful and partly holy, but must be either the one or the other, entirely. Hence it follows, that if all the sinful actions be forgiven through the atonement, the holy acts, which are perfectly conformed to the law, will merit the promised rewards of obedience. This theory is connected with other peculiar and novel opinions, but as it is evidently on the wane, it will be unnecessary to enter into any discussion of the doctrine of justification as held by its abettors. Properly speaking, according to this theory, though believers obtain pardon in this life, they are not justified until their course of obedience is completed. Their title to eternal life is acquired by their own

works ; and their obedience must be finished before the title is secured.

If that part of the system, which supposes all holy acts to be perfectly holy, could be sustained, there would be something plausible in the theory. But it is not more a matter of conscious certainty, that we have sinful exercises, than that our holy affections are deficient in their intensity. When we feel reverence for God, is the emotion as deep as it should be? Who among men, ever loved Christ, for one moment, as fervently as he ought? When we feel gratitude for the divine goodness, are we ever as thankful in degree, as we should be? Every one must answer these questions for himself; the appeal can only be made to experience. But the opinion, it is probable, arose out of the theory, and the origin of the error, as we must esteem it, is to be traced to incorrect views of the nature of sin; which they make to consist only in positive acts. But if sin may consist also in *defect*, and if this be truly the origin and formal nature of sin, as almost all sound divines have held, then, while there is sincere love to God, the affection may not, in intensity, be as strong as it should be. And that this is the real state of the case may be known by an appeal to our own consciousness.

## SECTION VII.

JUSTIFICATION DOES NOT CONSIST MERELY IN THE PARDON OF OUR SINS, BUT ALSO IN THE ACCEPTANCE OF OUR PERSONS AS RIGHTEOUS.

This discussion might with propriety have come under the head of the "*Nature of Justification*," which involved the true meaning of the word; and there, the subject was adverted to; but as this is a main point in our controversy with the Arminians, the consideration of it has been reserved for this place. The object, doubtless is, to get rid of the imputation of Christ's active obedience; for if justification is nothing more than the pardon of sin, then, manifestly, there is no necessity for the righteousness of Christ, properly so called. In defence of their opinion, they allege, that the Scriptures speak of justification and pardon as the same thing; and that the law cannot, at the same time, have a two-fold claim on the sinner both for suffering and obedience. It is their opinion, that, if we obey the law, we are not bound to endure the

penalty ; so, if we suffer the penalty there can be no demand for obedience, for the time past. This, therefore, may be considered a cardinal point in this controversy. If we cannot overthrow the Arminian foundation as now exhibited, we shall fail in establishing the doctrine of our standards. But we feel a strong confidence that we have truth on our side, and if it should not be fully vindicated, it should be attributed to the unskilfulness of the advocate who has undertaken its defence.

Deliverance from the guilt of sin is that which the convicted sinner is led most earnestly to seek. There can of course be no justification of the person unless sin is pardoned, for unpardoned sin is a state of condemnation. Justification must, of necessity, therefore, include the forgiveness of sins. And as this is the blessing first sought, and most needed, the whole effect and consequences of Christ's mediatorial work, while under the law, is often expressed by the "remission of sins ;" and the blessings procured by the active obedience of Christ are in these cases to be understood as included. Just as in the expiatory sufferings of Christ, in common, nothing but his blood is mentioned ; whereas his most bitter and oppressive sufferings were in his soul, without bodily wounds. But though it is very common to comprehend the whole of the blessings purchased by Christ by the remission of sins ; yet in other passages other blessings are expressly mentioned. Indeed, every passage in which Christ's mediatorial work is designated by the word *righteousness*, ought to be considered as inculcating the doctrine that he fulfilled the law for *us* by his active obedience. But as this point will be fully discussed in the sequel, it is unnecessary to say more in this place.

The pardon of sin alone, can with no propriety be denominated justification. Pardon and justification are not only distinct, but in common cases, utterly incompatible. A culprit tried and condemned, may among men be pardoned, but it would be a solecism to say, that such a man was justified. Pardon supposes that the law has been broken, and its penalty incurred ; justification supposes, that upon trial, the person arraigned is found to have complied with all the demands of the law. The same incompatibility would exist between pardon and justification, in regard to the sinner, under the Gospel, if nothing took place but a mere remission of past sins. The name justification, in that case could not have been properly used. But by the plan of Salvation through Christ, there is not only a ground for pardon, but

there is rendered to the law a **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, which lays the foundation for an act of justification. By pardon, the sinner is freed from condemnation, by justification, he is entitled to the heavenly inheritance. This, Christ has purchased for him, by his perfect obedience, unto death.

But the dispute is not merely about the propriety or impropriety of a term; there are important principles involved in this controversy. We maintain, that the law when violated has a double claim on the transgressor. It still retains its original demand of obedience, of which he never can divest himself; and it now binds him over to the endurance of the penalty. To suppose that suffering the penalty, is an equivalent for obedience, and entitles to the same rewards is extremely absurd. It would be to suppose that Jehovah who loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity, would be as well pleased with sin, accompanied with its due punishment, as with perfect obedience to his own most holy law. The enduring a penalty in his own person, or by another, never can entitle any one to any thing else than exemption from that which he has already endured. To illustrate this principle by a familiar case, let us suppose a law enacted in the state, which promises an inheritance to him who shall obey it without one failure, but threatens ten years imprisonment to him who shall transgress its precepts: a person under this law incurs the penalty, and suffers his ten years in prison. When this is suffered, has he the same rights and claims, as if he had rendered an unsinning obedience? Would any man in his sober senses believe, that when he came out of the penitentiary, he had as good a right to the promised inheritance, as the citizen who had perfectly obeyed the law? And if the penalty were endured by a substitute, the effect would be the same. If a surety would secure the inheritance for him, he must obey the law in his stead, as well as suffer its penalty. Hence it appears evident, that justification includes more than merely the remission of sins, or it would be no justification; and although pardon is included in justification; yet the transaction receives this denomination not from the forgiveness of sin, but from the imputation of righteousness, by which the believer is constituted righteous; and by which a title to eternal life is procured for him by the merit of his surety.

Justification, therefore, is not merely the forgiveness of sin, but in addition to this, a declaration that the justified person has a right to the blessings promised. He not only obtains deliverance from the sentence of condemnation, but instantly

is constituted an heir of God,—a joint-heir with Christ to the heavenly inheritance.

### SECTION VIII.

#### THE ONLY MERITORIOUS GROUND OF A SINNER'S JUSTIFICATION IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST.

By the righteousness of Christ, we mean, all that he did and suffered to satisfy the broken law of God, for those whose salvation he undertook to secure. It has been shown, that the law has a double demand upon the sinner, both of which must be satisfied before a sentence of justification can righteously be pronounced. But although the law has these two demands, the one for suffering on account of the penalty incurred, and the other for perfect obedience in order to obtain a right to the promised reward; yet it is not necessary, to attempt curiously to distinguish between obedience and suffering in the satisfaction of Christ; for as has been correctly observed by Dr. Owen and others, 'in suffering he obeyed, and in obeying he suffered.' It is sufficient, that we find in him, a full satisfaction both to the penal and preceptive requisitions of the law. As the law requires perfect holiness in the nature of man; so Christ's nature was holy. He was in all respects like other men, except that he had no stain of original sin on his soul. He was without sin—"undefiled," in infancy a perfectly holy child. His actions during every stage of his life, and in all the circumstances and relations in which he stood, were perfectly conformable to the precepts of the law. And as he performed every duty which it enjoined, so he abstained from every thing forbidden in thought, word, and deed. The eye of a holy God saw in him no sin, original or actual; neither of omission or commission; neither in the secret purposes and imaginations of the heart, nor in his external conduct and conversation. In his obedience the law was magnified and made honourable. He furnished the best exposition of the law in his public teaching, and what he inculcated, he exemplified, and illustrated in his whole life, from the beginning to the end. He performed all moral duties in relation to God and man with undeviating correctness, and attended on all the positive institutions, then in force. In childhood he was circumcised; when of sufficient age he attended on the stated institutions of the Mosaic religion; and

as God had commissioned John to baptize the people for the remission of sins, he came and was baptized in Jordan; giving as a reason, that it became him “to fulfil all righteousness;” that is, as he had placed himself under the law, it behoved him to render obedience to all that the law commanded. But it is evident, that he could neither be circumcised or baptized for the removal of any impurity from himself; neither could he join in the sacrifices which were daily offered, with any relation to his own person; but whatever the law enjoined upon others *that* he performed; thus rendering an obedience such as they had failed to perform.

It has been objected, that if Christ obeyed the law for us, he should perform the identical acts which every one for whom he obeyed was bound to perform, but this was impossible, because he did not sustain all the relations which they sustained. He could not perform the duties of a father, of a husband or wife, of a servant, of a magistrate, &c., therefore he could not render an obedience which would satisfy the law for us.

This objection is founded on very contracted views of the subject. When one places himself under a law, to render an obedience in behalf of another, it is no how necessary that he should perform the very same external duties. These vary in the same person, with every change of circumstances. What the law requires is a perfect obedience, and such an obedience must arise out of the existing relations of the person performing it. It is a matter of no consequence what the particular external acts of obedience may be, the only question is, are they conformable to the demands of the law under which the substitute is placed. But the objection most commonly insisted on against the active obedience of Christ as a necessary part of our justifying righteousness, from Socinus downward, is, that he owed obedience for himself, and therefore could perform no works of supererogation, which can be applied to the benefit of others. Socinians may with some propriety urge this objection, because they think that Christ was no more than man; and it is admitted that every mere creature is bound to obedience for himself, to the utmost extent of his powers. But it is a matter of grief to find men claiming to be orthodox, and who are so, so far as relates to the person of the Mediator, borrowing this often refuted objection of heretics.

In answer, we say, that Christ, though he must be holy, was under no necessity to place himself under the obligation of any law made for mere creatures. The obedience which



Christ rendered, though performed in his human nature, was the obedience of the God-man, the obedience of him who is Lord of lords and King of kings. It could not be that He, whom all the angels of God are commanded to worship, should be subject to the law, except so far as he voluntarily placed himself under it. Indeed, the human nature of our Lord is not a distinct person. This nature never was any other than a constituent part of the divine person of the Mediator. Besides, his putting himself under the law was not to gain any thing for himself, but to obey for us. If it be said, that having taken upon him the obligation of the law, his obedience was due; we answer yes, it was due for the end which he had in view in placing himself under the law; that is to obey, for his covenanted people. And if that voluntary obligation would render it impossible that his obedience should be for the justification of others, the very same objection would lie against his suffering for others; because in the covenant of redemption he took on himself an obligation to suffer as much as he did to obey. It might then with just as much propriety be said, that he suffered for himself, because by his own engagement he was bound to suffer, as that he obeyed for himself.

The principle may be illustrated by a memorable fact in Ecclesiastical History. Paulinus, bishop of Nola, in the fifth century, expended all his large estates, in redeeming from captivity his brethren enslaved by the Goths and Visigoths, who had overrun the empire. When his resources were exhausted, a poor widow came to him to represent her sad and destitute condition, in consequence of her only son, on whom she depended, being carried as a slave, into Africa. Paulinus, whose charity seems to have had no limit, immediately went over to Africa, and having found the young man, he entered into an agreement with his master, to take the place of the young man, and become a slave, that he might return to his destitute mother; and, accordingly, he continued under the yoke for some months, until his master happened to discover his high standing, and sent him home. Here then is a case in point. Paulinus was under no obligation to obey this barbarian, until for the redemption of the captive youth, he consented to take his place, and submit to all the hard laws of servitude. But can any one suppose that because he was now bound to obedience he could only perform it for himself? No: the very reason why he took this place and came under this obligation was for another. The case is too plain to need any further explanation.

As the obedience of the Mediator is expressly mentioned as the ground of our justification by Paul, where he says "As by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, (or condemned) so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," (or be justified,) the opposers of the imputation of Christ's active obedience have alleged, that by obedience here, we should not understand his holy life, but his obedience in dying; and they bring up another text, in which it is said he was "obedient unto death," to show that not his general obedience, but a particular act of obedience, namely, in dying for us, is intended. Now, for the sake of argument, conceding all that these contend for, the principle will not be altered. It will still be true, that we are justified by the active obedience of the Mediator. The only difference is, that according to the orthodox doctrine, all his holy acts go to make up his righteousness, by which we are justified; but by this hypothesis, one act of obedience is that by which believers are constituted righteous. But this is a mere hypothesis, having no shadow of proof, except the interpretation of the text in Philippians. The expression "obedient unto death" does not properly signify a single act of obedience in dying; it properly means an obedience continued even unto death; or rather an obedience which did not falter, even when a cruel and accursed death was to be endured. If the apostle had intended to express the idea of a single act of obedience in dying, he would have employed another form of expression. If God cannot be just and justify the ungodly, without a perfect righteousness, as we have in a former part of this treatise endeavoured to show, then the active obedience of Christ must be the ground of this sentence, or no one of Adam's sinful posterity ever can be justified in the sight of God; for there is no other righteousness which is in all respects perfect; for even if perfection were attainable in this life, the perfection of duration would be wanting. He who pleads justification on the ground of perfect obedience, must exhibit such an obedience through the whole course of his life; for the just Judge surveys the whole life of the creature whom he declares to be justified, as has before been shown.

An opinion has lately met with favour among a certain class of American theologians, which we believe to be new. It is, that justification by grace, has no respect to the law whatever. It is a scheme of bringing the sinner into a state of reconciliation without any satisfaction to law or justice. Literally, it is "without law." And this not only respects the active obedience of Christ for his elect people, but his

atonement, which they deny to be an endurance of the penalty of the law; but merely a public exhibition which comes in the place of a legal process. Thus they utterly subvert the righteousness of Christ, as it has hitherto been held by the orthodox. In support of their opinion they plead that a full satisfaction is inconsistent with gratuitous pardon; that none can possibly satisfy the law, either as to its precept or penalty but the sinner himself, because the law has no claim on any other; and that God is not bound by the holiness of his nature, to execute the penalty of the law; and therefore may take the sinner into favour, notwithstanding the demands of the law against him; which demands, they assert, will remain forever unsatisfied, even while the sinner is saved. Yet they maintain, that God could not consistently with the good of the universe pardon sin, without giving a signal exhibition of his dislike to it, and his settled purpose to punish it. On this account, he sent his own well beloved Son to die an ignominious death for sin, that is, to show his views and feelings of its evil nature. By this device, a way is opened for the gratuitous pardon of every one who repents of his sin and believes the Gospel. If asked, whether the sufferings of Christ are *vicarious*, they promptly answer in the affirmative; but when they come to explain their meaning, it is far enough from the orthodox doctrine of substitution, and vicarious satisfaction to the law, in the room of the sinner. It is something entirely different from this legal process, but which comes in the place of it, and is therefore properly called *vicarious*. This is a specimen of *new divinity*, which is now zealously inculcated from the pulpit, and from the press; and that too by men, who have adopted without exception, as their creed, the Confession and Catechisms of our Church!

In refutation of this theory, which is in fact, "another gospel," I have only room for a few remarks.

And the first is, that the word *justification* can have no intelligible meaning, unless it be a sentence according to law. An unjust judge may disregard the law and justify the wicked, and condemn the righteous; but a righteous judge will impartially try every person arraigned before him, by the law of the land, and will pronounce sentence accordingly, justifying the righteous, and condemning the wicked. And God the Judge of all the earth, who is infinitely righteous, will surely never cast his own holy law behind his back, and disregard its demands, when he pronounces a sentence of justification. If he cannot deny himself, he cannot cast dis-

honour upon his own law. Every sentence of justification must be either a just sentence, or an unrighteous sentence; but how can this be determined but by ascertaining whether it is according to law, or the contrary. In this case, it is admitted that it is a sentence contrary to law; which still condemns the sinner. How then can God be just, while he justifies the sinner? It is in vain to allege, that this scheme of pardon answers all the purposes of the penalty of the law; for, if the sinner bound to suffer, is taken away from under the law, without satisfaction to its demands, the law is not only dishonoured, but completely subverted; which is in direct contradiction of what the Lord Jesus Christ asserts, "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil." "I came to magnify the law, and make it honourable." And also in direct opposition to Paul's solemn testimony, where he says, "Do we make void the law through faith, God forbid; yea we establish the law."

Again, the penalty of a holy, violated law, was the only thing which stood in the way. Mere sufferings of any one are of no value, except in relation to some end. The sufferings of Christ could no otherwise open a way of pardon but by removing the penalty of the law; but they could have no tendency to remove the penalty, but by his enduring it. Sufferings not required by law and justice must have been unjust sufferings, and never could effect any good. Such an exhibition could not have the effect of demonstrating God's hatred of sin, for it was not the punishment of sin; nor could it make the impression on the world, that the Ruler of the Universe would hereafter punish sin; for, according to this theory, sin goes unpunished, and dreadful sufferings are inflicted on the innocent to whom no sin is imputed. This scheme as really subverts the true doctrine of atonement, as that of Socinus; and no reason appears, why it was necessary that the person making this exhibition should be a divine person.

But if the righteousness of Christ, consisting of his perfect obedience to the law and of his meritorious sufferings, be the only foundation of a sinner's justification, why do we not find it clearly and repeatedly inculcated in the Scriptures? In answer to this question, we say, that this doctrine is taught in the Bible with abundant perspicuity. As it relates to the vicarious sufferings of the Redeemer, every one who reads the Scriptures will find the doctrine inculcated, every where, and in every form; not merely in words, but by expressive emblematical ceremonies; especially by the bloody sacrifices

of the law. No ingenuity nor sophistry can ever obscure this prominent doctrine of divine revelation. It would seem to be the centre of the whole system; and is equally conspicuous in the Old and the New Testament. Take this doctrine from the Bible, and you have destroyed the whole plan of redemption.

But the difficulty with many does not relate to the expiatory sufferings of Christ for the redemption of his people, but only to the necessity of his active obedience to the law in their behalf. Let us hear, therefore, the testimony of Scripture on this point. Christ says "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy but *to fulfil*," (Matt. v. 17.) In Rom. v. 18, 19, we have this doctrine taught with great clearness, "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Nothing can be more express than this testimony. The righteousness which is here made the ground of justification is explained to be Christ's obedience; and that this is his active obedience is evident, because nothing else can properly be called *righteousness* and *obedience*. All obedience is active. Mere suffering cannot properly be denominated "obedience." It deserves also to be remarked, that this righteousness and obedience are contrasted with the offence and disobedience of Adam, which shows that as by the latter we must understand the breach of the law, by the former we must understand the fulfilment of the law. Another strong proof of our doctrine is contained in Phil. iii. 9, "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." To the same purpose is that in 1 Cor. i. 30. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and *righteousness*, and sanctification, and redemption." Here righteousness being distinguished from sanctification, must relate to our justification; and thus the enumeration of the blessings received through Christ will be complete. He affords his people instruction, furnishes a righteousness for their justification; obtains their sanctification, and finally, their complete and eternal redemption. And in the twenty first verse of the fifth chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, it is written "For he made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the

righteousness of God in him." And in Rom. x. 3, 4. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." What in one place is termed 'God's righteousness,' in the latter verse is described as being produced by Christ's becoming "the end of the law," that is the accomplishment, or fulfilment of the law. And by the prophet Jeremiah the Messiah is emphatically called "JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS," Jer. xxiii. 6.

### SECTION IX.

#### THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST CAN NO OTHERWISE JUSTIFY THE BELIEVER BUT BY BEING IMPUTED TO HIM.

Whatever Christ has done or suffered for our salvation, in order that it may be available to us, must in some way become *ours*, or be set down to our account. That act of God by which this is done, has long been called *imputation*; which is, simply reckoning to us what Christ as Mediator has done, and treating us as though we had done or suffered the same. It is only upon the principle of substitution, that salvation by a Mediator is conceivable or possible. What obstacles stand in the way of the salvation of a sinner? They are twofold, the penalty of the law which denounces a curse upon every one who transgresses, and depravity of nature which incapacitates the creature for enjoying the heavenly inheritance. He who undertakes to save a single soul, must remove both these obstacles. The latter can be removed by divine efficiency alone; but the former requires something more than the mere exertion of power. No exertion of power has any tendency to satisfy the demands of a broken law. The Mediator can remove this obstacle in no other way, as appears to us, but by placing himself under the law, and rendering such an obedience, and enduring such sufferings, as will be satisfactory to divine justice. The lawgiver might, indeed, have insisted on the punishment of the transgressor, and the execution of the law upon him in person. The acceptance of satisfaction from a substitute, is a matter of sovereign grace. No creature could, therefore, have known, that such a plan of mercy was practicable, until God revealed the mystery. But since he has made known his

divine counsel, in regard to this matter, we can see a wisdom in the plan, which is truly astonishing. The Son of God becomes incarnate, obeys the law perfectly in our nature, and to furnish a justifying righteousness for the sinner, &c. subjects himself to the penalty of the law, as an expiation for our sins. The law having thus been fulfilled and honoured God can be just and justify the ungodly who believeth in Jesus. This righteousness is complete, and God is well pleased with the work of the Redeemer; but it can answer no purpose to him, unless it is some how made over to him. The law still charges him with innumerable transgressions, and his legal standing is no how altered by the mere fact that the law has been satisfied by another. That satisfaction must by some means be so connected with him, that his relation to the law shall be changed. If such an appropriation of Christ's work to his benefit cannot be made, as some tell us, then salvation is impossible, and Christ has died in vain. But God has told us that this righteousness may become ours; that he may become our righteousness; and we the righteousness of God in him. He does become the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. But how can his righteousness become ours? How can we be justified by his obedience? In no conceivable way, but by the imputation of his righteousness to us. No part of evangelical doctrine has met with a more determined opposition, than the doctrine of imputation. It has been loaded with reproaches, as a doctrine the most unreasonable, the most dangerous, and the most impious. It is a remarkable circumstance, however, that all the objections which have been made to it are founded on a misapprehension, or a misrepresentation of the true nature of imputation. It has been objected, that it implies the transfer of personal acts, and the communication of the moral character of one to another, which things are manifestly impossible. But this is an entire mistake. Imputation implies no change, whatever, in the inherent character of the person to whom righteousness is imputed; or to speak more correctly, though there is a renovation of nature effected at the same time, this is not by the act of imputation. By this act, the legal relations of the sinner are changed. Whereas, before righteousness was imputed, he was condemned, he is now justified. His guilt, or liability to punishment, is taken away, and the Judge views him as standing fair in the eye of law; not considered in his own righteousness, but as clothed with the righteousness of the SURETY. His debt is cancelled, because another has paid it, and has caused it to be

set to his credit. We might, indeed, express the same idea without employing the word *impute*. No doubt, some, through prejudice against this word, do so; and firmly hold the doctrine, while they reject the language in which it has commonly been expressed. And some are disposed to ask, why be tenacious of a word? Why not avoid its use, since so many are offended by it? To which we answer, 1. Because the term is Scriptural. 2. It is convenient and expressive; we do not know any single word which so exactly expresses the truth, in this matter. 3. Because the opposition to the phrase is not all; there is an aversion to the doctrine itself; and history teaches that errorists and heretics are accustomed to make the first attack on the established language of orthodoxy; but this is but a cover for their design to subvert the doctrine itself.

Again, it has been objected to the doctrine of imputed righteousness, that it is nothing else than to ascribe to God a false judgment, esteeming those to be righteous whom he knows to be not really so. They have represented the word *imputed* to be synonymous with *putative*, and have so far mistaken the whole thing as to assert, that a putative righteousness, was a mere suppositious thing; an erroneous judgment or estimation, which cannot be attributed to God without blasphemy. Now, we are surprized at such misrepresentations of our views. There is nothing false or suppositious in the case. When God imputes the righteousness of Christ to a sinner, he actually bestows it upon him for all the purposes of his complete justification. The sinner owes a righteousness to the law, which he cannot pay; but God in mercy reckons to him the perfect righteousness of another. For the sake then of Christ's satisfaction to the precept and penalty of the law he is pardoned and accepted as having a perfect righteousness in his Surety. The Psalmist says "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." The non-imputation of sin is not a false judgment, but a gracious act by which no charge is made against the transgressor on account of his iniquities: they are remitted. So when God imputeth righteousness, the guilty sinner has his legal responsibilities changed. These are transferred to another who has borne the curse in his stead, and the righteousness of another is so charged to his account, that by it he is accepted as fully as if he had in his own person rendered a complete righteousness.

The idea of imputation is well understood in the transactions of men. As when one owes a debt for the payment of



which a friend makes himself responsible, there is a transfer of legal obligation to the sponsor, and if the debtor be unable to pay, the surety is bound. When in law one man becomes bail for the appearance of another to answer on some certain day, he enters into a recognizance by which he incurs a penalty if the other should fail. But it will probably be alleged, that these cases of pecuniary suretyship and obligation are entirely different from cases of moral delinquency; where one man's good conduct is never made the ground of the justification of a guilty person. It is certainly true that no transactions among men can furnish a complete parallel to the mediation of Jesus Christ, and our justification through his perfect righteousness. This device is as much above human conception, as the heavens are higher than the earth: but still there are principles admitted in human transactions which may serve, in some small degree, to illustrate the Gospel plan of justification. Take the following case. Suppose a man to have become by his heroic acts and achievements, and by his wounds and sufferings, the saviour of his country. The debt which the people owe him for his meritorious services can never be fully paid. Now suppose the son of this benefactor is detected in some treasonable practices against his sovereign. He is arraigned before the supreme tribunal of the kingdom. The evidence against him is full. Sentence is about to be pronounced, when the father presents himself before his sovereign, and begs that his son may be pardoned on account of his services; and at the same time points to the scars of the numerous wounds which he received in fighting for his country. Moreover, he is willing to become responsible for the good conduct of his son in time to come. The king feeling the obligation which he is under to the father, for the sake of his services, agrees not only to remit the punishment, but to restore the offender to all the rights and immunities which he had before enjoyed. If such a pardon could be granted consistently with the good of the state, no one would say that there was any thing wrong in the transaction. In this case the good conduct of the father is imputed to the son, and he is pardoned and restored to the favour of his prince, by the meritorious conduct of another. Indeed, the principle of treating with special favour the near connexions of those whom we greatly love, or to whom we have been laid under peculiar obligations, is brought into view almost every day. But the wisdom and propriety of imputing Christ's righteousness for the justification of sinners does not depend on any resemblance to it which may be found

among men. It is sufficient for us to know that God has revealed it as his chosen plan for the salvation of his redeemed people.

It is again objected to the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, especially his active obedience, that it releases the sinner from all obligation, any longer to obey the law. If this were a just inference from the doctrine it would indeed be an unanswerable objection; for it should be received as a first principle in theology, that the obligation to be conformed to the law of God can never cease. But there is not the least foundation for the objection. Suppose that the first Adam had continued to obey until his probation was finished, would any one think that afterwards either he or his posterity would be freed from the obligation to be holy? Well, what he failed to do, the second Adam has performed, but the obligation to be holy is immutable. It may be asked, does the law of God require a double obedience, one from our surety, and one from ourselves? We answer, that it requires but one righteousness in order to our justification; but it requires that the justified person continue in conformity with its holy precepts. Our obedience is not now required as a condition of justification; to entertain such an opinion would be to leave the covenant of grace, and to go back to the old covenant of works. It would be *to fall from grace*, as Paul expresses it, that is from the doctrines of grace. Suppose each one of us had a probation for life under the law, and that we had completed our obedience and obtained justification, we should be required to render no more obedience with a view to being justified, for this is supposed to be already done. But the obligation to obey God would not cease, because we were in a justified state. We would still be required to be conformed to the law, because that was our reasonable service, arising out of our natural relations to our Creator, and because holiness is pleasing to God, beneficial to men, and essential to the promotion of our own happiness.

Another objection to imputation is, that if Christ's righteousness becomes ours in this way, then we shall be made as righteous as Christ was. This scarcely deserves a serious answer. Upon the same principle they ought to argue, that because our sins were imputed to Christ, He must by this be made as great a sinner as we are; which is blasphemy? But in both cases, the inference is false, and does not follow from the doctrine. If a rich man permit a poor debtor to draw upon him for as much money as will pay his debts, and obtain his release from prison, it does not follow that by this

act the poor man is made as rich as his benefactor. When the king pardoned the treason of the son for the sake of the extraordinary merits of the father, this did not invest the son with personal merit equal to that of the father. The truth is, that the imputation of righteousness, although it procures perfect justification, produces no change in the inherent character of the man; but as we stated before, it merely changes his relation to the law; and therefore, the idea of our being made as righteous as Christ, is without reason alleged against this doctrine.

It has, moreover, been objected, that if the righteousness of Christ is imputed to every believer, then all must receive an equal reward in the world to come; but the doctrine of Scripture is, that there are degrees of felicity and glory in heaven. It is true, that the righteousness of Christ is equally bestowed on all believers, and the consequence is, that they are all equally justified; but persons equally justified, and equally entitled to a part of the heavenly inheritance, may partake of happiness in different degrees. Some may have a larger capacity than others, and may on this account enjoy more; and yet all have liberty to drink in as much as they can; just as if you throw empty vessels of different dimensions into the river, they will all be filled as full as they can hold, but the quantity in each will be very different.

Again, though the good works of believers are in no measure the ground of our justification, yet they will be exhibited at the day of judgment, for two reasons. The first is, that they may be a public evidence to the universe, that they are the genuine disciples of Christ; and secondly, that these acts of sincere but imperfect obedience may be the standard by which they shall receive their portion of happiness. "They who sow sparingly shall reap also sparingly; but they who sow bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Hence we so often read, that men shall be rewarded according to their works. And this mode of proceeding commends itself to our reason, as congruous. Some have attempted to evade the doctrine, by alleging, that not the righteousness of Christ but its effects are imputed to us. They who talk thus, do not seem to understand what they say. It must be by the imputation of the righteousness, that the good effects are derived to us; but the imputation of the effects themselves cannot be. To talk of imputing pardon—of imputing justification—imputing peace, &c. is to use words without meaning. What we are inquiring after is the reason why these blessings become ours. It cannot be on account of our own righteousness,

which is of the law; it must be on account of the righteousness of Christ. The next question is, how does that righteousness avail to obtain for us pardon, justification, and peace with God? The answer is, by imputation; that is, it is set down to our credit. God accepts it on our behalf: yea he bestows it upon us. If there be any such thing as imputation, it must be of the righteousness of Christ itself, and the benefits connected with salvation flow from this imputation. We conclude, therefore, that the righteousness of Christ can only justify us, by being imputed to us. The last objection which I shall mention to the imputation of Christ's righteousness, is, that it makes the sinner's justification a matter of justice, and not of grace; for if our debt is fully paid, and the law obeyed in our stead, the whole proceeding, upon this hypothesis, is one of law and justice, and not at all of mercy and grace; but the Scriptures teach nothing more clearly and constantly, than that our justification is "without law," and purely gratuitous.

As this is an old Socinian objection which has been borrowed and revived by men wishing to be esteemed orthodox, it will deserve a special attention.

And first, let it be observed, that all theories which suppose that grace is exercised at the expense of justice, or that in order to the manifestation of grace, law and justice must be suspended, labour under a radical mistake in theology, which cannot but introduce darkness and perplexity into their whole system. Indeed, if law and justice could have been set aside or suspended, there had been no occasion for the plan of redemption. The only reason why sinners could not be saved was, that the law and justice of God stood in the way; but if by a sovereign act, these obstacles could have been removed, salvation might have been accomplished without an atonement. But though the Scriptures, every where, ascribe salvation to GRACE—FREE GRACE; yet they never teach that this grace requires God to deny himself, as to his attribute of justice; or that law and justice are at all interfered with; or, for a moment suspended. On the contrary, the idea is continually kept in view, that grace reigns *through righteousness*; that the propitiation of Christ is necessary, that God may be *just*, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. Redemption is the obtaining deliverance by paying a price; and yet redemption and grace, so far from being inconsistent, are constantly united, as parts of the same glorious plan, according to the Scriptures. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his

grace." (Ephes. i. 7.) The only way in which it was possible for grace to be exercised, was by a plan which made provision for the complete satisfaction of law and justice. This was the great problem, to the solution of which no finite wisdom was competent; but which the infinite wisdom of Jehovah has accomplished by the mission and sacrifice of his own dear Son. What is objected, therefore, is a thing essential to the exercise of grace. And the whole appearance of plausibility in the objection arises from not distinguishing between God's dealings with our substitute, and with *us*. To him, there was no mercy shown; the whole process was in strict execution of law and justice. The last farthing due, so to speak, was exacted, of our Surety, when he stood in our place, under the holy and sin avenging law of God. But this exercise of justice towards him, was the very thing which opened the way for superabounding mercy towards us. And this cost at which the sluices of grace were opened, so far from lessening, constitutes its riches and glory. If grace had required no sacrifice, such as has been made, its loveliness and glory would not have been half what they now are. If I were in prison for a heavy debt, and some generous friend should do me the favour of releasing me, by paying the debt, would I have any right to say, that there was no favour in the case, because justice was satisfied before I could be released? The idea is preposterous. And as to what is said about being justified, "without law," it has been explained already, to mean, without our own works of obedience to the law, as many parallel passages of Scripture show. Upon any other plan, the law and Gospel would be completely at variance; or the law would be made void by the Gospel, which the apostle rejects with so much vehemence, and declares that instead of being made void, it was established.

#### SECTION X.

JUSTIFICATION BY THE IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST IS OBTAINED BY THE EXERCISE OF A GENUINE FAITH.

It has already been shown that neither the act of believing, nor the evangelical obedience which flows from faith is the meritorious ground of a sinner's justification. It now remains to consider what part faith performs in obtaining justification for us. That it is an essential thing in this business is manifest throughout the Scriptures. "The just shall live

by his faith," (Heb. ii. 4.) "The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe," (Rom. iii. 22.) "Therefore being justified by faith," (Rom. v. 1.) "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ," (Gal. ii. 16.) The righteousness by which we are justified is called *the righteousness of faith*. "Not having on mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," (Phil. iii. 9.) "What shall we say then? that the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith," (Rom. ix. 30.) "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise." (Rom. x. 6.) That faith justifies is so clear in Scripture, that no words could make it plainer. The only thing necessary is to ascertain *how* it justifies? And as much that might have been said here has been anticipated, we will confine our observations within narrower limits, than we otherwise should have done. The single question which needs to be now discussed is, whether faith justifies as *a condition*, or merely as an instrument. There is a sound sense in which faith may be called the condition of justification, and is so called by some of the most distinguished orthodox divines; and is once so denominated in our Larger Catechism, in the answer to the 32d Question, "and requiring faith as the condition to interest them in him." They are not therefore to be censured as departing from orthodoxy, or from a sound theological language, who choose to retain this word. But it should be carefully remarked, that when they use the word *condition*, they neither mean a meritorious consideration on which the blessings of the new covenant are suspended; nor an act performed by our own strength previously to our receiving any benefit from this covenant, but as a duty which God requires to be performed by us prior to our justification. It is a condition in the sense, that without it justification cannot be enjoyed. But as the word condition is so vague, and as it has been so commonly used in an erroneous sense, it is expedient to drop the word as it relates to faith, in a sinner's justification; for all orthodox theologians acknowledge, that faith itself is one of the richest blessings of the covenant of grace, and cannot, therefore, be the condition of that covenant, in a strict and proper sense. The sound doctrine then is, that faith is the *instrument* of our justification; just as the hand is the instrument of receiving the food which saves us from starvation; or the

reprieve which delivers from death. It is well represented by the case of a drowning man to whom a rope from a boat is cast out to draw him in. If he neglects to seize the rope, whether owing to dependance on his own ability to buffet the waves, or from a suspicion of the weakness of the rope, or the want of sincerity and good-will in those who have thrown it out, he perishes with help within his reach. This is precisely the case of those who reject the Gospel. But, if the man, convinced of his own helplessness, and having confidence in the strength of the rope, and of the good-will of those who have extended this means of relief, grasps the rope, and is drawn into the boat, this seizing the offered help, will represent the act of faith by which the sinner obtains deliverance, and is brought into a state of safety ; except that in his case the ability to stretch out the withered hand is given by him who commands it. The question has been often asked, whether justification is by faith alone ; and if so, why has this grace in this business a prerogative above every other ? Why does faith justify rather than love ? That justification is by faith alone is clear from the testimonies of Scripture, already adduced. Other things are necessary to our complete salvation ; but faith is the only instrument of our justification. We are never said to be justified by repentance, or by love, or by hope, nor by perseverance, and yet all these are necessary to our salvation ; but they follow justification, and are evidences of it. The Scriptural doctrine is, that we are justified by faith, and nothing else, “ is imputed for righteousness.” Our justifying righteousness is “ the righteousness of faith.” This point may be considered too clearly established, by express testimonies of Scripture, to admit of doubt or controversy.

The question still arises, why is justification ascribed solely to faith, or how does faith justify. The common and correct answer is, because faith apprehends and receives the righteousness of Christ. But the subject requires some further explanation. In all cases where the good or bad acts of one are imputed to another, who did not personally perform them, it is in consequence of a very close and intimate union between the parties. Thus, if the acts of a wife are ascribed to the husband, it is because, in law, as in Scripture, they are considered not twain but one—“ one flesh.” When the child of a man condemned for treason, in Great Britain, loses the title and inheritance entailed on him, it is because he is closely connected, in blood, with the guilty person. When all Israel suffered a desolating plague because of the sin of

David, it was because they all formed one body politic, of which he was the head. Upon this principle the posterity of Saul were executed on account of his sin towards the Gibeonites, which was imputed to them. On the same principle of union between the parties, God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation; and the sins of many generations are punished at last upon one, when the cup of their iniquity is full; according to the words of Christ to the Jews, "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation," (Matt. xxiii. 35, 36.) But the only case which furnishes a complete parallel to the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers, is the imputation of Adam's first sin to all his posterity, on account of their double connexion with him, first as their natural progenitor; and secondly as their federal head and legal representative in the first covenant.

Upon these principles, there must be a union formed with Christ, before his acts of obedience to the law, and satisfaction to its penalty can be imputed to us. The first step towards this union is Christ's assumption of our nature, by which he becomes truly a man, like unto us, sin only excepted—bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. But this union is not yet sufficiently intimate. As a man, Christ was equally united to our whole race; but before his righteousness can properly be imputed to us, we must become one with him by a close, and spiritual union. No truth of Scripture is more prominent or more strikingly illustrated than Christ's union with his elect people. He is the head, and they are the members; which, though many, constitute but "one body." He is the vine, they are the branches, and derive all their life and fruitfulness from him. He is the foundation of the spiritual temple, they are living stones builded upon this elect and precious corner stone. And lastly, He is the husband, and the spiritual Church is the spouse. "For as the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church," (Ephes. v. 23.) Where the apostle carries out the resemblance to a great length. Now if we inquire how this union is formed, it will readily appear that it is by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his," (Rom. viii. 9.) The converse of which is implied, If any man have the Spirit of Christ he is his. "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members



of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.) The whole context shows, that the bond which unites all Christians to their Head, and to one another, so as to constitute one body, is the Holy Spirit. And in another place, the apostle says "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." The soul thus united to Christ and a part of his mystical body, is brought into so close and intimate a union with him, that a foundation is laid for the imputation of his righteousness to them. But as God chooses to deal with his people according to the free and rational nature with which they are endowed, he has connected their justification, which is the commencement of their actual salvation, with their faith in Christ, which is the first act of the soul united to Christ, and by which Christ is apprehended and received. It is common to say that faith unites the soul to Christ; it would be more correct to say, that faith was the first fruit of this union, and its sure indication. Thus it appears, that we are clothed with this perfect and unspotted robe of our Redeemer's righteousness, as soon as we become one with him. He is now in reality our Mediator and sponsor; our wisdom and righteousness; and thus are we justified by faith, as the act or instrument by which we apprehend and receive Christ's righteousness. It is evident from what has just been said, that it is not every kind of faith which justifies; but only that which is produced by the Holy Spirit. It is the act of the soul which is united to Christ. Not such a historical assent as men commonly give to human testimony, but a lively, and deep persuasion of the truth and excellence of divine things, grounded on the illumination of the mind by the Holy Spirit. There is that in the truth of God which, when spiritually discerned, carries with it convincing evidence of its divine origin. A true faith is not a mere intellectual act which leaves the heart unaffected with the truth believed, but such a full persuasion of the excellence as well as the truth of God's revealed will, that it carries the heart along, and sweetly inclines the will to receive Christ as he is exhibited in the Gospel. As Christ, as our Redeemer, is the central object in divine revelation; so he is the primary object of justifying faith. There can be no faith where Christ is not known. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The first views of believers are exceedingly various as to clearness; for while some regenerated souls have a mere glimmering of spiritual light, others are favoured with such a bright shining of the light of the glorious Gospel, that their

‘assurance of faith’ is accompanied from the first, with the ‘full assurance of hope.’ But although in believers there are different degrees of light and vigour in the exercise of their faith, yet all true faith is produced by the same agent, founded on the same kind of evidence, respects the same object, and produces the same sort of fruits. But it should not be imagined, that the weak believer is less justified than the strong; the very weakest child is as truly a child as the most vigorous; and the humblest believer is as completely justified as was Abraham or Paul. I cannot adopt the opinion maintained by some eminent theologians, that there is a difference between a saving faith and a justifying faith. They allege, that a justifying faith respects Christ only in his sacerdotal office; while a saving faith respects all divine truth. But although it is true, that Christ’s work as a priest is the true ground of our justification, yet in the first exercises of faith, the mind does not always distinguish the several offices of the Redeemer, but receives him wholly, and for every purpose connected with salvation. But when the person is united to Christ, whatever may be the incipient exercises of faith, they are justifying; otherwise a soul might be supposed to be the subject of saving faith, and yet remain, for a time, in an unjustified state, which would be an unscriptural supposition. And if justification depended upon the clearness and distinctness of the views of the object, it would seem that the soul must fall from justification, when Christ as a priest was not distinctly in view. Even regenerated infants, by virtue of union to Christ are justified; certainly then all who exercise a saving faith are justified; and the reason why faith is said to be saving is because it justifies, for that which does not justify cannot be saving.

Much has been written about the various acts of faith; some making a greater and some a less number of essential acts; but although what they ascribe to faith belongs to its various actings, yet if we examine the matter more accurately, we shall find that faith is one simple exercise of the mind, including, however, both the understanding and will; and that all its various acts arise from the various truths brought into view. A full persuasion of the truth revealed, is faith, in every case; but when the truth believed is a divine promise, this persuasion is of the nature of trust or confidence. Most of the phrases which speak of faith are figurative, and express the common actings of faith in allusion to some analagous thing. Thus *receiving, flying for refuge, looking, coming, hungering, and thirsting, &c.* are used to convey to our minds

in an intelligible and striking manner, the exercises of a soul when it believes in Christ, but cannot be considered so many distinct acts. Of these figurative expressions, no one is more frequently used, or better suited to express the whole of a genuine faith, than that of "receiving" Christ. "To as many as received him gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Thus it is described in our Larger Catechism. "Justifying faith is a saving grace wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and word of God; whereby, he being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself and all other creatures, to recover him out of his lost condition, not only assenteth to the truth of the promise of the Gospel, but receiveth and resteth upon Christ and his righteousness therein held forth, for the pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation." This view of the subject is at once accurate and practical. How refreshing would it be to the people of God to hear preaching in the strain and spirit of this, and many other answers in our Larger Catechism, instead of cold moral harangues or metaphysical disquisitions, with which they are too frequently put off.

Another description of faith in our "Confession" is remarkable for giving, in few words, a just and comprehensive view of the nature of faith in its diversity of actings, under the view of truths of a different kind. It is as follows, "The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts; and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word. \* \* \* "By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true, whatever is revealed in the word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein; and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone, for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace."\*

From the view which has been taken of this subject, it is plain, that the thing to be believed, is not that Christ is already mine; or that he died for me in particular; or that my sins are pardoned. All these things may be certainly

believed to be true by him who has first received Christ as offered; but until this is done, he cannot have any just ground of evidence that these propositions, or others of a similar kind, are true. We may, and ought, however, to believe that God does truly and sincerely offer Christ and all his benefits to us in the Gospel, and this gracious offer is the ground of our warrant for receiving him as our Saviour. Some choose to call this offer a grant of Christ to the world; and insist, therefore, that we ought to believe in the very first instance, that Christ is ours. On this subject, we hope there is no real difference of opinion at bottom; we like to adhere to the plain language of the Scriptures, and of our standards. If it be asked whether there is not an *appropriating* act of faith? I answer that no act of ours can be more of an appropriating nature than *receiving*. He who receives Christ receives him as his complete and all sufficient Saviour. If one offers to another a large estate, the acceptance of the offer is the appropriating act. It would, however, in our judgment, be more correct to say, that God appropriated Christ and his benefits to us, when he imputed to us Christ's righteousness, and justified our persons.

We must not, however, overlook the necessity of a real and deep conviction of sin; not as a preparation for regeneration, but as a process suited to us as rational, moral agents. It is suitable that a sinner, whom God is about to save, should be made sensible in some measure, of his true condition. How otherwise could he exercise due gratitude for redeeming mercy? This appears to have been the common experience of those brought to believe in the times of the apostles; as on the day of Pentecost, in the prison of Philippi, and in the experience of Paul himself, who says, "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." And again, "I through the law am dead to the law that I might live unto God." "For I had not known sin, unless the law had said thou shalt not covet." So then, "And the commandment which was ordained unto life, I found to be unto death."

## SECTION XI.

### THE TIME OF JUSTIFICATION.

On this subject men have erred on the widest possible extremes; for while some strenuously insist that justification is

from eternity, thus confounding it with election, or the purpose to justify; others are equally confident, that there can be no proper justification until after our account is rendered at the day of judgment; while a few would refer it to the time of Christ's resurrection when he as our substitute received an acquittance, and arose from the dead as the triumphant Head of all his people. But all these opinions are unscriptural. If we are justified by faith, we cannot obtain this blessing until we believe; and it is equally certain, that upon this principle, our justification cannot be postponed until the final judgment.

The orthodox opinion may be thus expressed. From eternity, God determined to justify his chosen people, freely, through the mediation of his Son; by the obedience and death of Christ a solid foundation was laid for their justification, in consistence with the demands of law and justice; when an elect sinner is united to Christ and believes, his faith is imputed for righteousness; that is, the righteousness of Christ which is the object of faith, is made over to him, and his sins are, in that moment, pardoned, and his person accepted as righteous, in the sight of God, or in other words he is justified; and at the day of judgment, there will be a public manifestation of their being the disciples of Christ and the servants of God, by bringing to view before the assembled universe all their works of piety, justice, and mercy. Their thoughts will then be made manifest, also their words, and deeds; and the Judge of all, will declare them to be exempt from every charge, and will assign to them a portion in the heavenly inheritance, according as their works shall be found. He will say, "Come ye blessed inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

## SECTION XII.

### THE DOCTRINE OF JAMES.

There is an apparent contradiction of Paul's doctrine by James, where he says, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered up Isaac his son upon the altar." Again, "Ye see then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith alone."

"Likewise also, was not Rahab, the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way."

The reconciliation of these declarations with those of Paul can only be made by supposing James to speak of another kind of faith, and, perhaps, of another kind of justification, from Paul. And when the whole passage is carefully examined this thing becomes evident. He is censuring such as spoke good words to the needy, but gave no relief. "Even so," says he, "faith if it have not works is dead." Paul speaks of a genuine faith which works by love and purifies the heart; James of a barren and dead faith. "Though a man say he hath faith and hath not works can faith save him?" That is, can this empty profession of faith—this barren faith—save him? So through the whole passage he is evidently speaking of a mere empty profession of faith, or a mere historical faith, such as devils have. And some suppose that this is sufficient to remove the whole difficulty. They allege, that by *works*, James evidently means a true faith distinguished by the works which it produces; and that all that he aimed to establish was, that justification could not be obtained by a dead faith, but by a living operative faith which could only be manifested to others by works. But if we suppose, that he uses the word *justify* in a sense different from that of Paul, the difficulty will be still further relieved. Paul was speaking of a sinner's first acceptance with God by faith in Christ, James of cases in which a good man proves himself to be such by performing eminent works of righteousness, by which it became manifest that his faith was genuine, for while nominal professors said they had faith, which they could not show, as having no works to evidence it, he justified himself, by showing his faith by his works, as Abraham did, when he performed that extraordinary act of obedience of offering up his own son; and Rahab, in concealing and sending away the spies at the peril of her own life. Abraham's first justification took place long before this memorable event; but by this he manifested to all men, the sincerity and vigour of his faith. "Seest thou," says James, "how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect." Faith was operative in producing good works, and these works served to evince the sincerity of his faith, showing most clearly, that his faith was of the right kind. What the apostle James inculcates so earnestly is, that that faith which was imputed to Abraham for righteousness, was not a dead faith, such as these false professors boasted of, but was a faith productive of good works; and in this sense he was said to be justified by works.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion we will sum up the leading particulars; and add a few thoughts, not sufficiently brought forward in the body of the essay.

1. Justification is an act of God. "It is God that justifieth."

2. Justification is a forensic term, that is, borrowed from the proceedings of courts of justice among men. It is the opposite of condemnation; and is not a work wrought within a man, but an act by which he is acquitted from every charge, and declared to be righteous in the eye of the law.

3. Justification by the law is impossible to a sinner; for the law cannot justify a man whom it condemns as a sinner. But "by the law is the knowledge of sin."

4. Justification without respect to some law, and some righteousness rendered to the law, is inconceivable.

5. No righteousness can be the ground of a sinner's justification, but one which is perfect; therefore faith cannot be our justifying righteousness; neither can our evangelical obedience and good works. When faith is said to be imputed for righteousness, we should understand the object of faith, namely Christ's righteousness. This is called the righteousness of faith, because faith apprehends and receives it.

6. The righteousness of Christ consists of his perfect obedience to the law, and his atoning sacrifice; both of which are requisite to be set down to the sinner's account, before he can be justified.

7. Justification does not consist merely in the pardon of sin, but includes adoption, and the acceptance of our persons as righteous.

8. The righteousness of Christ by which we are justified does not become ours by transfusion, or by the transfer of his holy acts to our souls, but by *Imputation*, which is the reckoning this to us, or granting it to us, and treating us accordingly.

9. Justification is complete in the first moment of believing. It may be rendered more evident to ourselves and others by holy living, but our obedience adds nothing to the perfection of our justification.

10. Justification includes a full pardon for all our past sins, and an ample provision for the pardon of all which the believer may afterwards commit. Just as if a man owes a debt to a merchant, and some rich man deposits a sum and has it set down to his account, which is not only sufficient to

cancel his debt already contracted, but also to be a set-off against debts which he may afterwards contract.

11. Justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, through faith, is in consequence of the soul's union to Christ. What he has done and suffered for his people becomes actually and legally theirs, in virtue of their being one with him.

12. Faith, justifies because it receives Christ and his righteousness; but a dead faith will justify no one. Our faith and profession must be justified by our works, as Abraham justified his faith and piety by offering up his son at the command of God.

13. Justifying faith is the result of divine illumination. It is the gift of God, and the work of the Holy Spirit, and shows its genuineness by the works which follow it.

14. A justified state is never lost. When a man is justified he is confirmed in a state of grace, and will never fall into condemnation; but the justified person continues to be in a justified state because his union to Christ is indissoluble. 'They are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.'

15. Justified persons have the privilege of enjoying peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

16. When the Apostle James says, that a man is not justified by faith alone, he means a faith without works—an empty profession of faith—"a dead faith."

When he says, that Abraham was justified by works, he means by a faith producing good works, and not by an unfruitful faith; or by justification he means the clear manifestation of his true character; showing his faith by his works.

17. Though all believers are equally justified, it is not a necessary consequence, that they will all enjoy an equal reward. While all have a title to the heavenly inheritance; those who shall appear at the day of judgment to have most good works will have bestowed upon them a greater reward; for they shall be rewarded according to their works.

18. Justification and sanctification though perfectly distinct, the one being a change of our legal relations and responsibilities; the other of our inherent character; yet are they never separated. The person who is justified, always has a commencement of the work of sanctification; and faith is a necessary instrument of both. A justifying faith is always a sanctifying faith.

19. Believers may go forward with confidence to judgment, because their sins are forgiven, and the robe of Christ's righteousness will cover all their shame, and render them



glorious in the eyes of the whole universe and acceptable to the Judge.

20. Their poor works also will be mentioned to their honour; and will receive a reward surpassing all their hopes, and even all their conceptions. This will be a reward of pure grace. A reward which God bestows on them because of their union with Christ. As he is a King and Priest, so shall they be made "kings and priests unto God." As he has overcome, so also shall they: and as he has sat down with his Father on his throne, so shall they sit down with him on his throne. But all words, all ideas of mortals, are perfectly inadequate to this subject. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when he doth appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in HIM, purifieth himself even as he is pure."

THE END

THE

NECESSITY

OF

A T O N E M E N T .

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM SYMINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION,

---

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1837, by  
ALEXANDER W. MITCHELL, M. D  
in the office of the Clerk of the District Court for the  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

---

## SECTION I.

### NATURE OF ATONEMENT.

*How can man be justified with God?* This is the most important, by far, of all the questions that can ever awaken human inquiry. From the universal consciousness of guilt, it may be presumed, that every individual of our race, has, at one time or another, been forced to utter a similar interrogation. The very language in which it is expressed conveys the idea of difficulty; and one can scarce conceive of its being used without being accompanied, in the countenance of the inquirer, with at least a look of deep anxiety, if not an air of utter despondency. It is a question, too, on which the mind of man, unassisted by revelation, finds itself utterly undone. The light of reason, the lamp of philosophy, the torch of science, have been unable to shed a single ray of hope on this momentous subject; and, left to these, we should have been doomed to the blackness of darkness for ever. Not that there have been no attempts to answer, without the aid of inspiration, the all-momentous question; but the answers have ever been such as were calculated to bewilder and deceive, rather than to quiet the apprehensions of an awakened conscience, or to impart true peace of soul. The utmost that schoolmen, or philosophers, or natural religionists, have been able to effect in this department, has tended only to apply palliatives to the wounded heart, or to administer stupifying opiates to the patient. “Forgers of lies, physicians of no value” were they all, leaving their patients, so soon as the temporary effect of their worthless expedients went off, as ready as ever to exclaim, in mental agony, *Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?*

To the light of divine revelation alone does it belong to irradiate this moral gloom; to the wisdom of Jehovah was it reserved, to point out a sovereign remedy for the deep-rooted malady of human guilt. This he has done in his word, which contains full, multifarious, and satisfactory information on the most important of all human inquiries. All who believe the Scriptures, profess to regard the work of Christ as the only remedy for moral evil. They all agree in considering that he has conferred the greatest possible benefit on the

world, and that he is to be regarded as the only Saviour of men from sin and wrath. But by those who agree thus far, very different views are taken respecting the *nature* of the remedy Christ has provided. These views may be conveniently reduced to three, which have been distinguished by the names of the Socinian, the Middle, and the Catholic.

The Socinian system is founded on the supposition, that pure goodness, or unmixed benevolence, constitutes the whole character of God. Discarding vindictive justice, the abettors of this opinion represent him as ready to forgive the sins of his creatures, simply on their repentance. Nothing requires to be done by Christ to *procure* pardon; he has only to *reveal* or make it known. His priestly office is obliterated, or merged into the prophetic. His work is to instruct mankind by doctrine and by example; and the sole value of his sufferings and death springs from their tendency to confirm his doctrinal testimony. To this system they ingeniously accommodate all the language of scripture regarding the gospel remedy. When it is said, Christ "died for us," the meaning is that he died for our benefit. He is called "Mediator," only because he came from God to make known the divine mercy to men. He "saves from sin" by the influence of his precepts and example, in leading men to the practice of holiness. His "blood cleanseth from all sin," because it was shed in confirmation of that doctrine which is the strongest incentive to virtue. "We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," in as much as we are led, by the consideration of his death, to that repentance which is sure to obtain forgiveness under the merciful constitution of the divine government. Respecting this system, it is only necessary, at present, to request our readers to consider how ill it accords with the views given in scripture of the exceeding malignity of sin; how inconsistent it is with other features of the divine character; how much at variance with the letter and spirit of revelation; and how utterly irreconcilable with the exalted nature of the mediatory reward.

The Middle system rests on the supposition that a certain power to pardon sin was conferred on Christ in consequence of what he did. Like the former, it discards the idea of any thing being done to procure pardon, but holds that Jesus, by his obedience and sufferings, acquired a power to save. The friends of this system, while they allow that God could freely forgive the sins of his creatures without any satisfaction conceive it right in itself that some distinction should be pu

between innocents and penitents—that, while the former are accepted for their own goodness, the acceptance of the latter should proceed on some principle which shall serve to mark their character as transgressors, and to prevent them from feeling on a perfect equality with those who have never deviated from the commandments of God. These purposes are supposed to be served by sinners being pardoned, on profession of penitence, for the sake of something done by Christ, which entitles him to intercede for their deliverance as one friend intercedes on behalf of another. In some respects this scheme may be thought nearer the truth than the former, but it is open to substantially the same objections. It gives a most defective view of the divine character. It does not serve to explain the tenor of scripture language respecting the work of Christ: not to speak of its failing to account for the peculiarity and severity of the Redeemer's sufferings.

The Catholic system, so called because it seems to have been held by the great body of Christians since the days of the apostles, is founded on the principle that God is just as well as merciful. It maintains that the pardon of sin is procured by the work of Christ, by which he gave satisfaction to the justice of God on behalf of those to be redeemed. This is what is commonly known by the doctrine of **ATONEMENT**, deemed, in every age of the church, of such transcendent importance as to deserve the most complete and patient discussion. Such is the system which it is our object to explain, prove, and defend. In doing so, the others must, of course, necessarily fall to be refuted; and the objections against them, which have already been hinted at, will be more fully illustrated and confirmed.\*

It is important, at the outset, to have a correct definite idea of the doctrine of which we are to treat. Many definitions have been given. Perhaps the substance may be comprehended in the following:—**THE ATONEMENT MEANS, THAT PERFECT SATISFACTION GIVEN TO THE LAW AND JUSTICE OF GOD, BY THE SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST, ON BEHALF OF ELECT SINNERS OF MANKIND, ON ACCOUNT OF WHICH THEY ARE DELIVERED FROM CONDEMNATION.**

This statement supposes that mankind have offended against the law and justice of God. The fact of man's sin

\* For a more complete delineation of the three systems, see Principal Hill's Lectures in Divinity (vol. ii. pp. 398—434,) to which we have been indebted in drawing up the above abstract.

cannot be denied. And that sin is an offence against the almighty moral Governor, which calls forth his high displeasure, cannot be questioned, without blasphemously supposing that he makes no distinction between moral good and moral evil; that obedience and disobedience, righteousness and sin, are to him objects of equal indifference or complacency.

That God, being offended, requires to be satisfied, is also supposed in the statement. This is a point, the evidence of which will come to be presented afterwards. We now call the attention to it as a matter of fact, and content ourselves with remarking, that the contrary supposes either a want of truth in his professing to be offended, or a want of power to punish the offender.

It is farther supposed, in our definition of the doctrine, that the requisite satisfaction is given by a substitute, not by the offenders themselves. Satisfaction may be given by the offender himself, when what is required for this purpose is not previously due to the party offended; but where this is the case, if satisfaction be given at all, it must be by a substitute. The case before us is of the latter kind. To whatever men can perform, the divine Lawgiver has a prior claim on other grounds, a claim as strong as he has to that the non-performance of which constitutes the original ground of offence. Into the scripture doctrine of atonement the idea of *substitution* enters as an essential element.

On account of the satisfaction given by the substitute, the party offended is pleased to pardon the offenders, and to be reconciled to them. This is another thing supposed in the doctrine. There could be no atonement without this. God is pleased to accept the satisfaction offered by his Son, and on this ground to dispense pardon and reconciliation to sinners.

The only other thing included in the definition is, that the persons on whose behalf the atonement is made, are a definite number of mankind; not angels, but men; not all men, but elect sinners of the human family.

To prevent ambiguity, it may be proper, before proceeding farther, to give a brief explanation of the principal terms in common use on this subject.

**ATONEMENT.** (כִּפּוּר—καταλλαγή)—This is the characteristic appellation of the doctrine. It occurs frequently in our English translation of the scriptures, but only once in the New Testament. The Hebrew word which is so translated signifies a *covering*. The verb means to *cover*, to *draw over*, whence it comes, by an easy and natural process, to signify

to forgive, to expiate, to propitiate; that is, to cover an offence from the eye of offended justice by means of an adequate compensation. The term is applied to the mercy-seat, which was the lid or *covering* of the ark of the covenant, a divinely appointed symbol closely connected with the presentation of sacrifices on the day of expiation. The idea that seems to be expressed by this word, is that of averting some dreaded consequence by means of a substitutionary interposition. It thus fitly denotes the doctrine of salvation from sin and wrath, by a ransom of infinite worth.—The Greek word more closely harmonises with the English term atonement. It signifies *reconciliation*, or the removal of some hinderance to concord, fellowship, or good agreement. This is the true import of the term AT-ONE-MENT, the act of reconciling or uniting parties at variance. “The next day, he (Moses) showed himself unto them, as they strove; and would have set them AT ONE again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?” (Acts vii. 26.) Sin has placed God and man *apart* from one another; all harmony between them has been broken up; and those who once dwelt together in perfect concord have been separated and disjoined. What Christ has done has had the effect of reconciling the parties—of restoring them to a state of *one-ness* with each other. The Deity is *at-oned*; God is brought to be *at-one* with his people; the work of the Redeemer is a proper *at-one-ment*. “We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the AT-ONE-MENT.”

RECONCILIATION.—This term occurs in both the Old and New Testaments several times. But it is generally, if not always, used as a translation of the original words above explained. Indeed, as has already been remarked, it is quite synonymous with the term atonement, involving the same ideas and serving the same purposes. It supposes bringing into a state of good agreement parties who have had cause to be at variance, as is the case with God and his sinful creature man. It may farther be understood to express the effecting of harmony between two seemingly incompatible principles in the character and government of the great legislator—equity and sovereignty, justice and grace.

REDEMPTION. (תורה—*απολυτρωσις*.)—This term is borrowed from certain pecuniary transactions among men, as the release of an imprisoned debtor by liquidating his debt, or the deliverance of a captive by paying a ransom. These are transactions with which mankind in general, and especially the Jews and primitive Christians, have been perfectly fami-



liar. Accordingly, both in the Hebrew and Greek scriptures, the deliverance of man from sin is frequently represented by language borrowed from such negotiations. The term before us is of this nature. It involves all the ideas included in atonement. It supposes sin, which is the cause of imprisonment or captivity. It supposes deliverance by a substitute, the captive or debtor being unable to effect his own escape. And, of course, it supposes also a clear emancipation or restoration as the result of the ransom being paid. "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom (*λυτρον*) for many." "Ye were not redeemed (*ελυτρωθητε*) with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." (Matt. xx. 28. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.)

PROPITIATION. (*ιλαστηριον, ιλασμος*.)—In the three cases in which this term occurs in the New Testament (which are the only cases in the scriptures), it is applied to him by whom atonement is effected. (Rom. iii. 25. 1 John 2.—iv. 10.) It is the same word which the Seventy employ to translate *כִּפּוּרִים* atonement. The cover of the ark, or mercy-seat, is called by them *ιλαστηριον*. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews makes the same use of it. (Heb. ix. 5.) The verb (*ιλασκω*) from which it is derived, signifies to turn away wrath, to appease anger, to do whatever may give the judicial authority a valid reason for pardoning an offender. It supposes, of course, an offence, and the turning away of the offence—two ideas which we have seen, are involved in the doctrine of atonement; while the use that is made of it in scripture connects it inseparably with sacrifice as the means by which the offence is taken away.

SATISFACTION.—Though not found in scripture, this term is of frequent use in connexion with the subject under discussion. From certain misconceptions regarding its import, the grossest prejudices have been raised against its use. It properly denotes, that the sufferings borne by Christ were not the identical punishment required by the law, but a proper equivalent with which the great moral Governor was pleased to be *satisfied* in its place. What Christ endured was not the precise penalty of the law, but something equally *satisfactory*, serving the same purpose, as far as the rectoral honour of God is concerned. "By satisfaction," says an accurate and learned theologian of the present day, "we mean, such act or acts as shall accomplish all the moral purposes which to the infinite wisdom of God, appear fit and necessary under a system of rectoral holiness, and which

must otherwise have been accomplished by the exercise of retributive justice upon transgressors in their own persons.— If the work of Christ have that excellency and merit, which the unerring justice of heaven has seen to be an actual doing of that which was requisite to compensate for the injury perpetrated, and to restore the moral harmony which had been violated, it may with the utmost propriety be called a *satisfaction*. The theological use of the word was probably introduced from the Roman law. Tertullian, who was well acquainted with that science, says, *Christus peccata hominum omni satisfactionis habitu expiavit*: which may be, I conceive, justly translated, “Christ atoned for the sins of men by a satisfaction perfect in every respect.” He clearly shows his understanding of the term, when he says that our Lord, by healing the wound of Malchus, repaired the injury.\* It is scarcely necessary to add, that this term involves all the requisite ideas of our doctrine—sin, substitution, and pardon.

**SUBSTITUTION.**—Neither is this term to be found in the Bible, though in common use, and of great moment. The doctrine supposes, as has been said, that Christ takes the place of offending sinners, bearing their guilt, and suffering their punishment. As surety for men, he voluntarily places himself in their situation, as violators of God’s holy, just, and good law; he holds himself responsible for all their guilt; and bares his bosom to the full award of the threatened penalty due to *them* for sin. He substitutes himself in their stead, not merely in regard to punishment, but in respect of obligation to punishment. Christ submitted not only to be treated as a *sin-offering*, but to be made *sin* for us. He not only “bare our *griefs*, and carried our *sorrows*,” but he “bare the *sin* of many.” While his holy soul was free from all the moral contamination connected with a state of guilt; while personal guilt never could be charged upon him; he, nevertheless, behooved to have imputed to him the guilt for which he was to make atonement. This was necessary that his sufferings might partake of the nature of a *punishment*. Suffering, disconnected from guilt, is *calamity* or affliction, not *punishment*; to punishment, guilt is indispensably requisite. Christ had no guilt of his own; he was incapable, indeed, of contracting it; but “the Lord laid on him the *iniquity of us all*.”

**VICARIOUS.**—This word, as its Latin derivation imports, has the same meaning as that just explained. It signifies performing the functions, or standing in the place of another.

\*Dr. Pyc Smith’s Discourses on Sacrifice, &c., pp. 287, 288.

**EXPIATION.**—The annulling of guilt, or taking away of sin by some meritorious interposition, is the distinctive idea suggested by this term. Though not found in the Scriptures, no word is of more frequent use, or of greater significance, in connexion with the subject of our present inquiry.

Such, then, are the principal terms, scriptural and technical, which are in use on the subject now under review. It is of great importance that they be rightly understood, so that specific and distinctive ideas be attached to them respectively. In theology, as in other departments of science, we are in danger from that common law by which words and phrases in constant use come to be dissevered from the notions they are designed to represent. “This gravitation,” as has been happily remarked by a powerful anonymous writer, “which brings the heavier substance (knowledge) down, as a *residuum*, and leaves the lighter (language,) to float as a frothy crust on the surface, is to be counteracted only by *continual agitation of the mass.*”\* Let it be remarked, then, that the first three terms above explained (atonement, reconciliation, and redemption), direct our attention particularly to the *effects* of Christ’s work; the next (propitiation), to the source of the sinner’s *danger*, the wrath of God which needs to be appeased; the three next (satisfaction, substitution, and vicarious), to the *medium* of deliverance; and the last (expiation), to its *nature* as a deliverance from guilt. Some of these terms involve the same ideas as others; but, generally speaking, there are nice shades of meaning which serve to distinguish them. A knowledge of these distinctions will at once serve to direct us in the choice of proper language in speaking on the subject ourselves, and tend to facilitate our right understanding of what is spoken by others. The terms are not to be regarded as mere synonymes or expletives. The death of Christ was at once expiatory, and vicarious, and propitiatory, and atoning. When we say it was *expiatory*, we mean that it was for sin that he died. When we say it was *vicarious*, we affirm that he died for the sins of others, not for his own. When we speak of it as *propitiatory*, we represent it as designed to appease the wrath of God, who is angry with sinners for their sins. And when we say it was *atoning*, we regard it as effecting a proper reconciliation.

Let the reader strive, before he proceeds, to fix in his mind

\* Saturday Evening; by the Author of the Natural History of Enthusiasm, p. 99.

correct notions of the language in use on this subject. Whatever be the matter of investigation, this is of vast moment; and more so, surely, when the theme, as in the present case, is one of such awful magnitude. Let the doctrine in question be clearly distinguished from others which have been substituted by heretics in its place. Let it be distinctly understood what is meant by Christ's atonement. Let the terms in customary use in treating of it be associated with definite conceptions. Thus may we expect the issue of our investigation to be satisfactory and profitable. But if we content ourselves with vain ambiguities, like persons in a mist every thing must appear to us dim and ill defined; we are likely, at every step, to get more and more bewildered; and the result is sure to be darkness and confusion.

It may be proper to remind the reader of the necessity of bringing up a candid, humble, and well-disciplined mind, to the investigation of this great question. A subject so high and difficult in itself, and withal so much controverted, is not to be approached under the influence of prejudice or passion. In such an inquiry much depends on the state of the moral feelings. In justice to the pure light of sacred truth, the dark mists of moral prejudice must be dissipated, and the soul freed from every unholy bias which the love or practice of sin is fitted to impart. Perfect submission ought to be given to the word of God as the sole standard and unerring guide. There should be humble reliance on the promised assistance of the divine Spirit, and the wrestlings of fervent prayer at the throne of mercy for light and direction. Care ought to be taken to view the subject as one, not of speculative research, but of practical and awful importance; affecting the very foundation of a sinner's hopes; the bond of Christian doctrine; the heart and life-blood of the religion of Jesus. Then will levity, self-confidence, and pride, be discarded; and the investigation be pursued in that lowly, pure, and reverential spirit, which cannot fail to be rewarded with ultimate success. *What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.*

## SECTION II.

### OBJECTIONS TO ATONEMENT CONSIDERED.

The view given, in the former section, of the nature of atonement, is strenuously opposed by many. The orthodox

doctrine on the subject is disbelieved by not a few, who, nevertheless, lay claim to the Christian name. Their objections are at best but the specious cavils of a cold and speculative philosophy, and, in many cases, there is reason to fear, the natural result of criminal passions and irreligious prejudice, producing a secret dislike at those exalted views of the divine purity, and those humiliating sentiments of man's guilt and depravity, which the doctrine necessarily presupposes. But from whatever source they spring, the objections in question must be duly weighed. If found to be valid, it will be unnecessary to advance another step: if proved to be unfounded, the future discussion will be freed of no little incumbrance. To the candid consideration of these objections, let us, then, proceed.

I. It is objected that the doctrine of atonement represents the Supreme Being in an unamiable light, destroys the attribute of mercy, and resolves his whole character into stern and inexorable justice.

This it is supposed to do by representing the death of Christ as that which procures the mercy or love of God for sinners; that which renders him willing to pardon the sins of his creatures and without which he would not be so willing: in short, as a motive, an inducement, a price, a bribe, a something which effects a change in the divine mind from stern and vindictive wrath to melting compassion. Now, say our opponents, so far from this being the case, God is uniformly spoken of in scripture as in his very nature merciful and gracious; as disposed to regard sinners with spontaneous benevolence; as perfectly reconciled, and instead of needing to be appeased, as "waiting to be gracious" and "ready to pardon." That such is the light in which the sacred writers exhibit the character of God, is not denied; and if the doctrine we maintain could be shown to be at variance with this view of the divine character, this must be regarded as an insuperable objection against it. But we beg attention to the following remarks.

1. The objection gives a mistaken view of what the atonement is understood to effect.

It is never supposed, by those who understand the subject, that the work of Christ is, in any sense, the *cause* of divine love, mercy, or grace; but the *medium* through which these perfections of God find expression to guilty creatures. It is never regarded as necessary to *produce* in God love toward men, but as necessary to his love being *manifested*. It is not looked upon as that which *renders* God placable, but as

that which renders the *exercise* of his placability consistent with the other perfections of his nature. It does not *procure* the divine favour, but *makes* way for this favour being shown in the pardon of sin. There is a clear and broad distinction betwixt these two things, to which it is of the utmost importance to attend. This distinction is consistent with scripture, where the whole scheme of human salvation is referred to divine love as its origin; and it is as clearly implied in the doctrine under consideration, namely, that the work of Christ gives satisfaction to God for the sins of his people, for this necessarily supposes a previous willingness on the part of God to accept of satisfaction; and what is this previous goodwill but love, or mercy, or grace? The true view of the matter is this, that divine love is the cause of the atonement, and not that atonement is the cause of the divine love. And when the subject is placed in this, its just and proper light, so far from the atonement representing the Deity as unamiable, it must be regarded as itself the brightest display of the divine loving-kindness. Nothing can be conceived more expressive of the benevolence of God, than his sending his Son into the world to suffer and die for the guilty objects of his love. In the estimation of the inspired writers, the gift of his Son is ever regarded as the most perfect manifestation of the riches of God's grace. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." (John iii. 16. 1 John iv. 9.) When atonement is thus exhibited as the *effect* and not the *cause* of God's love and mercy, the objection in question is completely neutralized; for so far from representing the Supreme Being in an unfavourable light, it stands forth as the most brilliant and overpowering manifestation of his loving kindness and grace—the pure emanation of infinite, eternal, and unchangeable love. And all such views of the doctrine as are inconsistent with Jehovah's original disposition to be merciful, or which represent him as changed, by the Saviour's sacrifice, from wrath and fury to kindness and grace, are either the misconceptions of friends or the misrepresentations of enemies, which are to be viewed with unmingled disapprobation and regret.

2. But this is not all. The objection proceeds on a mistaken assumption.

It assumes that God is ready to pardon sin without satis-

faction, that retributive justice is no part of his character, and that, consequently, forgiveness is the result of a mere arbitrary resolve of will, with which law and government have nothing to do. But we must take leave to remind the objector that God is *just* as well as merciful. Rectitude is as essential a feature of the Divine Being as love. If the scriptures represent God in the light of a Father "in whom compassions flow," they no less distinctly reveal him as a Lawgiver "who will by no means clear the guilty." These views of the divine character must never be opposed to one another, but considered as alike essential, co-existent, co-operative, and harmonious. It is quite a mistake to regard God as acting at one time according to the one, and at another time according to the other; at one time according to mercy, and at another according to justice. He acts agreeably to both at all times. The exercise of the one never supposes the suspension of the other. When he punishes the guilty, it is not at the expense of mercy; when he pardons the transgressor, it is not at the expense of justice. Mercy must, therefore, proceed on a principle which is agreeable to justice. While mercy inclines him to forgive, justice must receive satisfaction in order to forgiveness. Deny this, and you place in irreconcilable opposition two essential attributes of the divine nature. Admit this, and the objection under consideration falls to the ground; for the satisfaction which the doctrine of atonement supposes to be made by Christ is necessary, not indeed to awaken the feeling of mercy in the divine bosom, but to reconcile the merciful forgiveness of sin with the equitable demands of justice. If, then, justice or equity form any part of the character of God, if there be such a thing as a moral government in the universe over which God presides, that the pardon of sin should proceed on a principle which respects the claims of the divine character and government, can never represent the Supreme Being in an unfavourable light; unless it can be shown, that the proper display of one feature of his character involves the obliteration of another. The objection thus appears to proceed on a gross mistake regarding the nature of that connexion which subsists between the love of God and the satisfaction of Christ. A connexion there is, and a connexion, too, of cause and effect. But in the mind of the objectors these are made to exchange places; the cause is put for the effect and the effect for the cause; the love of God is represented as the effect, and the satisfaction of Christ as its cause: whereas the fact is quite the reverse; the love of God is the cause; and the satisfac-

tion of Christ the effect. And when viewed in this light, which is that of God's word, the objection loses all its force.

II. The doctrine of atonement has been thought inconsistent with the divine immutability.

God is unchangeable. In his nature, perfections, and will, he can undergo no alteration. This were to suppose him capable either of improvement or of deterioration, which suppositions alike involve a denial of his perfection. If he is capable of improvement, he was not before perfect. If he can undergo a deterioration, supposing him perfect before, he is perfect no longer. These suppositions are equally blasphemous and absurd; and, consequently, inapplicable to Him who says, "I am the Lord, I change not." Yet the atonement of Christ is supposed to effect such a change in the mind of God, that he is reconciled, on account of it, to those with whom he was formerly displeased, and induced to love what he formerly hated.

This objection resolves itself into the former, and might be disposed of in the same way. Yet, as the form in which it is presented makes it to turn on the immutability rather than the amiableness of God, it requires a distinct consideration.

1. First of all, let it be remarked, that, if the orthodox employ language which *seems to imply* a change in God, this is nothing more than is done by the inspired writers themselves.

The phrase *God's being reconciled* may not, in so many exact terms, be found in the Bible; but, certainly, phrases of precisely equivalent import are to be found there in abundance. Is not his *anger* said to be *turned away*? "In that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me." (Isaiah xii. 1.) Is he not spoken of as *keeping not his anger for ever*? "Go and proclaim these words towards the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever." "He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy." (Jer. iii. 12. Micah vii. 18.) Nay, is he not represented as being *pacified*? "That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I AM PACIFIED TOWARD THEE for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." (Ezek. xvi. 63.) In these and similar passages, although the word "reconcile" is not used, the *idea* of reconciliation is surely expressed. It is to no purpose, then, that



the enemies of atonement cite those passages in which man is said to be reconciled to God, as if it were impossible, at the same time, that God should be reconciled to man. Man is indeed reconciled to God, and this reconciliation, too, is effected by Christ. "When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 10. 2 Cor. v. 18.) The orthodox believe that the atonement of Jesus has a bearing on man, a tendency to bring down the proud opposition of the human heart, and to slay the enmity of the carnal mind against God. But they believe, also, that it has a bearing on God, because the scriptures formerly quoted teach as much. And there is nothing in this incompatible with those other texts which suppose that it has a bearing on man. So far from there being any thing inconsistent in admitting both ideas, it can even be shown, we think, that the latter supposes the former.

In Scripture phraseology, when an offender is spoken of as being reconciled, it means his taking some steps to reconcile him whom he has offended. When the princes of the Philistines are wroth with David and say, "Wherewith should he reconcile himself to his master?" (1 Sam. xxix. 4.) the meaning they intend to express, plainly is that he should find a difficulty in reconciling his master to himself. Such, also, is the import of the phrase in the well-known passage, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Matt. v. 23, 24. This passage is most decisive. The person addressed is the *offender*; he has nothing against his brother, but his brother has something against him; yet is he exhorted to go and be reconciled to his brother, that is, to go and *reconcile his brother to himself*. This is the only meaning which the passage can bear, consistently with the terms employed. On the same principle, when man is required to be reconciled to God, may we not be warranted to conclude that the phrase implies that God is to be reconciled to man? When the facts of the case are considered, this inference is the more confirmed. God is the offended party, man is the offender; the reconciliation is effected by the blood or death of Christ, which is frequently represented in other places as offered to God; and the effect produced is equivalent to the non-imputation of trespasses, which is certainly the prerogative of God alone. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to him-

self, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Cor v. 19.)

How futile, thus, are all the attempts of Socinians to get rid of the scripture doctrine of God's being reconciled to men by Jesus Christ! The doctrine is plainly expressed in numerous parts of holy writ, and it is clearly implied even in those which are supposed to exclude it. Let them explain to us, therefore, on their theory, the texts of Scripture in which language is used that seems to imply a change in God as well as in man. On the principle of atonement, these present no difficulty. Both sets of passages are easily interpreted, for God is supposed to be reconciled to man as well as man reconciled to God. On the Socinian hypothesis, however, which supposes that only man is reconciled to God, it is not easy to see how the one class of texts is to be understood at all. Betwixt the two, on the orthodox principle, there is no disagreement, but the most complete and delightful harmony; on the principle of its opponents, the inconsistency is glaring and palpable.

2. Still, it may be thought, this does not get rid of the difficulty; it merely shifts it from our own shoulders to those of the sacred penmen.

And are we to suppose, on the authority of scripture too, that the atonement *does* effect a change on the immutable God? Far be the thought. The doctrine is not chargeable with any thing so blasphemous. What we have affirmed is, that the texts in question *seemingly* imply a change in God. We have not said that they *really* imply such a thing. What, then, *do* they imply? To speak of a change in the nature, or attributes, or will of God, is blasphemous and absurd, as we have just now said. But it is neither blasphemous nor absurd to speak of a change in the mode of the divine administration. Now the *anger*, *wrath*, and *displeasure* of God, are not passions or affections of the divine nature resembling those which receive the same names in man. They are terms denoting the necessary opposition of the divine rectitude to such as have violated the holy law of the righteous Lord who loveth righteousness. They mark the relation into which iniquity brings such as are chargeable with it, to the Lawgiver and Judge of the universe. It is the language of *government*, not of *passion*. And what the atonement effects, is not a change in God the Lawgiver, but a change in the administration of his government; a change in the relation subsisting between his creatures and himself. Those whom he formerly treated in a way which is fitly represent-

ed to us by anger, indignation, and wrath, he in consequence of what Christ has done, treats in a way which is fitly represented by love and complacency. But the change is *not in God*, it is in the *creature*, and in the *relation* in which the creature stands towards God. God does not love at one time what he hated at another. He does not, in respect of Christ's atonement, love what, irrespective of this atonement, he hated. No. He hates and loves the same things at all times. What does God hate? It is sin, and not the sinner; he cannot hate his creatures as such, but only as violators of his just and holy will. What does God love? Holiness, his moral image, which is reflected from men, not as mere creatures but as *moral* creatures, as *new* creatures; not as sinners, but as saints. The change thus appears to be *not in God*. He is pleased and displeased with the same things at all times. He always hates sin—always loves holiness. The atonement does not make God love sin which he formerly hated, nor hate holiness which he formerly loved. The change which it effects is not in God who is the author of love, but in man who is the object of love. By means of Christ's death, man is brought out of a state of condemnation and depravity which God could not but regard with repugnance, into a state of reconciliation and purity which he cannot but look upon with complacency. The change, every one must perceive, is, in this case, not in God, but in man, or in the relation in which man stands to God. Whatever change the creature undergoes, God continues the same. The sun, the glorious fountain of light and beauty, is always the same in its nature and properties, although the earth may reflect its rays at one time and not at another. But it were every whit as reasonable to ascribe the different appearances which the earth assumes by day and by night, to a change in the solar luminary, rather than to its own relative position with regard to that luminary, as to ascribe the state of man, in consequence of Christ's atonement, to a change in God rather than in man himself. Thus do we dispose of the objection founded on the divine immutability.

III. It is further objected to the doctrine of atonement, that it is incompatible with the gracious nature of pardon.

The forgiveness of sin, say the objectors, is uniformly in scripture ascribed to grace. It is an act of free favour, of sovereign goodness. But, on the supposition of satisfaction being given for sin by Jesus Christ, the act can no longer be called an act of grace; it is an act of justice; and, instead of its being merciful in God to pardon sin, it would be unjust in

him to withhold forgiveness. Such is the objection with which we have now to deal. It is more specious, certainly, than some others, and, consequently, a great favourite with the enemies of atonement. But the following observations may serve, it is hoped, to show its groundlessness.

1. The objection supposes justice and grace to be opposed to one another, not only in their nature, but in their exercise, so that both cannot respect the same object.

This supposition has already been refuted, and we must beg our readers to revert to what was before advanced in proof of the perfect harmony of these perfections of the divine nature. (See p. 14.) In addition, we may here observe, that the inspired writers appear to have had no idea of any incongruity between justice and grace in the pardon of sin. On the contrary, they represent both as connected with forgiveness. What one apostle ascribes to grace, another refers to justice. Paul says, "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his GRACE:" (Eph. i. 7.) while John, writing under the direction of the same Spirit, tells us, that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and JUST to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.) It is worthy of remark, too, that in both these passages pardon is connected with atonement; in the former mention being made of "redemption through the blood" of Christ, and in the context of the latter reference being made to "the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son which cleanseth from all sin." This is agreeable to other parts of scripture; as, for example, when Paul, writing to the Romans, in one verse ascribes forgiveness through the redemption of Christ to *grace*, and in the very next speaks of it as a manifestation of *justice*. "Being justified freely by his GRACE, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his RIGHTEOUSNESS for the remission of sins. (Rom. iii. 24, 25.) Can any thing more distinctly prove that the inspired writers had no notion whatever of an essential incompatibility between justice and grace, or between atonement and free favour?

2. The objection overlooks the origin of Christ's satisfaction.

It did not originate with man, but with God. Man did not find a surety for himself; it was God that found out the ransom. If another than God who pardons sin had provided the ground on which the pardon rests, there might have been room to deny the graciousness of the act. But as it is God

that provides the Mediator, the work of the Surety, so far from interfering with the freeness of man's forgiveness, becomes the most illustrious proof and confirmation of divine grace. God manifests his grace in determining to pardon man; it is farther displayed in providing a legal ground on which pardon might proceed in consistency with justice; and it is again brought into view in accepting the satisfaction offered by the Surety, which he was not bound in absolute justice to do.

3. The objection also overlooks the circumstance, that although the satisfaction of Christ may be regarded as a legal purchase of pardon, the *bestowment* of pardon is altogether an act of grace as regards the persons on whom it is conferred.

It is free pardon at least to *men*. They have no claim; no satisfaction is made by them; they do nothing to procure for themselves forgiveness. If the pardon of sin is an act of justice at all, it is so only to Christ; to the sinner it is one of pure sovereign goodness. It flows through an equitable channel; it proceeds on a righteous foundation; the ground on which it rests is such as to meet every claim of divine justice: but, as regards the spring from which it issues and the objects on whom it terminates, it is wholly a display of superabounding mercy. "Being justified through the redemption that is in Jesus" is thus no way inconsistent with "being justified freely by God's grace." "Fancy to yourselves," says Dr. Wardlaw, "a band of traitors, apprehended, convicted, condemned, lying in irons under the sentence which their crimes have deserved. Suppose their prince, naturally benignant, desirous to extend mercy to them; but at the same time, wise and righteous and mindful of the interests of the community, as well as benignant, solicitous to effect this in such a way as may at once secure the dignity and authority of his government, attach the hearts of the criminals to its administration and to himself, and impress all his subjects with the conviction that the remission of the penalty in the particular case implies no relaxation of the rigour of the law and the stability of its sanctions. Suppose that, in such circumstances, he should contrive some method by which these ends might be effectually answered; and that, having completed his scheme, and publicly announced its purpose, he should give his clemency its desired indulgence: would the pardon now be less a matter of free favour or grace to the delinquents? Clearly not. The scheme does not render them one whit more deserving of it. It does not

lessen their guilt: it rather shows its magnitude, by declaring it such as could not be passed by without some precautionary means for securing the honour of the prince and the respect due to his government; nay, it aggravates instead of extenuating, by showing the character of the prince, and government against which the rebels had risen up, not a ruthless tyrant and an oppressive despotism, but a paternal ruler and an administration of equity and love. The pardon is to them, therefore, as much an act of mercy as ever:—and the character of the prince stands forth to more prominent view and to more rapturous admiration, as adorned with the twofold excellence, of a gracious solicitude to show mercy, and at the same time a decided attachment to righteousness, and a determination, for the good of his subjects, that its claims shall not be trifled with, but shall be maintained inviolate. In like manner, the Divine Ruler's adopting a plan for maintaining the honour of *his* character and government in the dispensation of forgiveness, does not, in the least degree, render that forgiveness less a matter of pure grace to those who receive it. And, while it is pure grace, it is also rich:—rich indeed, that provided such an atonement!—and rich indeed, which, on the ground of the atonement so provided, blots out, to every sinner who partakes of it, so vast an amount of evil, and yet embraces among its favoured objects a multitude which no man can number, out of all kindreds, and peoples, and nations, and tongues!"\*

4. These remarks may be deemed a sufficient reply to the objection. But, in refutation of the Socinian's favourite position, we may perhaps go farther still.

It may fairly be questioned, whether there could have been seen to be grace at all in the pardon of sin, had it not been for the atonement of Christ. Had God pardoned sin without satisfaction, our opponents think he would have given some satisfactory display of his grace. We are inclined to suppose, on the contrary, that, in such a case, there would have been no proof of grace at all. Make the supposition that God had pardoned sin without an atonement, and pardoned not only some but all the family of man, and what is the inference which intelligent and moral beings should have been disposed to draw from this act? That God is gracious, and that his grace is altogether without limits? We presume not. Would it not be a much more reasonable inference that sin, the violation of his law, was no evil, no *great* evil

\* Essays on Assurance and Pardon, pp. 199, 200.

at least, not such an evil as it had been supposed to be, seeing it could be so easily passed over by a Being of absolute moral perfection? This, we have no hesitation in saying, would be the more natural inference of the two. If even the awful view of sin's magnitude which the cross of Christ is fitted to give is found insufficient to prevent men from thinking lightly of it, it is not to be supposed that their sense of its turpitude would have been enhanced by the absence of an atonement. "So far then is it from being true, that the mercy of God would have been ready to forgive the sinner without atonement had justice allowed it, and that it would have been highly honoured by so doing, that the very existence of mercy can be proved only by the atonement. Remove that proof of it, and I may very safely challenge all the wisdom of human philosophy to prove that such a thing as mercy exists. I know not if this view of the matter be urged upon the attention of the church with sufficient frequency and prominence; but if it were, I can hardly think that so strange an objection to the atonement could ever have been conceived, as that which considers the atonement,—the only fact by which the very existence of mercy, and much more its infinite extent, can be proved,—as a drawback upon the fulness and freeness of that mercy."\*

IV. Objection has often been made to the doctrine of atonement, on the ground that it supposes the innocent to suffer for the guilty; a thing which is regarded as inconsistent with reason, and with the goodness and justice of God.

The doctrine of atonement certainly involves the principle of substitution: whether that principle be liable to the objection alleged against it, is the thing to be considered. We have no wish to get rid of the difficulty by denying the fact; but as little are we disposed to suffer the admitted fact to lie under the weight of aspersions which are thrown upon it unjustly. Let us see, then, how the matter stands as to this point.

1. It must be admitted by all, that, under the moral government of God, the innocent do sometimes suffer for the guilty.

It is not pretended that cases exactly similar to that we are considering are of frequent occurrence in the providence of God. The contrary, indeed, is frankly admitted. The substitution of Christ is allowed to be altogether extraordinary—

\* Dods on the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, p. 120.

to be without a parallel in the divine proceedings with regard to moral creatures. Nothing like it, in all respects, has yet existed or is likely ever to exist again to the end of time. Yet cases sufficiently like to neutralise the objection in question, are not of unfrequent occurrence. The innocent do often suffer for the guilty, and that too without such exalted purposes being served by it as in the case of Christ. Poverty, and pain, and disgrace, and disease are not seldom entailed on children, in consequence of the criminal indiscretions of their parents. This is what cannot be denied. It is not the same thing as the substitution of Christ; the suffering is of the nature of calamity rather than of punishment. Yet it is the innocent suffering for the guilty; and as this is the point on which the objection turns, we may call upon the objectors to explain this undeniable fact in divine providence, before we can admit their right to urge the principle of the fact against a doctrine of divine revelation. If the thing is unreasonable and unjust in the one case, it cannot be less so in the other. Will they have the hardihood to affirm, that such occurrences in providence as have been mentioned, imply injustice in the administration of the moral government of our world? If they will, we have nothing more to do with them; we leave them to one from whom they will not find it so easy to escape. "He that reproveth God, let him answer it." But if they will not venture so far with regard to providence, we have just to tell them they have no right to make any such assertions in a matter of pure revelation. The difficulty, if it be a difficulty, is one which they cannot be permitted to urge as an insuperable objection in one case, while in a parallel case they feel it to be no difficulty at all.

And that the idea of the innocent suffering for the guilty is not so repugnant to the natural reason of man as the objectors allege, seems confirmed by the universal prevalence of expiatory sacrifices. Whether the practice of offering such sacrifices be of divine origin or not—a question which will come to be considered at another stage of our argument—its universal adoption cannot be denied. This, be it remarked, is not a little in our favour, as the practice in question proceeds distinctly on the principle of the innocent suffering for the guilty. Whether you suppose this practice to have originated with man, or whether, as we are persuaded was the case, the suggestion proceeded from God, the fact is alike to our purpose. If it originated with man, the idea of substitution which it essentially involves must be any thing but re-



pugnant to the human mind. Supposing it to have originated with God, its having been eagerly and universally embraced by man when suggested conducts us to the same conclusion.

2. But the very same objection presses, with all its force, against the doctrines of our opponents.

They admit that Jesus Christ suffered for the benefit of mankind. They admit, too, that at least as regards the alleged grounds of his sufferings he was innocent. Few of them, indeed, have ventured even to "hint a doubt" with regard to his perfect immaculate purity; and none has gone the length to suppose he was the blasphemous usurper which his enemies alleged he was, as the ground of their inflictions upon him. Well, then, what is this but the innocent suffering for the guilty? In the one case he is supposed to suffer for our benefit; in the other, to suffer in our stead; in both he is understood to be innocent. The innocent, then, suffers *for the guilty*. There is, it is admitted, a distinction between what Socinians understand by Christ's suffering *for our benefit*, and what the orthodox mean by his suffering *in our stead*; but the distinction is not of such a nature as to render suffering on the one supposition manifestly just, and on the other manifestly unjust. If it be just in the one case it is just in both: if it be unjust in one, it is so also in the other. Nay, inasmuch as suffering for our benefit, according to the sense of Socinians, is an end every way inferior to what the orthodox understand by suffering in our stead, if injustice is supposed to be involved in any degree in the latter supposition, in a much higher degree must it be involved in the former. The Socinian, then, by the objection in question employs a two-edged weapon, which is capable of being turned with effect against his own cause. If it possess any weight, it falls with tenfold force on the system which he is pledged to support.

3. It is overlooked by the objectors, that, although Christ was *personally* innocent, he was viewed as *legally* guilty.

In *himself* he could put to the most impudent accuser the defiance—"Which of you convinceth me of sin?" but as the surety and *substitute* of elect sinners, "the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all—he made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin—he bare the sins of many." It was formerly explained, and we beg now to remind our readers of the explanation, that when Christ took the place of offending sinners, he not merely suffered their punishment, but bore their guilt, that is to say, was regarded by the holy law of God as

under obligation to suffer. Apart from this obligation, as was remarked, his sufferings would have been nothing more than calamities; there could have been nothing *penal* in them, nothing of the nature of *punishment*, nothing possessing the character of a legal satisfaction. In order to this, he behoved to be brought under an obligation to suffer, and, as he had no personal guilt by which this could take place, it was effected by the imputation of the guilt of others. "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." This alters the case entirely. Guilt, not in the sense of *blameworthiness* but of *legal answerableness*, was his.\* Innocent indeed he was in himself; and had he not been so he could not have stood as the substitute of others; he must, in this case, have had to answer for himself: but, while free from all personal guilt, he was pleased to take upon him the guilt of his people, and in the character of their surety or substitute was it that he suffered the penalty of the law. The law held him guilty as standing in the room of the guilty, and in this character he suffered. Such a union subsisted betwixt Christ and his people as to lay a foundation for a reciprocal proprietorship, in consequence of which, while he was "made sin for us," we are "made the righteousness of God in him." Nor let it be said, that this supposes God to have treated Christ as something different from what he was,—as guilty when he was not guilty, which would be essentially unjust. By no means. He was not personally guilty, and God did not treat him as personally guilty: but he chose to take upon him *our* guilt, and God treated him, not as one who had made himself guilty by personal transgression, but as one who was the representative of the guilty, standing in their place, and bearing their sins in his own body. Such was the light in which God viewed him; and, viewing him in this light to inflict on him the suf-

\* "As the term *guilt* is liable to misconstruction, I have declined retaining it; though it was used in a sense quite, I trust, unobjectionable. We commonly employ this term both in the sense of LEGAL ANSWERABLENESS (*reatus*,) and of BLAMEWORTHINESS (*culpa*). In divinity, as well as in other sciences, it is necessary to attach to some terms a technical definiteness of signification, much more restrained than the ordinary acceptation of the same words. It were to be wished that, in all such cases, we had words appropriated only to the particular objects; but the usage of language (*quem penes arbitrium est, et jus, et norma loquendi*,) forbids such a wish. If scepticism or rashness should raise a cavil, we can only reply, that the cavil is unreasonable. No man ridicules mathematical terms, because, in many instances, they are the words of common life employed in a very restricted signification."—*Smith on Sacrifice, &c.*, p. 284.

ferings due to human guilt involved no infringement of legal rectitude or justice.

4. It ought also to be considered how far the circumstances of Christ's suffering for guilty men under the sanction of divine authority, and by his own voluntary agreement, go to do away with the present objection.

An innocent person's being *compelled* to suffer for the guilty involves the highest injustice; but Christ *voluntarily* substituted himself in the room of his people;—he took upon him their sins; he bowed his neck to the yoke; he laid down his life, no one took it from him, but he laid it down of himself. It was a deliberate act, the result of solemn purpose and not the sudden impulse of transient enthusiasm. He had a perfect right to dispose of himself as he thought fit, being under no antecedent obligation to law, but possessing an absolute independence, and being at perfect liberty to give his life a ransom for many. "I have power to lay it down," says he, "and I have power to take it again."—Nor was this wonderful act of voluntary condescension without the sanction of supreme authority. Although a private person, heroic and benevolent enough to offer himself as a substitute for the guilty, could be found, it is clear that, to the consequences of such surrender being perfectly just, the transaction must receive the sanction of the offended lawgiver. He alone has a right to say whether he will admit of the proposed commutation, as he only can judge whether such a procedure may be conducive to all the ends of justice. While, therefore, Christ "*gave himself* for our sins that he might redeem us from the present evil world," he did so "*according to the will of God* even our Father;" and, when about to enter on the last awful scene of woe, he was heard to say, "As the Father gave me commandment, so I do; arise, let us go hence." The innocent suffering for the guilty involuntarily and without the countenance of legal sanction, may be allowed to be inconsistent with reason and with the goodness and justice of God; but the same cannot surely be said of the innocent suffering for the guilty with the full approbation of supreme authority, and in a manner which is perfectly voluntary.

5. The futility of the objection will still farther appear, if it can be shown that, by the innocent suffering for the guilty, the ends to be subserved by punishment are more fully attained than by the suffering of the guilty for themselves, while at the same time, no injury is done either to the law or to the sufferer.

That no injury is done to the law or to the sufferer, in the present case, appears from what we have already adduced. It remains to be shown, that the ends to be accomplished by suffering the punishment of the law, are much more completely subserved by the substitutionary scheme than they could otherwise have been. "The matter may be illustrated thus,—a rebel is taken, tried, and condemned. As he is led out to punishment, the king's son,—the heir of his crown, steps forward and proposes to purchase the life and liberty of the rebel, by having the sentence transferred to himself, and consenting to undergo its infliction. His father consents, and his offer being accepted, the law has the same hold upon him that it had upon the rebel, while upon the latter it ceases to have any farther claim. And though it be now his own son upon whom the sentence is to be inflicted, the king abates not one iota of its severity, but causes it to be carried into execution to its fullest extent. This shows on the part both of the father and the son, how highly they prize the safety of the rebel. It shows the unpardonable guilt of rebellion, that even the heir to the throne cannot deliver the rebel otherwise than by undergoing his sentence. It shows the majesty of the government, and the sanctity of the law in a much more striking manner than the death of the rebel himself could have done, when the king's son is spared nothing of what the rebel was doomed to bear."\*

If such be the case,—if by the method of a vicarious interposition rather than by suffering righteous vengeance to fall where it was personally due, the ends of God's holy government are attained, not only equally well, but unspeakably better; if the rectoral honour of the Eternal Sovereign is more inviolably preserved and exhibited; if sin is held up to the moral universe as more deserving of abhorrence and execration; if the designs of wisdom, justice, and mercy are more amply and effectually accomplished, who will presume to say that the Divine Being was not at liberty to adopt this method without subjecting his procedure to the charge of inconsistency and injustice? *Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?*

6. It ought, moreover, to be taken into consideration, that, in respect of the substitutionary sufferings of the Son of God, the case admits of such a compensative arrangement as to prevent all ultimate injury to the party concerned.

The idea here suggested deprives the objection before us

\* Dods on Incarnation, &c. pp. 236, 237

of all force, and this idea is so happily stated and illustrated by one of the greatest ornaments of our age, that I cannot resist presenting it in his own nervous and felicitous language. "However much we might be convinced," says Mr. Hall, "of the competence of vicarious suffering to accomplish the ends of justice, and whatever the benefits we may derive from it, a benevolent mind could never be reconciled to the sight of virtue of the highest order finally oppressed and consumed by its own energies; and the more intense the admiration excited, the more eager would be the desire of some compensatory arrangement, some expedient by which an ample retribution might be assigned to such heroic sacrifices. If the suffering of the substitute involved his destruction, what satisfaction could a generous and feeling mind derive from impunity procured at such a cost? When David, in an agony of thirst, longed for the water of Bethlehem, which some of his servants immediately procured for him with the extreme hazard of their lives, the monarch refused to taste it, exclaiming, *It is the price of blood!* but *poured it out before the Lord.* The felicity which flows from the irreparable misery of another, and more especially of one whose disinterested benevolence alone exposed him to it, will be faintly relished by him who is not immersed in selfishness. If there be any portions of history, whose perusal affords more pure and exquisite delight than others, they are those which present the spectacle of a conflicting and self-devoted virtue, after innumerable toils and dangers undergone in the cause, enjoying a dignified repose in the bosom of the country which its example has ennobled, and its valour saved. Such a spectacle gratifies the best propensities, satisfies the highest demands of our moral and social nature. It affords a delightful glimpse of the future and perfect economy of retributive justice. In the plan of human redemption this requisition is fully satisfied. While we accompany the Saviour through the successive stages of his mortal sojourning, marked by a corresponding succession of trials, each of which was more severe than the former, till the scene darkened, and the clouds of wrath from heaven and from earth, pregnant with materials which nothing but a divine hand could have collected, discharged themselves on him in a deluge of agony and of blood, under which he expired, we perceive at once the sufficiency, I had almost said, the redundancy, of his atonement. But surely deliverance even *from the wrath to come* would afford an imperfect enjoyment, if it were imbittered with the recollection that we were indebted for it to the irreparable destruction of our com-

passionate Redeemer. The consolation arising from *reconciliation with God* is subject to no such deduction. While we rejoice in the cross of Christ as the source of pardon, our satisfaction is heightened by beholding it succeeded by the crown; by seeing him that was *for a little while made lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, seated at the right hand of God, thence expecting till his enemies are made his footstool.*"\*

7. There is one circumstance more which deserves to be taken into the account in replying to this objection. The substitution of Christ is a case which is absolutely peculiar.

Such a case could never be justified as a matter of ordinary or frequent occurrence. It could only be when something extraordinary called for its introduction, when such a combination of requirements met as could but seldom come together, that it would be warrantable to admit of the innocent being substituted in room of the guilty. Its frequent occurrence could not fail to have a most injurious influence in weakening the sense of moral obligation. That the bad should be pardoned at the expense of the good, the virtuous sacrificed that the wicked might be spared, and those who are a blessing to society cut off that such as are a curse might be perpetuated, are what no wise government could tolerate. The punishment of crime would, in this case, be so dissevered from the perpetration of crime, as to impair the motives to obedience and take away all fear of offending against the law. The purposes of good government thus require that the principle of substitution shall be but rarely introduced. It cannot take place in the common course of justice; it must be an extraordinary interposition; not contrary to law, but above law; departing from the letter, but maintaining the spirit; and introduced by one who possesses the right of exerting a dispensing power, that is to say, by the lawgiver himself. Now the substitution of Christ is exactly of the nature required. It is an event quite *unique* in the administration of God's moral government. It is strictly and literally an extraordinary proceeding. We have no reason to conclude that the like ever existed before, or shall ever exist again. It stands forth an insulated and prominent fact in the economy of Divine Providence—"a single and solitary monument amidst the lapse of ages and the waste of worlds." Inspired history contains not a hint of any such transaction having ever be-

\* Hall's Works, vol. i., pp. 514—517.

fore occurred on the theatre of the universe; nor does prophecy give us ground to expect that any thing similar is ever again to occur in the annals of eternity. It is the masterpiece of infinite wisdom—an unparalleled display of infinite goodness, calculated to engage the enraptured and eternal contemplation of every order of created intelligences. (See Hall, vol. i., p 516.) *Christ hath ONCE suffered for sins. Christ was ONCE offered to bear the sins of many. ONCE in the end of the world did he appear to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

V. We shall notice, only farther, the objection that the atonement of Christ was unnecessary.

It is supposed, that God could as honourably acquit sinners *without* as *with* a satisfaction. It will not be necessary to dwell long in replying to this position, as we intend to devote the next section wholly to the investigation of the necessity of Christ's atonement. A few brief remarks may here suffice.

1. The objection is presumptuous.

It is not for us, on the ground of mere abstract reasoning, to say absolutely what is necessary or not necessary in a case like the present. When we venture to say what God ought to do or ought not to do, what course it would be honourable and what not honourable for him to pursue, we step quite beyond our limits; we set up our weak, erring, finite understandings as judges over the infinite mind of Jehovah. The only safe ground on which we can determine whether a certain line of procedure be necessary or honourable in God, is judging from what he has already revealed or done. To pronounce it antecedently unnecessary is thus to beg the question,—it is just to affirm that an atonement has not been made, nor any data given from which it can be inferred. This, however, is the very point in dispute, and must be determined by quite a different process from that of arrogantly pronouncing an atonement unnecessary.

2. But supposing, for the sake of argument, that the necessity of an atonement could not be shown from any thing that appears, it would not follow, even then, that we are at liberty to pronounce it absolutely unnecessary.

There may be reasons for its existence which we have never discovered, or which we are not qualified to comprehend. There may be purposes to be served by it which have never been made known to us, and which our unaided faculties are incapable of penetrating. Unless we can say that we are acquainted with every possible reason that can

exist for such a course—unless we can affirm that we know every purpose which it is capable of serving, it must be obvious we have no right to pronounce it unnecessary; for, amongst those things which are not known to us, there may be reasons numerous and sufficient why an atonement should be made. As well may a child object to the necessity of some intricate scheme of national policy, because it cannot perceive such necessity, when the only reason of its not perceiving it is its want of capacity to understand the subject. Let it not be supposed, from these remarks, to be our opinion that the reasons for a vicarious satisfaction to the law and justice of God, are either not revealed or incapable of being understood. Far different is our conviction, as will appear in the sequel. But supposing it were so, we mean to say that the objection before us supposes an unwarrantable overleaping of the bounds of the human understanding.

3. The objection, too, supposes a most imperfect and restricted view of the nature of man's offence against God.

Inadequate views of sin are at the foundation of almost all the doctrinal and practical errors that exist in the world. Men are ready to regard it as something altogether different from what it is regarded by God. A thousand palliatives and excuses they can easily conceive for the commission of it, and, after it has been committed, they can talk of it in language which too plainly indicates the imperfection of their views. If sin were a mere insult offered to majesty, it might be overlooked, for dignity is often more consulted by passing by an offence, than by rigorously demanding satisfaction for every slight that is offered to it. If sin were a mere debt, it might have been remitted, as a creditor may, without any impropriety, suffer his debtor to go free. If sin were merely a thing to be abhorred, it might have been pardoned, simply on the person's showing, by his repentance, a disposition to abhor it. But it is something more than all this. It is the violation of a holy, just and good law, an infraction of a moral constitution, in the maintenance of which the honour of God and the good of all his moral subjects are concerned. This alters the case materially, and renders it necessary, as we shall afterwards see, that steps be taken which would not otherwise have been required.

4. The objection, we shall only add, proceeds on a more imperfect view of the nature of human salvation.

Admitting that God might honourably pardon sin without a satisfaction, it should be remembered that the remission of sin is not the whole of salvation. The penal inflictions due



to sin may be supposed to be remitted without the soul being saved. The salvation of the soul supposes deliverance from other evils, and the possession of other qualities, to which after all, the virtue of an atoning sacrifice may be indispensable. "Were we even to concede," says Dr. Smith, with much acuteness and force, "that the Deity could remit the positive punishment of sin, by a determination of his gracious will; yet this would not effect the salvation of the sinner. This measure of gracious will (the supposition of which, however, I by no means think tenable) would be merely *the forbearing from certain positive acts* of righteous power, merely *waiving a right*, merely *declining to effectuate* that which, speaking analogically, as the scriptures so often do, would be an insulated act in the procedure of the blessed God, alien from the ordinary tendency and character of his government, and which he would not execute without the greatest reluctance, "his strange work." But under a very different respect, in moral consideration, would come the arbitrary taking away of the natural and necessary consequences of sin. *These are not inflictions*; but they are events and states of things which *follow of themselves*, according to the general constitutions of the universe, the laws of intellectual and moral nature; constitutions and laws which are essential to the harmony and well-being of God's entire world. To intercept this course of things, which infinite wisdom and goodness have established, to prevent these effects from ensuing, when their proper causes have already occurred, is not a case of forbearing to act; it is the exact reverse, it is a case of acting. It would be an interference of the Deity to suspend the operation of his own laws, to cut off the connexion between the cause and the effect, to change the course of nature; it would be to work a miracle." (Disc. on Sac., &c. pp. 196, 197.)

We have thus endeavoured to state with fairness, and to examine with candour, the principal objections to the doctrine under review. If they have been, as we hope, satisfactorily refuted, an additional and important step of advancement has been made. We now not only see what atonement means, but are convinced that there exists no antecedent improbability that such an expedient should be introduced into the moral economy of God. No such antecedent improbability can be urged, either on the ground of reason, or of the nature of salvation. We cannot, therefore, but bewail that deep depravity of man's understanding and will, which is manifested in his failing to perceive, or, perceiving it, refusing to admit

the doctrine before us. Great indeed are the pride and presumption of human reason, which starts its little cavils against the great truths of revelation. We have need to be on our guard against the influence of objections which spring from a state of moral corruption common to all. Let us distrust ourselves, and, while we pity such as are led astray by gross and fatal errors, let us seek to enjoy the promised guidance of Him whose prerogative it is to lead into all truth. It belongs to God to bring good out of evil; and, although the existence of objections to divine truth is in itself to be deplored, the goodness and wisdom can never be too much admired which render this very evil a means of ultimate good. By leading to investigate the truth with greater care, by tending to quicken the understanding, by rousing to a more zealous defence of what is valuable, by producing stronger attachment to that for which we have had as it were to fight, and by inducing a firmer confidence in the truth itself as having stood the trial of the most searching scrutiny, the objections themselves may be turned to a profitable account. And how truly thankful ought those to be, who have been kept from error and established in the truth as it is in Jesus. If those who have escaped the temptations of the world through lust have reason to be grateful, those who have escaped the temptations of error through the prevalence of heretical opinion, have no less cause of gratitude. That mental error is safe and innocent, is much the same as saying that truth is a thing of no value; and neither the one sentiment nor the other can be held by those who have seriously pondered the import of those awful words—*that they all might be damned who believed not the truth*. And if error is in any case unsafe, and truth in any case valuable, it must be in a matter of such vital importance as that now under discussion.

### SECTION III.

#### NECESSITY OF CHRIST'S ATONEMENT.

The remarks at the conclusion of last section, on the objection that an atonement is unnecessary, are merely negative. They are designed to prove only that it cannot be shown to be unnecessary, without going the length of positively maintaining its necessity. We now advance a step higher, and

shall endeavour to show that the atonement of Christ is necessary.

It cannot surely be requisite here to do more than remind the reader of the sense in which the term *necessity* is used. It is employed, not in an absolute, but relative sense. It is not supposed that the Deity was obliged, either by the perfections of his nature, or by the claims of his creatures, to furnish an atonement in order to the pardon of sin. There was nothing in his own character that rendered it absolutely imperative to take any steps whatever toward the remission of iniquity; such a supposition goes to divest him entirely of grace or sovereignty in the exercise of forgiveness. Neither was it possible that the offenders against his moral government could, by any thing they were capable of performing, lay him under an obligation to furnish them with a legal ground of deliverance from sin; this goes to invest a guilty creature with the power of controlling the divine Law-giver, as well as to deprive the glorious provision of infinite mercy for the salvation of man of all claims to the character of free unmerited favour. The necessity of which we speak is not of this nature. It is a relative necessity that is affirmed with respect to Christ's atonement, a necessity springing from God's antecedent purpose to save sinners from the wrath to come, arising solely out of his own free purpose, determination, or promise. Having resolved that sin shall be pardoned, it becomes necessary that an atonement shall be made. The necessity, in one word, is not natural, but moral.

The moral necessity of an atonement supposes three things, all of which are understood as distinctly admitted in the subsequent reasoning. It supposes that man is a moral creature, the subject of a holy, just, and righteous law, which attaches eternal punishment to the violation of it:—It supposes that man has broken this law and become obnoxious to the punishment threatened:—It supposes, in fine, that God has determined to deliver some at least of such violators from the legal consequences of their transgression. These assumptions, it will not be expected, we should wait to prove. They are all understood as admitted by those with whom we are contending, and no advantage is taken of our opponents, when they are taken for granted. The first is involved in man's nature as a moral being: the second rests on the broad undeniable fact of the fall: the third is supposed in all reasoning about salvation. Let these admissions, then, be kept distinctly in view—let it be understood that God has determined

to save guilty men from the punishment due to their sins and we ask no more as a basis on which to construct our proof of the necessity of Christ's atonement.

I. The *perfections of God* rendered an atonement necessary to the remission of sin.

This might be argued even from the honour or majesty of God. His dignity as Creator of the ends of the earth, Preserver of man and beast, Lord of heaven and earth, and Lawgiver of the moral universe, is unspeakably great; it is infinite. Sin is a dishonour done to this great Lord God; a direct insult offered to the majesty of the skies; and, if pardoned without satisfaction, it is as much as to say that God may be insulted with impunity; that to offer the highest affront to the Great Supreme, to bid open defiance to infinite excellency, exposes to no hazard, involves no forfeiture of safety. What is this, but to unhinge the whole moral constitution of things, and to hold out a temptation to universal revolt? For if God may be insulted with impunity once, it may be oftener, it may be at all times; there can never be any infallible inducement to honour him; but license is proclaimed to all to treat him with sovereign and perpetual contempt. If such revolting consequences as these are to be reprobated and rejected with abhorrence, as they must be by all who have any remains of a moral sense, it follows, that, in order to the pardon of every sin, satisfaction must be given to the insulted majesty of God by an atonement.

The truth of Deity does not less imperatively call for such a provision. He is a God of *truth* and without iniquity, just and right is he. He is abundant in goodness and *truth*. The strength of Israel *will not lie*. He is a *God that cannot lie*. (Deut. xxxii. 4. Exod. xxxiv. 6. 1 Sam. xv. 29. Tit. i. 2.) Now, let what God has spoken with regard to sin be here remembered. He has said—"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the law to do them—the soul that sinneth it shall die—the wages of sin is death—woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him—the Lord will by no means clear the guilty. (Gal. iii. 10. Ezek. xviii. 4. Rom. vi. 23. Is. iii. 11. Exod. xxxiv. 7.) These are the true sayings of God. His veracity and faithfulness require that they be fulfilled. But if sin is pardoned without a satisfaction, fulfilled they are not;—the violation of the law is not cursed; death is not the wages of sin; it is not ill with the wicked; God *does* clear the guilty! And what is this but to impeach the truth of God—to make God a liar? Nor is there any way of reconciling such expressions with the fact of

man's forgiveness, but by referring to him who was "made a curse for us," who "tasted death for every one" of the redeemed, and whose substitutionary satisfaction is rendered necessary by the faithfulness of God to his own word.

More distinctly still, if possible, does this necessity appear from the divine holiness. The Lord our God is holy. He is free from every vestige of moral pollution; he delights in whatever is pure; he hates whatever is of an opposite character. Now, sin is opposed to the holiness of God; it is essentially impure, filthy, abominable. It follows that it is the object of his supreme detestation; he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity. But how can this be made to appear, without the punishment of sin? It is not enough that a penalty be annexed to transgression, that a threat be appended to the violation of his law; if the penalty is not inflicted, if the threat is not executed, there is still room left to suppose that sin is not the abominable thing that was supposed; the blasphemous thought may nevertheless spring up in the bosom of moral creatures, that God, after all, approves of sin, and secretly connives at the commission of it. To vindicate the holiness of the divine character, the penalty annexed to disobedience must be executed. But its being executed on the *transgressor* is incompatible with the transgressor's being forgiven. To the pardon of sin, then, consistently with the purity of God, the punishment must fall on the sinner's substitute. In other words, the divine holiness proclaims the necessity of Christ's atonement. Thus, and thus alone, can the sinner be saved without sin being palliated, or the perfect moral purity of the Holy One being sullied.

To these add the requirements of divine justice. Justice consists in giving to every one his due—in rendering to every being what is right. It is much the same as equity or rectitude, and is an essential and unchangeable perfection of the divine nature. Of justice there are supposed to be four kinds:—general, commutative, distributive, and vindictive. The two last apply to our present subject. Distributive justice consists in giving every one his due, treating all according to their desert, acting toward the subjects of law agreeably to the terms of law. This requires that sin be punished according to its desert. The evil of sin is infinite. It must, therefore, receive an infinite punishment—infinite either in nature or in duration. A punishment which is infinite in nature cannot be borne by a finite creature; punishment infinite in duration is exclusive of all possible pardon; whence it fol-

lows, that if sin is to be punished agreeably to its desert and yet sinners saved, it must meet this punishment in the person of one who can sustain an infliction which is infinite in nature; that is to say, the distributive justice of God renders necessary an atonement.

This is still more apparent from the vindictive or retributive justice of God. That opposition of the divine nature to sin, which leads to the annexation of a penalty to the breach of his law, the execution of which penalty is referable to distributive justice, is called the vindictive or retributive justice of God. The opposition of God's *law* to sin, is just the opposition of his *nature* to sin; his nature, not his will, is the ultimate standard of morality. His determination to punish sin is not *voluntary*, but *necessary*. He does not annex a punishment to sin because he *wills* to do so, but because his *nature* requires it. If the whole of such procedure could be resolved into mere volition, then it is not only supposable that God might not have determined to punish sin, but, which is blasphemous, that he might have determined to reward it. This is not more clearly deducible from the nature of a being of perfect moral excellence, than plainly taught in scripture. *He will by no means clear the guilty. The Lord is a jealous God, he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee. God is angry with the wicked every day. The Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? Our God is a consuming fire.* (Exod. xxxiv. 7. Josh. xxiv. 19. Psal. v. 4; vii. 11. Nah. i. 2, 6. Rom. iii. 5. Heb. xii. 29.) We may confidently appeal to every unprejudiced mind whether such descriptions as these do not fully bear us out in the view we have taken of God's retributive justice. And if this view is correct, sin cannot go unpunished; it cannot be pardoned without a satisfaction; God cannot but take vengeance on iniquity: to do otherwise would be to violate the perfection of his nature. Just he is, and just he ever must be; and there is only one way, that of an atoning sacrifice, by which he can be at once "a JUST God and a SAVIOUR." It is to no purpose to tell us that such language as we have quoted from the word of God is figurative, that it can never be understood as ascribing passions to God. This we fully admit; but if wrath in God is not an agitating passion, so much the worse for our opponents. It is a settled purpose or determination to oppose and to punish.

sin. Had it been a passion, it might have been supposed to cool, and, in process of time, to die away altogether; but being the fixed necessary opposition of his nature to evil, it is as incapable of change as the divine character itself.

We might even urge the goodness of God in proof of the necessity of Christ's atonement. This is the view of the Divine Being to which the enemies of the doctrine incessantly appeal. His goodness prompts him to consult the happiness and welfare of his creatures, especially his moral and intelligent creatures. It is the tendency of sin to destroy all happiness, and inflict all possible misery. *Natural* evil is the invariable effect of *moral* evil. It was sin that expelled angels from the abodes of bliss; that introduced sorrow and suffering and gloom into this lower world; and that lit up those flames of Tophet which are to inflict never-dying torment on the wicked in a future state of being. Does not goodness say, then, that every thing should be done to check the progress and hinder the effects of such wide spreading evil? And is this to be done by inflicting on it its merited punishment, or by suffering it to pass unnoticed and to operate unrestrained? Every man's reason must answer this question. Sin, to be put down, requires to be punished. It is not by pardoning it without satisfaction that it is ever to be prevented from spreading wretchedness and woe among every rank of God's moral creation. Mercy, not less than justice, demands, in order to pardon, that some one shall "drink the cup of wine of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God." "*Justice is but goodness directed by wisdom.*—(Stillingfleet.)

II. The atonement of Christ was rendered necessary by the *nature of God's moral government*.

That God has placed moral creatures under a law or moral constitution, which is designed to promote the glory of the Lawgiver and the good of his subjects will, it is presumed, be fully admitted. To the accomplishment of these purposes, it must also be admitted, that this moral constitution requires to be upheld and obeyed, and every thing done to prevent its violation. So far, all is clear, and can admit of no dispute. It merits consideration whether the notion of pardon without atonement be not directly subversive of the object in question, and destructive of the very principles of moral legislation.

It supposes a violation of the very letter of the law. The law says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die;" but the theory in question says, the soul that sinneth shall not die. The law says, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the law to do them;" but, according to the supposed theory, *not* every one, nay, *not any* one,

shall be cursed. The law says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or one tittle of the law shall not pass until all be fulfilled;" but, says the theory we are considering, not only one jot or tittle, but the whole penal sanction of the law shall pass completely away.

It reflects on the nature of the law. If the breach of the law can be passed over without compensation, it is clearly supposed to have been originally too strict, to have been over rigorous at first. This is much the same as to affirm that it was originally unjust, in opposition to the scriptures, which declare that the law is holy, just, and good. What a perfect law once was, it must ever continue to be. If it was originally just, it must be always just; but pardon without satisfaction, says either that it was originally unjust, or that it is now so. If it was originally holy, it must be always holy; but if pardon must be dispensed without satisfaction, either originally it was not so, or it has ceased to be what it once was, as it can never be wrong to carry the sanction of a holy law into execution. If it was originally good, it must be always good; but pardon without satisfaction proceeds on the supposition that it would not consist with goodness or benevolence to fulfil the threatening of the law. This scheme militates, thus, against the nature of the law, and supposes the moral constitution under which man is placed to be different from what both reason and scripture lead us to conclude.

It supposes, moreover, a relaxation to take place of the law or moral government of God, such as a perfect constitution can never undergo. If sin is pardoned without an atonement, then the law, which requires perfect and perpetual obedience, and which denounces punishment on every deviation from its requirements, is clearly understood to have relaxed its rigour: its requisitions are supposed to have been modified and abridged in adaptation to what is called human frailty or infirmity. This is not only supposed in the theory of pardon, against which we are contending: it is openly avowed, and strenuously defended. But against such a relaxation of God's law, we have more than one thing to urge.

First of all, we say that it supposes the law to have been originally wrong, seeing it could either need or admit of a change; and this we cannot but regard as a direct impeachment, both of the wisdom and equity of the Legislator.

Secondly:—It supposes that man's indisposition to obey, (for his inability is wholly to be traced to want of will,) can nullify the obligation to obey,—a principle which, if admitted, would put an end to all legislation whatsoever, as the conclusion would be, that men were bound to obey, only so far as they chose.



Thirdly :—A law which does not require perfect obedience under pain of positive infliction, is absolutely no law at all ; it is just a law which may be violated with impunity, the very propounding of which must be seen to be a burlesque on legislation.

Fourthly :—It is impossible to define the extent of relaxation requisite. No one has attempted to say to what extent the supposed relaxation has been carried. If the ability or inclination of the subject is to be the rule, the relaxation of the law must vary in every individual case of its application. And what is this but to throw every thing loose, and to annihilate all standard of moral obligation.

Fifthly :—The laws which govern the moral world are fixed and unalterable, nay, more so than those which regulate the material world. The importance of maintaining the latter steady and inviolable, is readily admitted, and strongly urged. Is it not at least of equal importance—we think it could easily be shown to be of greater—that those of the intellectual and moral world be permanent and inflexible ? Shall it be insisted upon that the laws which affect inanimate nature are to be considered incapable of a change, and yet maintained that those which connect the supreme moral Governor with his subjects, may fluctuate and vary indefinitely ? The one supposes only a change in the divine *procedure*, and constitutes a *miracle* ; the other supposes a change in the *nature* of God, and constitutes a grand moral *contradiction*.

In fine :—On the supposition in question, instead of the will of the creature being required to conform to the law of God, the law of God is required to conform to the will of the creature—which is not only a solecism in legislation, but a monstrous discrepancy in morals. We conclude, then, that, for all these reasons, the law of God cannot be relaxed ; and if it cannot be relaxed, an atonement must be necessary to the pardon of sin.

Indeed, any other supposition tends directly to subvert all the purposes of God's moral government at large. Sin is an offence against the moral government of God ; it is rebellion against the divine majesty ; it strikes at the root of that authority on which repose all the order and happiness of the universe. It denies his right to the respect which is due to him as the head of the universe, the love which he deserves on account of his infinite excellencies, and the obedience which he has commanded as the sovereign Lord and lawgiver—(Smith.) To pardon it without satisfaction, then, is to hold out such a view of the supreme lawgiver as cannot fail to encourage his moral creatures, both men and angels, to

disobey; it is holding out a powerful temptation to revolt; it is letting his moral subjects of every class distinctly understand that they may hoist the flag of rebellion and defiance without fear. Only conceive of the hideous consequences that must necessarily succeed from such a line of procedure, and you will acquiesce at once in the opinion that the purposes of God's moral government at large render an atonement necessary. If sin is pardoned, it must be in a way by which the law is magnified and made honourable, and by one, too, whose business it is, not to destroy the law but to fulfil it. We are the more confirmed in this view of the matter, that the punishment of sin is necessary to prevent the repetition of it, and that to pardon it without satisfaction is equivalent to throwing down the barriers of morality, and setting open the flood gates of iniquity; especially when we reflect how inadequately even the exhibition of the divine displeasure, which is made in the cross of Christ, restrains the growth of crime.

Such are our reasons for maintaining that the nature of the divine moral government renders atonement a necessary, indispensable provision to the pardon of sin. As sin is an infringement of the moral constitution supreme wisdom has appointed, and is calculated to introduce disturbance into the constituted moral order of the universe, and casts contempt on all the moral and legislative attributes of Deity, we hold it utterly impossible that the supreme moral Governor can connive at any one sin; for his doing so would inevitably lead to the subversion of the whole moral system of the universe. "As empirics in medicine, contented with a few facts imperfectly understood and ill-combined, deride the extensive search and the cautious inductions of the enlightened physician; and as the vulgar, looking only at appearances as they seem to them, reject and often hold in high contempt the demonstrated facts of natural philosophy; so those who disbelieve the atonement of Christ and its correlate doctrines, seem to me to form their sentiments from a very superficial consideration, hasty and incomplete views, and an unwarrantable confidence in first appearances; overlooking the great principles and general laws of a comprehensive moral system. Above all, I fear that they overlook the nature and obligations of obedience to the will of God, the rational grounds on which those obligations rest, and the true reasons of the demerit of sin."—(Smith on Sacrifice, p. 288.)

III. The necessity of an atonement may be argued from the *inefficacy of every other scheme* to secure the pardon of sin.

Penitence and future amendment, or repentance and good works, as they are commonly called, are chiefly brought for-

ward as all that is necessary for this purpose. If these can be shown to be sufficient, it follows, of course, that the atonement of Christ is unnecessary, and consequently that no such atonement has ever been made. God does nothing in vain; and it is a law in all his operations that the greatest good is effected at the least possible expense. If the pardon of iniquity could have been rendered consistent with the perfections of his nature and the interests of his moral government, by the mere sorrow and reformation of the sinner, it is not to be conceived that he would ever subject his only begotten Son to the pain of crucifixion, the misery of satanic assault, and the unutterable anguish of divine wrath. It is important, then, to ascertain whether these be sufficient for such a purpose.

That repentance is necessary to pardon, and in the case of adults inseparably connected with it, is not disputed. But that it is *all* that is necessary, or that the connexion is that of a meritorious ground or procuring cause, we unhesitatingly refuse; for these, amongst other reasons:

First:—No provision was made for repentance in the original moral constitution under which man was placed, and the necessity of maintaining which inviolate has already been shown. “In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die—The soul that sinneth it shall die,” is the language in which that constitution expressed its sanctions. There is no stipulation of repentance; not even a hint of such a thing being so much as admissible. It is never spoken of but in connexion with a widely different constitution, in which, as we shall see, it springs from, rather than stands as a substitute for atonement.

Secondly:—Penitence does not remove guilt, or the legal desert of punishment. It changes, indeed, the character of the sinner, but it leaves his liability to suffer the penalty of the law the same as before. No compensation whatever is made by it to the claims of justice; the guilt is lessened in no degree: it cannot, therefore, be enough to secure pardon which is the remission of guilt.

Thirdly:—Penitence can never repair the consequences of sin. By sin the majesty of God is insulted; repentance has no effect in wiping off this reproach. By sin a debt is contracted to the divine law and justice; penitence makes no compensation for this debt. In case of the breach of human laws, repentance is never looked upon as making legal compensation or removing the consequences of guilt. It is never known among men that the thoughtless speculator who has involved himself in bankruptcy, on giving signs of repentance, receives a discharge from his creditors, and takes again the

same honourable place which he formerly held in the commercial world. The intemperate voluptuary who has ruined his character, and fortune, and health, by his criminal indulgences, does not find these all retrieved, on his barely repenting of his misconduct. It does not even happen that the penitent finds immediate and permanent relief from the painful reflections of self-dissatisfaction; and if not satisfied with himself for having repented, how dare he have the presumption to fancy that God will be satisfied with him for it? It is contrary to all our notions of rectitude that punishment should continue longer than criminality, that the consequences of guilt should be perpetuated after satisfaction for guilt has been given. But it consists with the facts of daily experience, that compunctions and other effects of criminality remain after men have repented; and, as these are the natural punishments of crime, their continuance after repentance demonstrates its utter incompetency to form a legal compensation.

Fourthly :—It does not appear that, without an atonement, there could ever exist such a thing as genuine repentance. That deep sense of guilt which is essential in every case of penitence, would seem to be otherwise incapable of being produced. If all that God had done had been to make known his readiness to receive repentant sinners, we have the best reason to conclude, from what we know of man, that, instead of inclining him to repent, it would have tended rather to render him easy under his guilt, to harden his heart, and to encourage him to sin with a higher hand than ever. True mourning for sin is a thing unknown, excepting among those who have been taught “to look on Him whom they have pierced.” Repentance is a state of soul which can only be produced at the foot of the cross. “He who receives the atonement weeps not to wash away his sins, but because they are washed away he weeps.”

Fifthly :—The sinner is as incapable, in himself, of repentance, as of making an atonement. This important remark is so happily illustrated by an able theologian of our own day, that I cannot resist laying his remarks before the reader. “When it is said,” remarks Mr. Dods, “that God is willing to pardon us upon our repentance, without any atonement, it is taken for granted that we can repent when we please. For, if repentance be something entirely out of our power, then it can afford us no comfort to tell us, even if it were true, that repentance will purchase our pardon. For, besides that it seems just as difficult to perceive the connexion between repentance and pardon, as to perceive the connexion between atonement and pardon, I know not

that even the most determined rationalism has ever promulgated a tenet more clearly absurd, or more decidedly opposed to all experience, than the tenet that a man can repent of himself, without being led to do so, and enabled to do so, by the Holy Spirit. Many a sinner is no doubt soothing himself to peace by the promise of a future repentance. But he neither knows as yet what repentance is, nor his own need of repentance, else he would build himself up in no such foolish delusion. For what does the sinner do, when he promises himself a future repentance? He just says, to-day, nothing shall induce me to abstain from indulging every appetite and every desire, nothing shall lead me to think of God at all, or to think of him without dread and aversion; nothing can make me delight to contemplate his perfections, or find any pleasure in drawing near to him; to-morrow, I will sit down and mourn, in the utmost anguish of spirit, those indulgences from which nothing will induce me to-day to abstain, and wish a thousand times that I had never yielded to them; nothing shall give me such delight as the contemplation of those glorious perfections which to-day I hate to think of; and I shall account nothing such a privilege as to draw near to that throne of grace before which nothing shall induce me to-day to bend the knee. This is exactly what the sinner says when he promises himself a future repentance. He promises that to-morrow he will hate with the most cordial detestation, that to which, to-day, he clings with the most ardent affection. He who says, to-day I am bowed down with all the weight of threescore years and ten, but to-morrow I am resolved that I shall flourish in all the vigour of unbroken youth, forms a resolution quite as rational, and quite as much within his power to accomplish, as he who says to-morrow I will repent. He who says to himself, I will make to myself a new heaven and a new earth, makes a promise just as much within his power to accomplish, as he who says, I will make to myself a new heart and a new spirit. Repentance and renovation are not sacrifices which we give to God as the price of our justification; but gifts which God bestows upon us, and which God only can bestow, in consequence of our having been freely justified. That man has surely little reason to lay claim to the appellation of rational, who goes so directly in the face of common sense and of all experience, as to teach the sinner that he is capable of repenting, and that repentance will purchase his pardon; a tenet which, whether it be more deplorably absurd, or more fearfully fatal, I shall not take upon me to determine.—(Dods on Incarnation, pp. 158—160.)

Not less inefficacious is the scheme of future amendment. Good works can as little secure the pardon of sin as repentance; yet by such as deny the atonement, the worth of man's own doings, is unblushingly taught. As in the case of repentance, it is not our intention to deny the importance of good works in the scheme of man's salvation; neither to dispute their connexion with pardon. We are too well convinced of the "necessary uses" they are designed to subserve, with regard at once to believers themselves, to their fellow men, and to God; and we are too well aware of their being the necessary fruits and indispensable evidences of a justified state, to let fall so much as a disparaging syllable respecting them. God forbid that we should for a moment forget or overlook, even in the heat of argumentation, the holy purpose and tendency of the gospel. But let good works be kept in their own place. - We deny them the place of a *cause* in the salvation of man; their connexion with pardon we hold to be *not* a connexion of *merit*, as is supposed by those who maintain their efficacy to secure the pardon of sin. The reasons of this opinion are soon told.

In the first place, man can never do more at any one time than is his present duty, God having at all times a supreme right to all his services. He can never do more at any given time than it is his duty at that very time to fulfil. Being under obligation to the full extent of his ability, and throughout the whole period of his being, present obedience can do no more than fulfil present obligation. It follows that nothing man can ever do, can have the effect of meriting his release from the punishment due to former demerit. If it has merit at all, its merit is confined to the present, it cannot possibly be either retrospective or prospective. It can neither make amends for a past offence, nor purchase an indulgence for the future. As soon might the man who pays a debt which he contracted to-day, plead such payment as liquidating a debt which he contracted yesterday, or entitling him to contract another to-morrow without the intention of paying it. To maintain that past offences may be pardoned on the score of future amendment, is to adopt the antichristian absurdity of supererogation. Nay, it is every whit as reasonable to suppose that past obedience should atone for future sins (which is the principle of the Popish indulgences,) as to suppose that present obedience should atone for past sins: that is to say, neither can be maintained with the least claim to rationality.

In the next place, there can be no works good in the sight of God but what flow from, and are connected with, the atonement. Good works can be performed only by those who

are united to Christ by faith, that is, are in a justified state. Without faith it is impossible to please God. We are accepted in the Beloved. As an honest action can only be performed by an honest man, so a good work can only proceed from one who is himself good. The whole world is by nature guilty before God; there is none righteous, no, not one; in our flesh dwelleth no good thing; our best righteousnesses are as filthy rags in God's sight. None but such as are in Christ can serve God in newness of spirit, can yield him the obedience of faith; and to suppose any other kind of obedience to be acceptable, is to fancy that He who looks on the heart will be pleased with the performance without the principle, the shadow without the substance, the body without the spirit.

Moreover, the notion that good works are meritorious is expressly contradicted by scripture. On nothing is the bible more full and explicit. The assertions are so express, that only the most inveterate prejudice can mistake their import or evade their force. Before the efficacy of good works to secure the pardon of sin can be held with any plausibility, its advocates would do well to have certain plain affirmations blotted from the records of divine truth. *By the deeds of the law there shall be no flesh justified in his sight. And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace: but if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work. As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse. Not of works, lest any man should boast.* (Rom. iii. 20. xi. 6. Gal. iii. 10. Eph. ii. 9.)

Such is the insufficiency of those other grounds of pardon which have been supposed to render atonement unnecessary, or, rather, have been proposed as substitutes for the atonement of Christ. If, by the previous remarks on this subject, we are warned against entertaining insulated views of the divine perfections, and defective notions of God's moral government, by that we have just been considering, are we put on our guard against trusting to repentance or future amendment of life, as a meritorious ground of forgiveness. What impious presumption do such thoughts imply! How perilous the state of those who rest their soul's eternal interests on the daring experiment of supplanting the righteousness of God's own Son by worth of their own! God grant that we may have deeper impressions of the evil of sin, and humbler views of ourselves than such presumption supposes! The heathen themselves may well reprove such impiety; for the existence among them of expiatory sacrifices, indicates a universal sense of the inefficacy of other things to secure pardon

to offenders, and of the necessity of something more than pardon and good works, to appease the anger of their divinities. The fact itself is highly instructive, and should put to shame those pretended Christians who would set aside altogether the plan of a propitiatory mediation.

IV. With the views already taken of the necessity of the atonement, agree the *assertions of holy writ*. The following are a specimen.

Luke xxiv. 26. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" The sufferings of the Redeemer are here spoken of by himself as being necessary. Such is the meaning of "Ought not;" οὐχὶ ἔδει. The verb denotes necessity in the strict and proper sense of the term. *Necesse est, oportet, opus est, ita, ut vel necessitas absoluta vel relativa indicetur?* (Scleusner.) The necessity is not absolute, but relative. It springs not from any personal sin on the part of Christ; but from God's sovereign and free determination to pardon the sins of those in whose room he stood, as well as from those scripture predictions in which his determination had been made known and which required to be fulfilled.

Heb. ii. 10. "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Here we have an object proposed, "bringing many sons to glory," or the salvation of a number of the human family; the manner in which the object is accomplished, by "making the Captain of Salvation perfect through sufferings," that is, by the sufferings of Christ, who is undoubtedly meant by the Captain of Salvation;\* and the necessity that exists for taking this method of effecting the end, "it became him for whom all things, and by whom are all things." Necessity is the idea expressed by the original term, ἱπερπε. It is *fit, decorous, becoming, proper*. The ground of this fitness is the character of God—"it became him." There was a moral fitness or propriety arising from the nature, will, and government of God, that Christ should suffer, if men were to be saved. Any other way would not have been befitting the Divine Being. A stronger necessity than what is founded on the nature of God, cannot be conceived; and such necessity we have here adduced by the inspired apostle for the sufferings or atonement of Christ.

Heb. viii. 3. "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man

\* ἀρχηγός is used in the New Testament only with reference to Christ. Acts iii. 15. v. 31. Heb. xii. 2.



have somewhat also to offer." The person spoken of as "this man," or this one (τοῦτον,) *i. e.* this high priest is Christ. What is said of him is, his having "somewhat to offer," some gift or sacrifice to present to God as an atonement for the sins of his people. And for this, there is stated to exist a strong necessity—"it is of necessity"—ἀναγκαῖον. The term expresses the strongest moral necessity, what cannot be dispensed with—indispensable. Not only to fulfil the type, to complete the office of high priest, but to satisfy the law and justice of God, on which account he assumed this office, was it necessary that Christ should offer an atoning sacrifice.

Heb. ix. 22, 23. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was, therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." A grand general principle, in the moral economy is here laid down—WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD IS NO REMISSION. The terms are most explicit; it is not *repentance*, it is not *amendment*, but the *shedding of blood*,—atonement,—without which there is no remission of the guilt or punishment of sin. It is spoken of, to be sure, in connexion with the ceremonies of the typical law; but the remission of the temporal penalty, due to ceremonial offences, by means of typical blood, was prefigurative, if that dispensation had any meaning, of the irreconcilable opposition of the divine holiness and justice to sin, and of the necessity of Christ's death to the remission of the eternal punishment due to the breach of God's moral law. Hence arose a necessity that there should be sacrifices of a typical nature to secure the privileges of the ceremonial economy. Whence it is inferred, that a sacrifice of superior intrinsic worth and relative value, was necessary to the enjoyment of communion with God here and of heavenly glory hereafter,—those high and glorious privileges of which the others were only shadows. The plural number—"better sacrifices"—presents no obstacle to the *one offering* of Christ being understood; when it is recollected that the plural for the singular is, in scripture, a not uncommon enallage, used to denote worth or dignity; and more particularly when it is considered that here the sacrifice of Christ stands in antithetical connexion with the sacrifices of the law, as that which fulfilled what these only typified.

THE  
NATURE, EXTENT, AND RESULTS

OF

THE ATONEMENT.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM SYMINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA :

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

---

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1837, by  
ALEXANDER W. MITCHELL, M. D.,  
in the office of the Clerk of the District Court for the  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

---

MATTER OR SUBSTANCE  
OF  
CHRIST'S ATONEMENT.

HERE we are to inquire what it was by which Christ made atonement for sin. Christ did many things while on earth; he taught, he obeyed, he suffered, he died. Now, the thing to be ascertained, is, by which of these he gave that satisfaction to the law and justice of God in which we conceive the essence of atonement to consist. The truth, on this topic, we are inclined to think, lies in the following statement:—That Christ made atonement by his sufferings alone; that all his sufferings were comprehended in the matter of his atonement; and that a peculiar importance attaches, in this connexion, to the sufferings of his soul, and of the concluding period of his life. Let us attend to the several branches of this position.

1. Christ made atonement by his *sufferings alone*.

This statement has been questioned by some of the older writers on the subject, and the opinion it involves has been deemed heretical. To this conclusion they have been led, by taking a more extensive view of the nature of atonement than respect to strict accuracy of definition seems to warrant. Indeed the whole controversy, on this point, depends on the extent of meaning which is attached to the word atonement. If understood to embrace the whole of the Saviour's work for the redemption of man, then more than his sufferings ought to be included in its substance. On the other hand, if by the atonement of Christ is meant only a particular department of the work performed by him for our salvation, correct thinking will require us to restrict our view of its matter to his sufferings alone.

To obviate all difficulty on this subject, it seems necessary only to advert to our definition of atonement. It is this—*That* satisfaction given to the law and justice of God, by the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, on behalf of elect sin-

ners of mankind, on account of which they are delivered from condemnation. From the terms of this definition, the atonement of Christ is understood to consist in giving satisfaction to the law of God, so as to procure escape from its curse; and, taking this as a correct view of the *nature* of atonement, it follows, as a thing of course, that its *matter* should be restricted to suffering.

This will appear in a clearer light if the following observations are attended to. The law of God is to be viewed in a twofold light—in its precept and in its penalty; the one prescribing duty and demanding obedience, the other denouncing punishment on the guilty violater. Corresponding to these, there is a twofold view to be taken of man's relation to the law—consisting in an obligation to obey the precept, and an obnoxiousness to suffer the penalty in case of transgression. Man's subjection to the law, again, may be viewed in three lights—natural, federal, and penal. Natural subjection to the law arises necessarily out of man's circumstances as a moral creature, and cannot be increased, or diminished, or nullified, by any thing which is done either by himself or by another in his stead: it remains unalterably the same at all times, and abides through eternity: it belongs to man as a moral being, and continues during the period of his existence: it could not be obliterated, but by an entire change of nature, which is tantamount to an annihilation of his existence. Federal subjection springs from the covenant form of the law, in which the fulfilment of duties is enforced, not merely by a threatening of punishment, which seems to be essential to the very nature of a law, but by a promise of reward which the abstract view of law does not necessarily require. This belongs not to man as a creature, but as a party in a voluntary transaction or economical arrangement, the obligation of which is supposed to cease when the object for which it has been entered into has been accomplished; that is to say, when the condition of the covenant is fulfilled. Penal subjection consists in an obligation to suffer the punishment due to the breach of the law, and is incurred by a violation of its requirements. These different kinds of subjection are founded on different views of the divine character, and are alike indispensable, excepting on the principle that the claims of Deity are answered. The first is founded on the nature of God, and is necessarily immutable. The second is founded on the will of God, and can only be dispensed with by a fulfilment of the whole condition of the covenant. The

third is founded on the retributive justice of God, and can cease only when the penalty has been fully borne.

Fallen man is to be regarded as under subjection to the law of God in these three lights:—naturally, federally, penally. He is under natural subjection, as a creature. He is under federal subjection, as included in the covenant which God made with Adam in his character of legal representative of his posterity. He is under penal subjection, as involved in the guilt resulting from the violation of the original covenant engagement, and from his own actual transgression.

Now, man's *need* of salvation arises out of his inability to meet this threefold obligation of God's holy and righteous law. He is under subjection, but he cannot fulfil what that subjection supposes to be required of him. He is under natural subjection; but he cannot meet the requirements of the law, because morally depraved. He is under federal subjection; but he cannot yield the perfect obedience which is the condition of the covenant, because he is without strength. He is under penal subjection; but he can never fully endure what the sanction of the law prescribes, because the punishment it denounces is everlasting.

The salvation of man must, therefore, include two things:—deliverance from the federal and penal obligation of the law, and qualification for the fulfilment of that natural obligation from which there can be no deliverance. To qualify man for complying with what his natural obligation to the law imposes, is the work of the Holy Spirit, in regeneration and sanctification. To deliver man from the federal and penal obligation of the law, is the work of Jesus Christ. But the work of Christ, it will thus be seen, must consist of two parts, or rather is to be viewed in two lights—as a satisfaction to the federal demands of the law, and as a compliance with its penal sanction. The former is necessary to give man a title to the life promised in the covenant, and is effected by positive obedience to the whole precepts of the law. The latter is necessary to free man from the death or curse denounced in the covenant on human disobedience, and is effected by suffering the whole amount of the penalty. Now, it is the last of these objects which is contemplated by the atonement, and hence the necessity of restricting its matter to suffering.

It is not to be understood, that, in making this distinction between the positive obedience and penal suffering of Christ, it is meant to be insinuated that these were ever actually separated from one another. *Is Christ divided?* No, by no means

The work of Christ is one, although it may be advantageously viewed in different lights, or as including different parts. It is not supposed, that in some acts he obeyed, and that in other acts he suffered only. Obedience and suffering are different views, or, if you will, different parts of his mediatorial work; but they are inseparable from one another—inseparable in covenant, in act, and in consequence. They are inseparably connected in the covenant, both being included in the stipulated condition which he engaged to fulfil, namely, that he should make reconciliation for iniquity and bring in an everlasting righteousness. They were inseparably united in what he did;—while he suffered he obeyed, and while he obeyed he suffered; he became *obedient unto death*. They are inseparable in the consequences of his work; that is to say, no one ever reaps the fruits of the one, without reaping also those of the other; whoever is delivered from death, is made a partaker also of life; whoever is freed from condemnation, is put in possession of a valid title to glory; whoever *receives forgiveness of sins*, obtains, at the same time, *inheritance among them who are sanctified*. Yet, though thus indissolubly united, they are nevertheless distinguishable from one another; and the work of the Redeemer admits of a corresponding distinction, in the aspects in which it may be viewed. The formal matter or substance of Christ's atonement is, thus, his sufferings, by which he fulfilled the penal obligation of the law, and procured the pardon of sin or deliverance from guilt; as distinguished from his formal obedience, by which he complied with the preceptive demands of the law, and in virtue of which his people are regarded as righteous and entitled to glory.

II. The *whole* of Christ's sufferings are comprehended in the matter of his atonement.

It was not by those of his soul to the exclusion of those of his body, or by those of the latter period of his life on earth to the exclusion of those of an earlier date, that he effected the purchase of our salvation. All were necessary, from his birth to his death, from the feeble cry of infancy to the piercing complaint of desertion. From the benevolence of God we conclude, that not a single pang was inflicted more than was requisite. Every pain he endured, every grief which he felt, constituted an indispensable part of that sacrifice by which he made reconciliation for the iniquities of his people. All his sufferings were of a vicarious, none of them of a personal nature. In every case he suffered *for*

us, never for *himself*; he suffered, the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God.

Some have held the opinion, that as a creature, Christ was under natural obligation to the law for himself. This we reckon an objectionable statement, as it overlooks the circumstance that he had no personal existence as man, and it is a person alone that can be the subject of a law; as well as that his being under the law naturally for himself as a creature, must have disqualified him from coming under it federally for others as a surety. But even were it admitted that he was under *natural* subjection to the law on his own account, it is never supposed by any that he was under *penal* subjection to the law for himself; he had no sin, consequently was entitled to no degree of suffering on his own account; he had no iniquity of his own for which he required to atone by his sufferings; nor was there any moral discipline of a personal nature to be subserved by what he endured. It pleased God, indeed, to make the captain of our salvation perfect through suffering; but it was a relative perfection as the surety of sinners, not a personal perfection as the Son of God, that was, in this way, promoted. What is said of his death, may be affirmed of every suffering by which it was preceded—it was NOT FOR HIMSELF. Not one throb of pain did he feel, not one pang of sorrow did he experience, not one sigh of anguish did he heave, not one tear of grief did he shed, for himself. All were for men; all were for us. If not one of his sufferings was personal, it follows that they were all substitutional, that they were all of course, included in the matter or substance of his atoning sacrifice. During the whole period of his mortal life the victim was a-slaying. At the moment of his birth, the sword of justice was unsheathed against the man who is Jehovah's fellow, and returned not to its scabbard till it had been bathed in the blood of Calvary.

It may be deemed at variance with this view of the subject, that the redemption of man is sometimes in Scripture ascribed simply to the blood of Christ, or to his death alone. But such language is not to be understood as limiting the atonement of Christ to the simple act of dying, or to those sufferings in which there was an effusion of literal blood. The bloody agony of the garden, and the accursed death of the cross were prominent and concluding parts of his sufferings, and, by a common figure, were fit representatives of the whole. They were the last portions, so to speak, the completion of his humiliation, without which all that went before must have been vain; and may be regarded as having pro-



cured salvation, in the same way as the last instalment of a sum which is paid by degrees, may be supposed to cancel the debt and procure a discharge. But, as when Christ is said to have been ‘obedient unto death,’ we are to understand the phrase, not of a *single act*, but of the *duration* of his obedience throughout the whole period of his life, so it may be said that he *suffered unto death*, as expressive of the duration of his sufferings throughout the whole of his earthly course.

III. Yet is it not intended by these remarks to deny that *a special importance attaches to the sufferings of Christ’s soul, and of the concluding period of his life.*

It is impossible to peruse the Scriptures attentively and not perceive that a special emphasis is put upon these. We are not to confine the matter of atonement to any one kind or degree of suffering; but as little are we at liberty to overlook the speciality that attaches to those sufferings to which we now refer. His bodily pains were of consequence, but the agonies of his holy soul were of more consequence. The sufferings of infancy and childhood and youth are not to be lost sight of, but those of the final conflict call for particular notice.

The soul is often spoken of with peculiar emphasis. ‘Thou shalt make his SOUL an offering for sin—The waters are come in unto my SOUL—My SOUL is full of troubles and my life draweth nigh to the grave. My SOUL is exceeding sorrowful even unto death—Now is my SOUL troubled, and what shall I say?’ (Is. liii. 11; Ps. lxxix. 1.—lxxxviii. 3; Mat. xxvi. 38; John xii. 27.) What our divine surety suffered in his soul must ever surpass all our powers of description or conception. The language used by the inspired writers denotes the highest pitch of intensity, while we have the best reason to suppose that every variety of inward agony which a sinless spirit can possibly feel was experienced by him. *His soul was exceeding sorrowful*;—the most pungent sorrow filled his bosom; his heart was pierced through with many sorrows; he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. *He began to be very heavy*:—an unutterable load of dejection, an overpowering weight of consternation pressed down his spirits to the lowest depth of depression. *He was sore amazed*:—filled with inexpressible wonder and horrific terror at the evil of sin, and the magnitude of the curse to be endured for its expiation. *His soul was troubled*;—agitated with alarm, filled with apprehension, overwhelmed with anguish, at the thought of that awful wrath which he had to

endure; at sight of that thick darkness, that midnight gloom of hell which he had to approach and to dissipate; at experience of that condemnation which now weighed him down under its mountain load; at taste of that cup of gall which had to be drunk with all its wormwood bitterness. Well might he take up the complaint, 'My soul is full of troubles; the waters are come unto my soul.' And thus was it that 'he made his soul an offering for sin.'

Nor can it be doubted that the sufferings of the latter period of his life possess a speciality of interest. The period of his mysterious agony, his awful desertion, and his actual death calls for particular notice. This is what is emphatically called 'his hour—the hour and the power of darkness—the hour that he should depart out of this world.' (John vii. 30; Luke xxii. 53; John xiii. 1.) It was now that he was subjected to that inexplicable agony which, in the absence of every adequate external cause, covered him over with a copious sweat of blood. It was now that he was cruelly deserted by all his former friends, there not being among the whole multitude of those whom he had cured of their sicknesses, to whom he had preached the gospel of salvation, and whom he had chosen as his disciples, one to abide with him in his dire extremity, but being left to utter the heavy complaint, 'I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.' (Psalm lxix. 20.) It was now that he suffered the withdrawal of all sensible tokens of his Father's love; the suspension of every kind of sensible support, of every display of divine complacency; the felt manifestation of God's righteous displeasure at sin; the total eclipse of the hallowed light which had formerly cheered him amid the deepest gloom; the paternal desertion which drew from him the deep groan of bereavement, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' It was now that he suffered the pains of actual dissolution; he died the death of the cross; he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. It was no faint, no swoon, no temporary suspension of the vital functions. It was death—a complete separation of the soul and body; the heart having been pierced by the soldier's spear, and his enemies themselves bearing witness to the reality of his departure. 'Then came the soldiers and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him: but when they came to Jesus and saw that HE WAS DEAD ALREADY, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.' (John xix. 32—34.) This was the period

when emphatically the Son of God made atonement for sin—when the tide of suffering rose to its height; when the dregs of the bitter cup of anguish were wrung out; when the sentence of woe reached its climax. A period, into which whatever is painful in torture, ignominious in shame, distressing in privation, terrific in satanic assault, and overwhelming in experienced wrath, was, as it were, compressed!—a period, whether to the sufferer himself or to the guilty world whose cause he undertook, the most awfully momentous that had ever occurred since the commencement of time.

Such, then, is what constitutes the matter or substance of Christ's atonement,—his sufferings, all his sufferings, and the sufferings of his soul, and of the concluding period of his life in particular. It is not necessary to suppose that the sufferings which Christ endured on our behalf were precisely the same in kind and degree which are experienced by the wicked in the place of final woe. There are, on the one hand, ingredients in *their* misery which *he* could not feel, as remorse, despair, and the fury of evil passions. Remorse, he could not feel, for his soul was a stranger to personal guilt. Despair he could not feel, for he had full assurance of deliverance from the bondage of death and the prison of the grave. And as for sinful passions, they had at no time a seat in his breast. On the other hand, there were ingredients in the sufferings of Christ, arising from the repugnance of his pure soul at moral defilement, which those who go down to the pit are incapable of feeling. 'It is, I humbly conceive, says Dr. Pye Smith, 'worse than improper to represent the sufferings of Jesus Christ, in their last and most terrible extremity, as the same with those of condemned sinners in the state of punishment. In the case of such incorrigible and wretched criminals, there is a leading circumstance which could not, by any possibility, exist in the suffering Saviour. *They eat of the fruit of their own way, and are filled with their own devices.* A most material part of their misery consists in the unrestrained power of sinful passions, for ever raging and for ever ungratified. Their minds are constantly torn with the racking consciousness of personal guilt; with mutual aggravations and insults; with the remorse of despair; with malice, fury, and blasphemy against the Holy and Blessed God himself; and with an indubitable sense of Jehovah's righteous abhorrence and rejection of them. No such passions as these, nor the slightest tincture of them, could have place in the breast of the holy Jesus. That meek and purest Lamb offered himself without spot. His heart,

though broken and bleeding with agonies to us unknown, ever felt a perfect resignation to the hand that smote him, and a full acquiescence in all the bitterness of the cup which was appointed him to drink: the resignation and acquiescence of love and conviction. He suffered in such a manner as a being perfectly holy could suffer. Though, animated by the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross and despised the shame; yet there appear to have been seasons in the hour of his deepest extremity, in which he underwent the entire absence of divine joy and every kind of comfort or sensible support. What but a total eclipse of the sun of consolation, could have wrung from him that exceedingly bitter and piercing cry, *My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?*—The fire of Heaven consumed the sacrifice. The tremendous manifestations of God's displeasure against sin he endured, though in him was no sin: and he endured them in a manner of which even those unhappy spirits who shall drink the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God, will never be able to form an adequate idea! They know not the HOLY and EXQUISITE SENSIBILITY which belonged to this immaculate sacrifice. That clear sight which he possessed of the transgressions of his people in all their heinousness and atrocity, and that acute sense of the infinite vileness of sin, its baseness, ingratitude, and evil in every respect, must have produced, *in him*, a feeling of extreme distress, of a kind and to a degree which no creature, whose moral sense is impaired by personal sin, can justly conceive. As such a feeling would accrue from the purity and ardour of his love to God and holiness, acting in his perfectly peculiar circumstances; so it would be increased by the pity and tenderness which he ever felt towards the objects of his redeeming love. A wise and good father is more deeply distressed by a crime which his beloved child has perpetrated, than by the same offence if committed by an indifferent person.' (Disc. on Sac. pp. 45—47.)

## SECTION II.

## VALUE OF CHRIST'S ATONEMENT.

THE value of Christ's atonement we conceive to arise, not from the nature, or intensity, or continuance of his sufferings. The work of Jesus was not a mere commercial affair of debt and payment. We have no conception that, had the number of those for whom he suffered been greater than it was, or had their sins been more numerous or more aggravated than they were, his sufferings must have been proportionally increased. Neither can we subscribe to the notion that one pang or pain of all that he endured was itself sufficient to effect atonement. We conceive, on the contrary, that he suffered nothing but what was necessary, that if less could have sufficed, less would have been required; while, on the other hand, the intrinsic worth of what he actually endured was such as to render it sufficient for the salvation of many more than shall be ultimately saved, had God only seen meet to extend to them his mercy in Christ Jesus. The sufferings of Christ we regard as a moral satisfaction to the law and government of God, which would have been necessary had there been only one to be saved, and which would have been found sufficient had the whole human race without exception been to rank among the redeemed. Just as the arrangement which exists for the outward illumination of our globe, would have been required had there been but one inhabitant to reap the benefit presently enjoyed, and would have been sufficient had there been many more millions in existence than actually inhabit the earth. The worth or value of Christ's atoning sacrifice we conceive to have arisen, not from one circumstance alone, but from several circumstances combined, none of which can be dispensed with in forming a proper estimate on the subject. These circumstances we shall now attempt to unfold.

I. The first is the *dignity of the Saviour's person*.

He who, in making atonement, is at once the priest and the sacrifice, is divine. He is the Son of God, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. He is

God himself, coequal with the Father, Jehovah's fellow. Titles which involve essential dignity are unhesitatingly ascribed to him. He is spoken of as possessing all the necessary attributes of Deity. Works which belong only to God, are said to be performed by him. And the highest forms of divine worship are used by all moral creatures, in doing him homage. The truth of these assertions, we must be permitted to take for granted, as to exhibit even an outline of their evidence would lead us into an improper digression. The doctrine of Christ's dignity is prominently set forth in the volume of revealed truth. It is the glory of Christianity. It sparkles, like a radiant gem, in every part of the sacred field. It invests the whole Christian system with heavenly beauty. It imparts a peculiar grandeur and sublimity to the doctrines of the cross.

From the dignity of the party offended by man's sin, it was requisite that he, who should successfully transact for pardon, should possess a corresponding elevation of character. He who is offended is the infinite Jehovah, the great God of heaven and of earth. It is the infinite Majesty whose honour has been violated; it is the throne of the Eternal whose stability and authority have been invaded. To effect reconciliation, in such a case, is a work to which no man, no angel, no superangelic creature is adequate. No priest of less personal consequence than the Lord of glory, is competent to the office of appeasing the wrath of the high and lofty one who inhabiteth eternity. But we have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens.

The sacrifice by which atonement is made for offences of infinite moral turpitude, must be possessed of infinite moral worth. The relative value arising from divine appointment is not enough; else it could never have been said, 'It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sin.' The blood of inferior animals was as capable as any other of all the worth which mere appointment can impart. But an intrinsic worth was required, which could be possessed by nothing short of 'blood divine.' Hence the sacrifice of Christ is so often spoken of in Scripture as being *himself*. 'Christ hath loved us and given HIMSELF for us an offering and a sacrifice to God.—Who gave HIMSELF a ransom for all.—When he had by HIMSELF purged our sins.—He offered up HIMSELF.—He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of HIMSELF.' (Eph. v, 2; 1 Tim. ii, 6; Heb. i, 3.—vii, 27.—ix, 26.

As the substance of Christ's atoning sacrifice consisted in his sufferings or death, it has been alleged that its intrinsic worth could be nothing more than human, as his human nature alone could suffer and die. But the close and inseparable union subsisting between the divine and human natures in the person of the Son of God is here to be remembered. Although the human nature alone could either suffer or die, it was the Son of God, as possessed of this nature, who endured the sufferings and died the death of the cross. The possession of a human nature qualified him for suffering; the divinity of his person gave to his suffering a worth equivalent to its own dignity. Although the human nature was alone capable of suffering, it was nevertheless the person to whom this nature belonged who suffered. It may be thought that at this rate, as the person was divine, such an assertion involves the blasphemy that Deity suffered. By no means. When a person suffers it does not follow that he suffers in all that pertains to him. He may suffer in his property and not suffer in his honour; he may suffer in his happiness and not in his character; he may suffer in his body, and not in his soul: still it is the person who suffers. So, in the case before us, while the Son of God suffers in his human nature it is still the person which suffers. If, before we are entitled to say that a person suffers, all that pertains to him must suffer, it follows that we can never say a person dies, as the soul, an essential constituent part of the person, never dies.

But, granting that it is the person who suffers, it may still be said that the value of these sufferings is to be estimated only by the nature of that in which he suffers. When a martyr suffers death, as it is the body only that dies, there cannot belong to his death a worth proportioned to his soul. In like manner, when Christ suffers, as Deity cannot suffer, his sufferings, it may be said, can possess only the worth of humanity. But this is to leave out of consideration altogether a circumstance which is allowed by all to have the effect of increasing the value of certain acts and sufferings. The circumstance to which I refer is *dignity of character*. There are some things which are of the same value, by whomsoever performed. Money, for example, paid by a prince, is of no more mercantile value than money paid by any other man. But there are other things in which the case is widely different, their value depending, in some measure, on the dignity of him by whom they are performed. The relative value of certain actions depends on the rank in the scale of intel-

lectual, or moral, or social being of the person who performs them. To the action of an inferior animal we attach less value than to that of a human creature; to that of a man less, again, than to that of an angel. On the same principle, the action of a peasant and that of a king may differ materially, with regard to relative worth. In one point of view, the life of a slave and the life of a monarch are of equal value; they are both human creatures. But, in another point of view, the life of a king is of far greater value than the life of a slave: and the act of laying down his life involves a higher degree of worth in the one than in the other. This distinction is recognized in the address of the people to king David, when he would go forth with them to battle:—‘Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but NOW THOU ART WORTH TEN THOUSAND OF US.’ (2 Sam. xviii. 3.) For a king to submit to excruciating tortures and an ignominious death, with a view to save some one of his subjects, will be reckoned by all a more meritorious piece of conduct than if such had been submitted to by one who held the place merely of a fellow subject. Yet here it might be said, it is humanity and not royalty which suffers, and why attach to it a value arising from the latter, rather than confine it to that which springs from the former circumstance? The case is parallel to that of which we are now speaking. The humanity of Christ alone could either suffer or die, but that humanity belonged to a person who is divine, and this gave to his sufferings and death the value of divinity.\*

\* “To suppose, because humanity only is capable of suffering, that therefore humanity only is necessary to atonement, is to render *dignity of character* of no account. When Zaleucus, one of the Grecian kings, had made a law against adultery, that whosoever was guilty of this crime should lose both his eyes, his own son is said to have been the first transgressor. To preserve the honour of the law, and at the same time to save his own son from total blindness, the father had recourse to an expedient of losing one of his own eyes, and his son one of his. This expedient, though it did not conform to the letter of the law, yet was well adapted to preserve the spirit of it, as it served to evince to the nation the determination of the king to punish adultery, as much, perhaps more than if the sentence had literally been put into execution against the offender. But if instead of this he had appointed that one eye of an animal should be put out, in order to save that of his son, or if a common subject had offered to lose an eye, would either have answered the purpose? The animal and the subject, were each possessed of an eye, as well as the sovereign. It might be added, too, that it was more bodily pain; and seeing it was in the body only that this penalty could be endured, any being that possessed a body



How it comes to pass, that the personal dignity of the sufferer conveys to the sufferings of his humanity a worth proportioned to *him* who suffers rather than to *that* which suffers, we pretend not fully to explain. The above observations, however, serve to show that the principle on which this is affirmed, is one on which we are not altogether unaccustomed to reason. It is not meant to be inferred that any analogies, such as that resorted to above, can give us a complete idea of the nature of a case which is transcendently and awfully peculiar. It is enough if they serve to neutralize the objections of such as are disposed to cavil at the truth. On a subject of this nature, it ill becomes us to speak either with carelessness or with precipitation. It is to be approached only with cautious reverence. Here, if anywhere, we should be careful to be 'lowly wise.' Yet we may be permitted to show the reasonableness of a doctrine, and to expose the temerity and presumption of its adversaries, without laying ourselves open to the charge of being wise above what is written. The following statement may not altogether be without its use, in shedding a ray of light on this acknowledgedly great and profound mystery:—A person only can perform moral acts: The human nature of Christ possessed no personal subsistence: Of course, although the human nature of Christ could either suffer or obey, the obedience and sufferings of his humanity, viewed in themselves could have no moral character: To give them a moral character they must be viewed in connexion with his person: Whence it follows that, the obedience, and sufferings of Christ, *physically* considered, possessed only the worth of humanity, but *morally* considered possessed a worth proportioned to the dignity of his divine person. Now, the sufferings and death of Christ for the sins of his people were of a moral character, being endured with a view to meet the claims of the divine moral government, to satisfy the law and justice of God. It follows that there attached to them all the value which divine dignity could impart.†

was equally capable of enduring it. True, they might endure it, but would their suffering have answered the same end? Would it have satisfied justice? Would it have had the same effect upon the nation, or tended equally to restore the tone of injured authority?"—Works of And. Fuller, vol. V. p. 565.

† On this delicate point, I beg to confirm the view I have given, by referring the reader to the following paragraphs by Dr. Pye Smith.

"I. The assumption of human nature by the eternal word, who is God, was the act of an infinite mind, knowing, intending, and contemplating all the *results* of that act of assumption, through the period

But we are more concerned with the evidence of the *fact*, than with the explanation of the *mode*, of this great and important truth. Those who hold the doctrine of Christ's divinity, can never hesitate to admit that the sufficiency or efficacy of his atonement springs from the supreme dignity of his person as the Son of God. The validity of his sacrifice takes its rise from his true and essential divinity. To this the testimony of Scripture is distinctly borne. The epistle to the Hebrews, which treats professedly of the insufficiency of the legal sacrifices, and the intrinsic validity of that of Christ, commences with an elaborate demonstration of Christ's divinity, as the basis on which the subsequent reasoning is made to rest. The High Priest of the Christian profession is explicitly shown to be the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person; to be much better than the angels; to be God whose throne is for ever and ever; to be Jehovah who laid the foundations of the

of the designed humiliation and for ever. To the divine mind, nearness and remoteness of time or space are equal. Consequently, as the actual assumption of human nature was the first result of the omnipotent will, so the same act, or volition, must equally have carried forwards and communicated its original divine value to all the subsequent moral and mediatorial acts of the incarnate Saviour.

"II. The union of the divine and human natures, in his person, was constant and invariable. The Scriptures afford us no reason to think that the Messiah's human nature though retaining always its essential properties, had ever a separate subsistence. To the mother of Jesus it was announced, 'The holy Being which is born of thee, shall be called the Son of God:' and, according to the prophetic declaration, as soon as men could say, 'Unto us a child is born,' so soon was it the fact that his name was called 'The wonderful, the counsellor, the mighty God.' It was the Mediator, *in his whole person*, that acted for the salvation of man; though it was impossible that the divine nature could be subject to suffering.

"From these two positions I infer a third, which I venture to propose, as an unexceptionable mode of stating this important, though profound and difficult subject:—

"III. All the acts of our Lord Jesus Christ that were physical, or merely intellectual, were acts of his human nature alone, being necessary to the subsistence of a human nature: but all his moral acts, and all the moral qualities of his complex acts; or, in other terms, all that he did in and for the execution of his mediatorial office and work;—were impressed with the essential dignity and moral value of his divine perfection.

"These reasons appear to me sufficient to authorize our attributing to this holy sacrifice, a value *properly* INFINITE, on account of the divine nature of him who offered it. A most important conclusion! Rich in blessing to the contrite sinner: full of joy to the obedient believer" — Disc. on Sac. pp. 69—71.

earth, who shall remain when all else has perished, who is the same and his years shall not fail. While, in another part of the book, the blood of Christ is represented as deriving its superiority over the ceremonial sacrifices, from its being offered 'THROUGH THE ETERNAL SPIRIT'—a phrase understood by some of our most eminent critics and divines to refer to the divine dignity of his person. 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God' (Heb. ix. 14.) It is because *Jesus Christ* is God's *Son* that his blood possesses intrinsic validity *to cleanse from all sin*. The value of the gift and the sufficiency of the propitiatory sacrifice arise from the same circumstance. '*God sent his SON to be the propitiation for our sins.*' (1 John iv. 10.)

II. But this is not all. *Relationship of nature to those for whom the atonement was made*, is an essential element in its validity.

Christ required to be real and proper *man*, as much as the true *God*. To qualify him for making atonement he must possess opposite attributes, a frail and mortal nature combined with ineffable dignity of person. We allude not now to the necessity of the incarnation to *fit* the Messiah for suffering, to render him *susceptible* of pain and death, to make the offering of himself as a sacrifice a thing *possible*. We refer rather to the possession of human nature as imparting a character of *worth* or *validity* to what he did. This was requisite, not more to *enable* him to suffer, than to impart to his sufferings an essential *value* in the estimation of the divine law. Had the work of our redemption been a mere mercantile transaction, it mattered not by whom the price might have been paid. But being a moral satisfaction to the law of God for the sins of men, there existed a moral fitness or necessity that the satisfaction should be made by one in the nature of those who had sinned and were to be redeemed. The Redeemer behaved, as of old, to be a kinsman, a brother. Without this, neither could the moral government of God be vindicated, nor the glory of the divine Lawgiver maintained, nor the principles of the law upheld. The law in its precept was suited to man, and in its curse it had a claim upon man. Its requirements were such as man only could fulfil; its penalty such as one possessing the nature of man only could bear. The penalty was *suffering even unto death*; and no angel, no one who had not a body as well as a soul, could die. The death only of a man could possess a

moral and legal congruity to the curse of a law given to man and broken by man. It was not, then, merely to qualify him for suffering that the Messiah took upon him the nature of man, but to qualify him for *such* sufferings as should possess validity in the eye of the divine law. *Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified* must be ALL OF ONE, (*i. e.* all of one nature.) *Therefore in all things it behoved him to be made LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN, that he might make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Since by MAN came death, by MAN came also the resurrection of the dead. The serpent's head could be bruised, only by the SEED OF THE WOMAN.* (Heb. ii. 11, 17; 1 Cor. xv. 21; Gen. iii. 15.)

III. *Freedom himself from all personal obligation to suffer*, is another essential ingredient in the value of Christ's atonement.

He who makes atonement for others must himself be entirely free from that which renders the atonement necessary. What renders atonement necessary is sin. But Jesus was altogether holy. It would seem to be a dictate of reason and common sense, that vicarious punishment cannot be borne by one who is himself a sharer in the guilt which calls for it. The law, in this case, has a previous claim upon him. His own state renders an atonement necessary. He cannot remove his own guilt by his sufferings, and how can it be possible that he should remove the guilt of others? A substitutionary victim must itself be perfectly spotless and pure.

This was plainly enough pointed out in the Levitical law. The high priest was required to possess a high degree of ceremonial purity. Perfect moral purity was impossible; but the necessity of this in the antitype, was sufficiently taught, by this legal functionary being required to be free from all bodily defect or deformity, to be the son of one who was a virgin and not a widow when married to his father, and by his being exempted from certain methods of contracting ceremonial defilement. The sacrificial victim, also, was to be a lamb *without blemish and without spot*. To the same purpose was it enacted that the red heifer should not only be one *without spot wherein was no blemish*, but one *upon which never came yoke*. (Num. xix. 2; Deut. xxi. 3.) All this, doubtless, was designed to shadow forth the immaculate purity of the great High Priest of our profession, who put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

In virtue of his spotless innocence, Jesus was completely free from all manner of legal obligation to suffer, arising from himself. Legal obligation to the curse may arise from one

or both of two things: either from being born under the curse, that is to say, from original sin; or from becoming exposed to the penalty in consequence of a personal breach of its requirements, that is, by actual transgression. Infants of the human family are under it in the former way; adults in both: but Jesus was neither the one nor the other.

He was free from all actual sin. His obedience to the divine law, under which he voluntarily brought himself, was complete. His thoughts were ever pure; guile was not found in his mouth; and he did always those things that pleased his father. As regarded God, he fully exemplified the duties of religion;—cherishing every pious emotion of love, faith, gratitude, patience, and submission; and scrupulously performing, with punctuality and exactness, every act of devotion, meditation, prayer, praise, and attendance on the services of public worship. As respected men, every social duty, whether of affection and obedience and respect to relatives, or of kindness and fidelity to friends, or of justice and equity and benevolence and integrity in general society, was fully exhibited. Nor were the personal duties of temperance, sobriety, circumspection, and self-command, less strictly observed by him.

These are not unsupported assertions. The testimony borne to the innocence of the Saviour's life is most complete and decisive. Prophets spake of him as the 'Holy One,' who 'had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.' The angel announced him as 'that holy thing' which should be born of Mary. Himself said 'I do always those things that please the Father—Which of you convinceth me of sin?—the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me.' His apostles spake of him as one 'who knew no sin'—who was 'without sin'—'who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners'—'who did no sin, neither was guilt found in his mouth'—one, of whom it could be said, 'in him is no sin.' But the most decisive testimony of all is that which was borne by his inveterate enemies. The Jews, who were brim-full of prejudice against his person and claims, were unwillingly compelled to affirm, 'He hath done all things well.' The traitor who gave him up to his enemies, exclaimed under the agonies of conviction, 'I have sinned in that I have betrayed *innocent* blood. The judge, who unjustly doomed him to the cross, acknowledged, 'I find no fault in this man.' Nay, even the fallen spirits were forced to confess, saying, 'Let us alone: what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to

destroy us? I know thee who thou art **THE HOLY ONE** of God.\* Such is the evidence that Christ did not bring himself under the curse.

Some of these passages are quite as decisive in favour of the innocence of the Saviour's *nature*, as of that of his life. That he was not *born* under the curse is as unequivocally taught as that he did not *bring himself* under it. Indeed, an innocent life would seem to afford very satisfactory proof of an innocent nature. We can conceive of a holy nature lapsing into sin, as has been exemplified both in angels and men; but how a holy life, a life free from the slightest taint of corruption, could spring from a nature in every degree corrupt, is, we must say, to us utterly inconceivable. It seems a natural impossibility. An impure fountain cannot but send forth impure streams: a corrupt tree cannot but bear corrupt fruit. To contend therefore, as some have done, for the sinlessness of the Saviour's life, and yet to maintain the sinfulness of his nature, appears to us to be grossly contradictory and paradoxical. But of the strict innocence of the Saviour's *nature*, of its perfect freedom from whatever should entitle it to the character of 'fallen,' we should reckon his own words as decisive:—'The prince of this world hath nothing **IN ME.**' To the same effect is the testimony of the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews,—'who is *holy*, (ἅγιος) signifying purity of nature, as distinguished from 'harmless' (ἄκακος) meaning freedom from evil in respect of external conduct, and also from 'undefiled,' (ἀμίαντος) which seems to denote purity of official qualifications and administration. Nor can there be any thing more unequivocal than the language of the angel, when, making known his miraculous birth, he calls him 'that Holy thing,' (τὸ ἅγιον). This refers to what was conceived and born of Mary; not 'fallen and sinful flesh,' but a 'holy thing,' essentially and naturally holy from the first moment of its existence.

The miraculous nature of the conception of our Lord's humanity affords additional proof of this point. By being born of a virgin, being in a peculiar sense the seed of the woman, the human nature of Christ escaped all connexion with the Adamic covenant. It was at once connected with the race of man, and yet free from the contamination springing from Adam's federal representation of his natural descendants.

\* Psalm xvi. 10; Is. liii. 9; Luke i. 35; John viii. 29, 46.—xiv. 30. 2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. iv. 15.—vii. 26; 1 Pet. ii. 22; 1 John iii. 5 Mark vii. 37; Matt. xxvii. 4; Luke xxiii. 4; Mark i. 24.

This is what constitutes the incarnation the great mystery of godliness, and but for this it is not only not easy to assign any good reason for the miraculous nature of his conception at all, but even difficult to vindicate it from consequences that are necessarily and positively injurious. If, even notwithstanding its miraculous production, his human nature was fallen and sinful, one can scarce help asking for what purpose a miracle was wrought at all in the matter, seeing that fallen and sinful humanity could have been produced without any miracle whatever. But the miracle was not only in this respect useless: it was, at the same time, calculated to convey the impression that the human nature of Christ differed essentially, in this particular, from man's nature in general,—an impression which, on the supposition against which we are contending, was false and delusive.

We wait not to argue the holiness of Christ's human nature from the oneness of his person; from the necessity of such holiness to his being a proper example to his people; from the impossibility otherwise of his death being voluntary; and from his having survived the conflict with the powers of darkness and the enemy death, which is not else to be accounted for. The discussion of these points would carry us too far away from our general design. But we deem it necessary to mention them. How full, and varied, and unequivocal the testimony of Scripture may be, there are many who will not hesitate unceremoniously to set aside the evidence of particular texts, by having recourse to some vague or loose mode of interpretation. For the sake of such, it must be made known, that the view taken of these particular texts is fully borne out and supported by certain general principles, which, while they harmonize with the meaning attached to individual passages of Scripture, themselves peremptorily and independently require us to admit the immaculate holiness of Christ's atoning sacrifice.

The perfect innocence of the Saviour's nature and life—thus, we hope, satisfactorily established—enters essentially into that which constitutes the moral worth or intrinsic value of his vicarious sufferings. It shows him to have been free from all legal obligation to suffering in himself. The law of God had in this way no claim upon him for subjection to its curse; and he was thus far at liberty to suffer the penalty due to sin, on behalf of others. It is on this principle that the apostle speaks of his personal innocence as essential to his sacerdotal character and work. 'Such an high priest,' says he, 'became us, who is *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate*

from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, *who needeth not daily to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins, and then for the people's.*'

IV. It was further necessary to the validity of Christ's atonement that he should be *entirely at his own disposal*.

It is not enough that the substitute, being innocent, is free from the claims of the law to which he gives satisfaction for others. He may be under obligations to another law, the fulfilment of whose demands may render it impossible for him to occupy the place of a surety. His whole time and energies may be thus, as it were, previously engaged, so as to put it out of his power to make a transfer of any part of them for the behoof of others. This is, indeed, the case with all creatures. Whatever service they are capable of performing, they owe originally and necessarily to God. They are, from their very nature, incapable of meriting any thing for *themselves*, much more for *others*. The right of self-disposal belongs not to creatures. They and all that pertains to them, are the property of Him who made and preserves them. They are under law to God, and at liberty to dispose of themselves only as that law directs. It thus appears that an angel of light, though perfectly innocent, and free from all the claims of that law which binds man over to punishment, could not have furnished a sacrifice, of value to atone for human guilt. Angels are creatures, and as such, are necessarily under law to God. It is true, they are not under the covenant which God made with man, but the law under which they exist has a claim upon them for the full amount of the service they are capable of performing, and thus denies them all right of giving satisfaction to another law, in behalf of a different order of creatures.

But the Son of God, not being a creature, was not only not under the law which man had broken, but he was under no other law; he was not only innocent, but free to do, or to suffer as might seem to him to be fit. He was Lord of all, and subject to none. He, and he only, was entitled to assume such language as this:—'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I HAVE POWER TO LAY IT DOWN, and I HAVE POWER TO TAKE IT AGAIN.' He here not merely claims to have acted voluntarily, but to have had a right, a legal right, (*ἐξουσία*) so to do. This is what no creature could ever say. In giving his life a ransom for many, Christ gave what was strictly his own, and entirely at his own disposal. Without this, it



does not appear that what he did could have possessed any value; subjection to one law could not have been yielded without the violation of another, and this was sufficient to deprive it of all moral worth.

V. Christ, in making atonement, was perfectly *voluntary*; and here we have another ingredient in its value.

Without this, it is clear, all the other ingredients were of no avail. Let his person be ever so dignified; let him be ever so closely related to man; let him be as free as possible from all moral contamination; nay, let him be entirely at his own disposal; it is manifest that, unless he chose actually to dispose of himself in the manner in question, no validity could attach to what he did. Vicarious satisfaction can never be compulsory; voluntariness enters into its very essence. Every well-ordered mind revolts at the idea of one person being *compelled* to suffer for another. So much is this a dictate of reason, that even the heathen reckoned it an unpropitious omen, if the animal showed any reluctance.

In all that he did to make atonement for sin, Jesus manifested no degree of reluctance. At every step we meet with evidence of the most perfect willingness. To the proposal in the eternal covenant he gave his cheerful consent,—‘Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.’ (Psal. xl. 6—8.) It was the same spirit that dictated the well-known reply to his mother, when yet young,—‘How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business.’ (Luke ii. 49.) At a later period he said, ‘I lay down my life: no man (*οὐδεις*, no one) taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. (John x. 17, 18.) In no instance did he manifest the slightest symptom of backwardness. The inspired writers speak of him as submitting to every suffering with a fixed determination of purpose which nothing could shake. ‘He *gave* his back to the smiters and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair—He *gave* himself a ransom for all—He *gave* himself for us—He bowed his head and *gave* up the ghost.’ (Is. l. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Eph. v. 25; John xix. 30.)

His death was as voluntary as any part of his sufferings. The Roman soldiers, indeed, were employed in crucifying him; but we err egregiously if we suppose that he died otherwise than voluntarily. ‘I lay down my life; no one taketh it from me,’ is his own unequivocal and emphatic lan-

guage. He died, neither from disease nor exhaustion. Just before he expired, he had strength enough to cry with a loud voice, 'It is finished.' He could then, or at any other moment, had it so pleased him, have stepped down from the cross, to the confusion of those who assailed him with the bitter taunt, 'If thou be the Christ, come down from the cross and save thyself.' But, then, the Scriptures would not have been fulfilled, nor the redemption of man have been effected. Nevertheless, his own decisive words, as well as the fact of his divinity, leave us without a doubt that, had he not cheerfully given it up of his own accord, neither earth nor hell could have wrung from him his life. The very time of his death was that of his own choice; for neither could the barbarities of his persecutors hasten, nor the lingering punishment of crucifixion protract it beyond the period in which he determined himself to yield up the ghost; and, accordingly, when the soldiers came to break his legs, they found that he was dead already.

The voluntary nature of the Saviour's death, it may here be remarked by the way, affords a strong argument in proof of the divinity of his person, and also of the spotless innocence of his humanity. Had he been a creature, even a super-angelic creature, brought into being for the purpose of dying for us, his death could not have been said to be voluntary. Much less could this be said if his human nature had been in any sense sinful, for then he must have died of necessity, not of free-will; he must have died, as has been said; 'by the common property of flesh to die because it was accursed in the loins of our first parents,' and then the doctrine of atonement with all its comforting influences, must have been given up.

This willingness of Christ to suffer and to die, was not the result of ignorance. A person may thoughtlessly engage to submit to treatment, of the amount of which he may not at the moment of engagement, be aware; and, when the reality comes to be known, he may, from the force of honour or some such principle, persevere in his determination to suffer. But such suffering could scarcely be called voluntary. Such, at all events, was not that of Christ. He knew, from the first, the full amount of what he was to endure. It was, with the perfect knowledge of all that should befall him in the Jewish capital, that 'he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.' (Luke ix, 51.) He knew every bitter ingredient that was infused into the cup of woe, when he said, 'The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it.'

(John xviii, 11.) It was, with a full understanding of all the terrors, with which that cloud of Jehovah's wrath was soon to burst in awful vengeance on his head, that he magnanimously exclaimed, 'I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished. (Luke xii, 50.) It was no sudden impulse of enthusiasm which moved the Son of God to undertake the work of our redemption. It was no momentary movement of generous pity, which the experience of difficulties and dangers might cool or extirpate. No. It was a settled and immoveable purpose, which time and obstacles only served to strengthen and confirm. Instead of shrinking from dangers, and seeking excuses for desisting from his undertaking, his fortitude seemed to gather power in proportion as he approached the final scene of complete woe. On representing to his disciples that he must go up to Jerusalem and suffer many things, Peter presumed to expostulate with him, saying, 'Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee;' but he turned and said unto Peter, 'Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.' (Matt. xvi, 22, 23.)

From all this it appears, that the work of Christ, in giving himself up to suffer and die for us, was strictly voluntary. In no step of that glorious undertaking, was he moved by any thing but his own free will and matchless love. It was a high act of sovereign grace; not a boon forcibly wrung from a reluctant benefactor. To deny this, is to destroy altogether its efficacy. 'It is of the utmost importance for us to know,' as has been beautifully observed, 'that through every step of the painful process through which he passed, the benefits derived to us by his sufferings, were not by constraint wrung from him, but willingly purchased for us; that he was not bound to endurance by the iron chain of his own fallen and sinful personal constitution, but by the golden chain of that love to God whose glorious perfections he was manifesting to the universe, and of that love to men through whose salvation he was making the manifestation, which no waters could quench, and no floods could drown.' (Dods, p. 126.)

VI. One ingredient is still necessary, which is of such essential importance as to have been supposed by many to be all that is requisite. In a compensatory arrangement, such as the atonement is, both parties must be voluntary. Not only must the one party be willing to make the compensation; the other must be willing to accept of it when made.

*The appointment of the Father* is no less important than the voluntary engagement of the Son; and this, we have now to state, is a prerequisite to validity which the work of Christ distinctly possessed.

The necessity of divine appointment will appear, if it is considered, that God, being the party offended by man's sin, had a right to determine whether sin should be pardoned at all, and on what ground. It was not enough, that a person heroic and benevolent enough should be found, to offer himself in the place of the guilty. To the offended sovereign does it belong to determine whether the proposed substitution shall serve all the ends of justice. Of this He is the only judge. And, supposing him satisfied on this point, it is still a part of his sovereign prerogative to determine whether he shall be pleased to accept of this, or shall insist that the penalty be inflicted on the person offending. To say otherwise, is to hold the monstrous opinion, that the Almighty could be compelled to adopt a line of procedure pointed out by another. The power of dispensing, in any particular, with the laws, can reside only in him who has the power of making the laws. Now, in the case before us, there is a dispensing with the letter of the law as far as it requires the personal punishment of the offender. It is thus clear as noon-day that, had not God voluntarily consented to accept of the sufferings of Christ, these sufferings, however otherwise precious, could have been of no avail. No security could have existed for their ever being accepted. Intrinsically valuable though they were, they might have been relatively worthless; and, as regards the grand design of appeasing the wrath of God, the precious blood of Christ might have been as water spilt upon the ground.

The evidence that the sacrifice of Christ was appointed by God is happily as satisfactory, as the necessity for the appointment is indispensable. In giving himself for our sins that he might redeem us from the present evil world, he acted 'according to the will of God, even our Father.' (Gal. i, 4.) Jesus died, 'being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.' (Acts ii, 23.) The character in which he suffered was stamped with the authority of a divine delegation—'I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.' (Prov. viii, 23.) At the very time that he claims for himself the character of entire self-devotement, he fails not to point distinctly to his commission from above—'I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. *This commandment have I received of my*

*Father.*' (John x, 18.) Just before entering on the final scene of woe to which so much importance is attached, did he say, 'As the Father gave me *commandment* so I do; arise, let us go hence.' (John xiv, 31.) Not less decisive is the testimony of the apostles. 'Whom,' says Paul, 'God hath *set forth* (foreordained, *προέθετο*) to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' (Rom. iii, 25.) 'For of a truth,' says Peter, 'against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, which gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel *determined before* to be done.' And again, 'Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold—but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was *foreordained* before the foundation of the world.' (Acts iv. 27, 28; 1 Pet. i. 19, 20.) In beautiful harmony with these testimonies is the descriptive language of the beloved disciple, 'The Lamb slain *from the foundation of the world.*' (Rev. xiii, 8.) Thus does it fully appear that, in making atonement for our sins, Jesus acted, not only with the full consent, but under the high commission of God. He it was who awaked the fiery sword of vengeance against the Shepherd, the man that was his fellow, which continued to smite with relentless severity till justice was satisfied, and could not be quiet because *the Lord had given it a charge.* So true is it that 'the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.'

These are the circumstances, then, which constitute the validity of Christ's atonement. They are all of them necessary; not one can be dispensed with. They resolve themselves into supreme divinity, perfect humanity, and divine appointment. These, not singly but together, are what conferred on the sufferings and death of our Mediator that high character of intrinsic and relative worth which rendered them a complete atonement to the law and justice of God for the sins of men. Without these, the dying conqueror had never given utterance to the expiring shout of exultation, "It is finished:" never had he risen from the grave, and ascended to glory, and sat down at the right hand of God, amid the welcoming shouts of enraptured seraphim: the mediatorial glory which eclipses the splendours of the shekinah had never thrown around him its celestial radiance: nor had the sceptre of universal empire ever been put into his hand. From the perfection of his atonement, arising out of the circumstances specified above, does it proceed, that he makes intercession

for us within the veil of the upper sanctuary; and dispenses with a munificent hand the gifts of his purchase. And peace, and pardon, and redemption, and holiness, and eternal glory, are among the rich fruits of the royal and triumphant conquests he achieved, when, by his infinitely meritorious death, he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly. With the most entire confidence, then, may the needy sinner, smitten with the deepest sense of conscious unworthiness, rely for salvation on this all-sufficient atonement.



### SECTION III.

#### EXTENT OF CHRIST'S ATONEMENT.

THE point of which we are now to treat has been extensively agitated, as well in ancient as in modern times. At a very remote period, Faustus, the leader of the Pelagians, and Sirmandus, an acknowledged Semipelagian, advocated the sentiment that Christ died for all men; and were opposed by Augustine, Prosper, Fulgentius, Remigius, and other fearless defenders of the truth. In the Romish Church, this controversy was carried on with no small degree of warmth, the Jesuits espousing the one side, and the Jansenists the other. From the Papists it passed to the Protestants, Lutherans and Arminians advocating the cause of universality, while the Calvinists contended for a definite or restricted extent. The opinion of the Remonstrants on this topic was pointedly condemned by the Synod of Dort. (Turretini Institutio, v. ii. pp. 495, 496.) It still constitutes a prominent feature in the controversy between Arminians and Calvinists; and even some, who are otherwise free from the Arminian taint, have adopted notions on this point that are at variance with the Calvinistic creed.

1. Before going into any thing like argument, it will be proper to attend to some preliminary EXPLANATIONS.

On the extent of Christ's atonement, the two opinions that have long divided the Church are expressed by the terms

*definite* and *indefinite*. The former means that Christ died, satisfied divine justice, and made atonement, *only for such as are saved*. The latter means that Christ died, satisfied divine justice, or made atonement, for *all mankind without exception*, as well those who are not saved as those who are. The one regards the death of Christ as a *legal satisfaction* to the law and justice of God on behalf of elect sinners: the other regards it as a *general moral vindication* of the divine government, without respect to those to whom it may be rendered effectual, and of course equally applicable to all. The former opinion, or what is called *definite* atonement is that which we adopt, and which we shall endeavour to explain, prove, and defend, in our subsequent observations. It may be thus stated:—THAT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST MADE ATONEMENT TO GOD BY HIS DEATH, ONLY FOR THE SINS OF THOSE, TO WHOM, IN THE SOVEREIGN GOOD PLEASURE OF THE ALMIGHTY, THE BENEFITS OF HIS DEATH SHALL BE FINALLY APPLIED. By this definition, the extent of Christ's atonement is limited to those who ultimately enjoy its fruits; it is restricted to the elect of God, for whom *alone* we conceive him to have laid down his life. However, to prevent mistakes, and to give a clear understanding of the point in dispute, it may be necessary to offer a few explanatory remarks.

1. The point in dispute, let it be carefully observed, does not respect *the intrinsic worth* of Christ's death. This is admitted, on both hands, to be *infinite*. There is no room for controversy here. As has been shown in the preceding section, the inherent worth of Christ's atonement arises not from the nature, intensity, or duration of his sufferings, but from his personal dignity and other concurrent circumstances, which stamp a character of infinite value on all that he endured. On this ground we hold that the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ possessed an intrinsic value *sufficient* for the salvation of the whole world. In this sense it was adequate to the redemption of every human being—able to procure the expiation of every man's sins that ever existed, or ever shall exist to the end of time. Here we feel no hesitation; nor can we qualify these assertions in the slightest degree. We shall yield to none in our estimate of the intrinsic worth of Christ's atonement. That worth we hold to be, in the strictest sense of the term, INFINITE—ABSOLUTE—ALL-SUFFICIENT. If sufficiency were the point on which the controversy turned, it might soon be ended; and we are strongly inclined to believe, that nothing more than this is meant by

many of those who contend for Christ's having died for all men; it is with such persons a mistake of words more than of opinions. In the fullest sense of the terms, then, we regard the atonement of Christ as SUFFICIENT FOR ALL. This all-sufficiency is what lays foundation for the unrestricted universality of the gospel call. And from every such view of the atonement as would imply that it was not sufficient for all, or that there was not an ample warrant in the invitations of the gospel for all to look to it for salvation, we utterly dissent. Against every such limitation or restriction we enter our solemn and deliberate protest, as alike dishonouring to Christ, and unwarranted by the testimony of scripture. Nor would we hesitate for a moment to adopt the following strong protestation of an eminent writer, as expressive of our own settled conviction on the subject:—'Such is my impression of its sufficiency, that were all the guilt of all the millions of mankind that have ever lived concentrated in my own person, I should see no reason, relying on that blood which *cleanseth from all sin*, to indulge despair.'\*

2. Neither does the present controversy turn on the *application* of Christ's atonement. The extent of application is also allowed, on both hands, to be limited. Our opponents must admit that the atonement is *made effectual only to some*. Only such as believe, ultimately come to share in the benefits of the Redeemer's purchase; and it is admitted that "all men have not faith." There have been persons among the ancients, who have maintained that all men actually reap the saving benefits of Christ's blood; and there are those even in our own day, who contend for the ultimate eternal welfare of the whole race of mankind: but as these sentiments are held in connexion with the most vague and erroneous views of the nature of the Redeemer's work, in short, with a denial of the doctrine of atonement, with those who maintain them we cannot consider ourselves as having at present any dispute. Those with whom we contend restrict the application of atonement to believers, while they allow that many shall perish finally and eternally in a state of unbelief.

3. The present question, then, hinges solely on the *divine intention* regarding the subjects of atonement, or what is called the *destination* of Christ's death. This, some maintain, extends to all mankind without exception, and not to those merely who are saved by it in the end. This is the turning point of the controversy. The question is not, whe



ther Christ's atonement is sufficient for all, or whether all finally enjoy the benefit of his atonement: but whether it was the secret design, intention, or determination of God that his Son should make atonement for all, or only for the select specified number who are finally saved. Now, confining ourselves to the divine intention or design regarding the objects of the atonement, there are only these supposable cases, one of which must constitute the truth on this important and much litigated point:—The design or intention of God must have been, that his Son should make atonement by his death;—either for SOME of the sins of ALL men—or for ALL the sins of ALL men—or for ALL the sins of SOME men—or for the sins of NO man in particular, but for SIN IN GENERAL. The first of these suppositions we do not know to be held by any: to die for only some of the sins of men would avail nothing for salvation, as what remained unatoned for would be sufficient to ensure condemnation. The second and the fourth are involved in one another, as the advocates of universal or indefinite atonement seem to mean, by Christ's dying for the sins of all men, that his death was a moral satisfaction to the divine law for sin in general, which, without a designed reference to any one in particular, was capable of being applied to all. Now this is the sentiment which we mean to oppose, by proving and vindicating the third supposition, namely, that it was the design or intention of God that his Son should make atonement for ALL the sins of SOME men only.

II. These explanations prepare the way for the PROOF that the atonement is definite or limited as to its extent, that is to say, that Christ made atonement for the sins of only some men.

1. And here we appeal, first of all, to *the speciality and immutability of the divine purpose respecting the subjects of salvation.*

We enter not on the wide field of controversy connected with the doctrine of divine decrees. A sovereign act of election from all everlasting is admitted, we believe, by those with whom we at present contend. Indeed, it is difficult to see how this can be denied by any who believe in the wisdom and foreknowledge of God, or who pay respect to the direct testimony of scripture. It is admitted that there is such a thing as salvation, and that this salvation is the privilege, not of all, but only of some of the human race. It must also be admitted, that, in effecting salvation, the Divine Being acts agreeably to a preconceived plan or designed ar-

rangement. To deny this is to impute to the infinitely wise God conduct such as we ascribe only to the most foolish and thoughtless among men; conduct such as is exemplified in no other department of the Almighty's works, for in all of them we meet with such order and regularity as evince the existence of an original purpose or design. Well, then, if God, in the matter of salvation, acts according to design, and it so happens that salvation is limited in its application to some, does it not follow that it was the design of God that it should be so limited? And, if it was the eternal purpose of God that only some should be saved by the death of Christ, with what propriety can it be held that it was his design that Christ should die for all? Does not this amount to the supposition, that God designed his Son should die for some to whom it was not his design that his death should be effectual? That is to say, that it was God's design that the death of Christ should be ineffectual with regard to some of those for whom it was designed—that God designed the existence of a cause which should not be attended with its designed effect. This appears to us to be unworthy a Being of infinite wisdom, and at variance with the direct scripture testimony, that *whom he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, them he also called, and whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

Besides, the purposes of God must be allowed to be immutable. Scripture asserts, and reason approves the assertion, that his *counsel stands and he will do all his pleasure.* All the designs of a Being of infinite wisdom and Almighty power must be fulfilled. It is impossible to see how they can ever be frustrated. To assert that they can, savours of blasphemy. If, therefore, it was the design of God that Christ should make atonement for all, this design must be accomplished in the salvation of all. But, if the fact is that only some are saved, it must have been the design of God that atonement should be made only for some, else the designs of God may be frustrated—the intentions of the divine will may be disappointed. If it was the purpose of God that atonement should be made for all, and yet the fact turns out to be that only some are benefited by the atonement, how comes it about that it fails with regard to the others? It cannot be from any deficiency of knowledge, for God is omniscient. It cannot be from any deficiency of wisdom, for his understanding is infinite. It cannot be from any alteration of affection, for he rests in his love. It cannot be from any

defect of power, for his arm is omnipotent. We are reduced to the conclusion that the design of God, whatever it is, is infallibly accomplished, and of course, are compelled to adopt the opinion, that, as the atonement actually extends but to some, it was the original purpose of the divine will that it should not extend further. The fact is the best interpreter of the divine intention.

2. *The rectitude of the divine character* conducts to the same inference.

Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? A God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he. Reason, conscience, revelation, and providence all concur in attesting this perfection of his nature. The supreme Being gives to every one his due. This principle cannot be violated in a single instance. He cannot, according to this, either remit sin without satisfaction, or punish sin where satisfaction for it has been received. The one is as inconsistent with perfect equity as the other. If the punishment for sin has been borne, the remission of the offence follows of course. The principles of rectitude suppose this, nay peremptorily demand it; justice could not be satisfied without it. Agreeably to this reasoning it follows, that the death of Christ being a legal satisfaction for sin, all for whom he died must enjoy the remission of their offences. It is as much at variance with strict justice or equity that any for whom Christ has given satisfaction should continue under condemnation, as that they should have been delivered from guilt without a satisfaction being given for them at all. But it is admitted that all are not delivered from the punishment of sin, that there are many who perish in final condemnation. We are therefore compelled to infer that for such no satisfaction has been given to the claims of infinite justice—no atonement has been made. If this is denied, the monstrous impossibility must be maintained, that the infallible judge refuses to remit the punishment of some for whose offences he has received a full compensation; that he finally condemns some, the price of whose deliverance from condemnation has been paid to him; that, with regard to the sins of some of mankind, he seeks satisfaction in their personal punishment, after having obtained satisfaction for them in the sufferings of Christ; that is to say, that an infinitely righteous God takes double payment for the same debt, double satisfaction for the same offence, first from the surety, and then from those for whom the surety stood bound. It is needless to add that these conclusions are revolting to every right feeling of equity, and

must be totally inapplicable to the procedure of Him who *'loveth righteousness and hateth wickedness.'*

3. Let *the connexion of the atonement with the covenant of grace* be considered, and farther confirmation will be given to our argument.

The scriptures represent the divine persons as entering into a federal agreement for the salvation of men. In this covenant of peace, the Father is the representative of the Godhead, and the Son, the representative of those who are to be redeemed. He is on this account called the Mediator and the Surety of the covenant. Whatever he did as Mediator or Surety, must, therefore, have been done in connexion with the covenant. His death was the condition of the covenant. It was stipulated, as the condition of his having a seed to serve him, that he should make his soul an offering for sin; that he should bear their iniquities; that he should pour out his soul unto death. In reference to this, the blood of the ancient sacrifices was called the *blood of the covenant*, while, of his own, the Saviour testifies, *this cup is the new testament in my blood*. The blood of Christ was not shed by accident, it was not poured out at random or on a venture. No: he laid down his life by covenant. The terms of the covenant must, therefore, define the designed extent of the objects of his death. If all mankind are included in the covenant—if the Surety of the covenant represented, in this eternal transaction, the whole human race, then the atonement of Christ must have been indefinite. But, if the children of the covenant, as is admitted, are only a given specified number of the human family, then must the atonement of the Mediator be restricted to *them*. There seems no evading this inference. To give the designed objects of the Saviour's atonement a greater extension than the covenant of grace, is to nullify its character as the stipulated condition of the covenant, and to render nugatory and unavailing the consolatory address by which the heart of many an awakened sinner has been soothed, *'Behold the blood of the covenant.'*

4. We may refer, also, to *the very nature of atonement*.

What is the atonement of Christ? It has been already defined and explained as that perfect satisfaction to the law and justice of God, on account of which sinners are delivered from condemnation. Or, in other words, it is that which removes the offence subsisting between God and men, and procures a reconciliation. It supposes a compensation to be made to the lawgiver, in consideration of which certain specific blessings flow out to men. From its very nature, then,

all for whom the atonement is made must reap its fruits. It is no atonement without this. That any of those for whom Christ died should fail to enjoy the benefits of his death, is, in this way, utterly inconceivable. It is not more at variance with the purpose of God, or the equity of the divine character, or the tenor of the covenant of grace, than with the very nature of the Saviour's work. His work is an atonement, that is, a reconciliation; and to talk of his making atonement for such as are never reconciled, is a contradiction in terms: it is to say he makes atonement and yet no atonement, in the case of the same individuals. The same conclusion follows from other descriptions of the work of Christ. He is said to give satisfaction for sin; but how can he have given satisfaction for the sins of those on whom the law is to take satisfaction eternally? He is said to appease divine justice; but can the justice of God be appeased, in the case of those against whom its flaming sword shall awake for ever and ever? He is said to expiate our offences; but how can those sins for which the guilty perpetrators are to suffer everlastingly have been expiated? He is said to redeem from the curse of the law; but how can those who are to be kept in eternal thralldom have redemption through his blood? He is spoken of as propitiating the wrath of God; but how can those be interested in his propitiation who are to be the objects of Jehovah's unceasing displeasure? He is described, in fine, as procuring by his death grace and glory; but how can this apply to the case of those who continue under the power of corruption here, and sink hereafter into never-ending perdition? We appeal, then, to the very nature of atonement; we revert to the terms of our definition, in proof of the definite object of Christ's death. Any other view is directly at variance with these terms, and this we should conceive as sufficient in itself to determine the controversy. All views of an indefinite extent are at once put to flight by this question, What is the atonement?

What renders the present argument more emphatic is, that, previous to the atonement being actually made, multitudes had been placed beyond the reach of ever being benefited by it. Before Christ died many of the human race had gone to the place of woe, where God has forgotten to be gracious, and where his mercy is clean gone. But, according to the opinion we are combating, the eternal salvation of these was included in the designed extent of the atonement. And what have we here? Why, the supposition, not merely that Christ made atonement on Calvary for many who should

afterwards, through unbelief, come short of an actual participation in the benefits of his death, but that he made atonement for thousands who, long before he did so, had gone down to irretrievable perdition, and were on this account, at the very time, placed beyond the possibility of ever receiving from his death a single benefit. Such are the palpable inconsistencies, nay, the monstrous absurdities, which the error in question compels men to adopt.

5. *The connexion of the death of Christ with his resurrection and his intercession, and with the gift of the Spirit,* is here deserving of attention.

The death and resurrection of the Saviour bear a close relation to each other. In whatever character he died, in the same character he rose from the dead. If he laid down his life as Head of the church, and Surety of his people, and Mediator of the covenant, in the same capacities did he take it up again. The persons interested in the one event and in the other, are the same. 'Christ died for *our* sins, and rose again for *our* justification.' (Rom. iv. 25.) He died for none, for whose sake he did not rise. And for whom did he rise? Who are they who are benefited by his resurrection? 'Those, surely, who 'shall come forth unto the resurrection of life.' 'Now Christ is risen from the dead and become the *first-fruits of them that slept.*' (1 Cor. xv. 20.) The sleep here is not the sleep of death merely, which all undergo, but that *refreshing rest* to which the death of the righteous is compared, and which is called, by the same apostle, in another of his writings, *sleeping in Jesus*:—'Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.' (1 Thess. iv. 14.) Then he adds, in language fully corroborative of the restricted extent of those who profit by his resurrection, 'Every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits; afterwards *they that are Christ's* at his coming.' (1 Cor. xv. 23.) Those, then, to whom Christ in his resurrection stood in the relation of the first-fruits, are they *who sleep in Christ*, they *who are Christ's*, and not the whole race of mankind. And, from the connexion subsisting between his resurrection and his death, for these only can he be held to have died.

A similar relation subsists betwixt the death and the intercession of Christ. Such is the economy of our salvation, that his intercession is necessary to a participation of the fruits of his death. No one can ever partake of the latter without the former. Of course, he cannot be supposed to have died for any for whom he does not intercede, as he cannot be supposed to intercede for any for whom he has not

died. And for whom does he make intercession? For all, or only some of the human race? Let us see. "I PRAY NOT FOR THE WORLD, BUT FOR THEM WHICH THOU HAST GIVEN ME."—"Father, I will that THEY WHOM THOU HAST GIVEN ME, be with me where I am." (John xvii, 9. 24.) If he died for all, how comes it that he prays only for some? Are there any for whom he died, for whom he neglects or refuses to pray? The thing is incredible, impossible, on every view that can be taken of the Redeemer's character and work. If he died for all, he must pray for all; and, if he prays for all, all must be saved, for *him the Father heareth always*. But the intercession of Christ is manifestly special and restricted, as respects the persons who are the subjects of it. Whence, we feel warranted to conclude, that a similar restriction attended his death.

The work of Christ and that of the Holy Spirit are also closely connected, and bear an exact correspondence the one to the other. It is not our object to trace this correspondence extensively. The fact, however, is abundantly evident. 'This is he that came by *water and blood*, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood: and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.' (1 John v. 6.) The ancient ceremony of the two birds, one of which was to be killed in an earthen vessel over running water, and the other to be dipt alive in the blood of the slain bird, significantly prefigured this connexion. Nor do the writers of the New Testament fail to call our attention to the circumstance. 'That the blessings of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' (Gal. iii. 14.) God's having 'sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law,' bears a distinct relation to His 'sending forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' (Gal. iv. 4—6.) How appropriate and expressive, in this view, was the act of the divine Saviour, when, just after his resurrection from the dead, 'he breathed on the disciples, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' (John xx. 22.) In the economy of redemption, they bear so close a relation to one another, as to induce the belief that they must necessarily be coextensive as regards those who are their objects. The connexion is, indeed, inseparable. If the atonement opens the door of the heavenly sanctuary, the Spirit's work is necessarily to fit for inhabiting the holy place; and it were of no avail that the one of these were secured for any without the other. If

the atonement of Christ lays the foundation, the Spirit by his work rears the superstructure of grace; but it were a reflection alike on the wisdom and goodness of our covenant God, to suppose that there are any who possess the former of these blessings without the latter, which is necessary to its perfection and utility. The question, then, comes to be, do all receive the gift of the Spirit? Are all actually regenerated, sanctified, and put in possession of eternal life? If not, we have no ground for supposing that all are interested in the atoning virtue of Christ's precious blood; for, as we have seen, the work of Christ and the fruits of the Spirit have a corresponding extent. "He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things." This is good reasoning, but it is fatal to the opinion we are combating, as it infallibly establishes that all for whom God delivered up his own Son shall certainly come to the enjoyment of every fruit of his purchase.

6. Some weight is deserving of being attached to *the limited application and even revelation of the atonement.*

The argument from the limited application, is substantially involved in what we have already said respecting the nature of atonement, and its inseparable connexion with the work of the Spirit. Of the designed extent of Christ's atonement, we may judge from that of its influence. Is the effect or application of the atonement universal or restricted? Restricted, as we have already seen is acknowledged on all hands. But as the omnipotent and omniscient God cannot fail in any of his designs, the *actual* effect lets us know the extent of the *designed* effect. Betwixt these there can never exist any proper disagreement. And as the effects of atonement, namely, redemption, reconciliation, sanctification, and glory, extend but to some, we are bound to apply to the atonement itself a similar restriction in the designed extent of its subjects.

Even the limited extent to which the atonement has been revealed, would seem to point to the same conclusion. A knowledge of the fact is, according to the plan of our salvation, necessary, in the case of adults, to a participation in its fruits. 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved:' but 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;' and 'how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?' It seems to follow from this, that all, for whom the remedy revealed in the gospel is designed, must be put



in possession of the gospel. They must believe, that they may be saved; they must know, that they may believe; and they must hear, that they may know. Many, for whose ultimate benefit the remedy itself is not designed, *may* possess the revelation of it, but all, for whom it is so designed, *must*. Now, in connexion with this, consider the limited diffusion of the gospel. In every age of the world, the revelation of mercy has been, in fact, restricted to a few. In ancient times, the Almighty showed his word to Jacob, and his judgments to Israel, while the nations at large sat in darkness. In later times, although the diffusion has been more wide, and the command has been, that the gospel should be preached to every creature, it has actually been greatly limited, compared with the population of the world. To this hour, there are hundreds of millions of our race who remain unvisited by the day-spring from on high. And if we suppose that for these the atonement which the gospel reveals was as much designed as for the others, we shall be led to the most unworthy views of the divine character. God could have made it known to all, and yet it seems he has not. It is vain to plead the remissness of those whose duty it was to diffuse the benefit of gospel light among their benighted fellow men; for as they were completely under his sovereign controul, this, although it leaves them inexcusable, leaves the fact wholly unexplained as regards the purpose and design of God. The thing has happened under his superintending providence, and must, therefore, be in harmony with the secret counsels of his will. It is, of course, utterly irreconcilable with the notion that the atonement of Jesus Christ was designed for all. What would men think of the prince, who, designing to emancipate all the inhabitants of a rebellious province of his empire, should provide a sufficient ground of escape for all, but should communicate the knowledge of this merciful provision only to a few, while the greater number were allowed to continue in perpetual durance, in consequence of their unhappy ignorance? Or, what would men think of the physician, who should benevolently devise and prepare a medicine designed to cure a disease of universal prevalence, and yet suffer multitudes for whom it was so designed, to remain ignorant of its existence, thus rendering it impossible for them to avail themselves of its healing virtues? Such things might occur among men, with whom generosity, and humanity, and consistency, and wisdom, are but rare qualities, but that any thing analogous should ever occur in the arrangements of Him whose understanding is infinite, whose nature is love.

and in whom compassion flows, is utterly inconceivable. We hold, then, the limited diffusion of the gospel to be demonstrative of the definite nature of Christ's atonement.

7. We take the liberty of adverting to *the absurdity that attends every other supposition* but that of a definite atonement.

There are, as we have seen, only four suppositions on the subject:—that Christ died, either for some of the sins of all men; or for all the sins of all men; or for all the sins of some men; or for the sins of no one in particular, but for sin in general. The first is held by none: the third is that which it is our object to prove: the second and fourth are what are held by the opponents of our doctrine; and these, we are now to show, involve such as maintain them in absurdity. That Christ made atonement for all the sins of all men, is a supposition fraught with absurdity. As we have already seen, it supposes him to be the Saviour of those who are never saved, the Redeemer of those who are never redeemed, the Deliverer of thousands who are never delivered, but remain under eternal condemnation. But this is not the absurdity we have at present in view. When those who hold the sentiment that Christ made atonement for the sins of all men, are asked, why, in this case, it happens that any are condemned? they readily reply, that salvation was procured for men on the condition that they should believe, and, not believing, they of course cannot be saved. The reason, in short, why many of those for whom Christ died, fail to reap the benefits of his death, is their unbelief. Now here is a series of absurdities. It is supposed, for one thing, that many are condemned for unbelief, although, as we have seen, they had not an opportunity of believing, never having been put in possession of the gospel. Then, again, it is supposed that men are able of themselves to believe—that faith is a spontaneous act of the natural man, irrespective of the death of Christ, and that without which the death of Christ can have no efficacy; whereas, according to the scriptures, faith is the gift of God, an act of the new man only, and an effect, not the cause, of the efficacy of Christ's death. This being the case, it is absurd to talk of its being the condition of man's salvation, on the fulfilment of which the effect of the atonement hinges. For, if man cannot believe of himself, if the power to do so is God's gift, conferred out of respect to and in consequence of the virtue of Christ's atonement, it is as absurd to speak of Christ's making atonement for men on condition that they believe, as it would be to offer a blind man a sum

of money on condition that he will open his eyes. Besides on this supposition, the death of Christ might have been utterly and for ever unavailing, with respect to the whole human race. The efficacy of the atonement is thus suspended on the condition of man's belief; the reason why it proves inefficacious, in the case of any, is the unbelief of the persons in question; but had all chosen not to believe—and what some do, all might have done—the atonement had been rendered altogether useless. Every view of salvation, then, is absurd, which does not provide security for the existence of faith in all for whom it is designed. Christ died, not to render salvation *possible* merely, but *certain*.

Nor are these the only absurdities with which this supposition is burdened. The benefit of Christ's atonement, it is said, extends not to all men, because of the unbelief of some. But unbelief is either a sin or not a sin. If it is not a sin, it is unaccountable that any should be condemned, or come short of salvation, on account of it. If a sin, Christ either made atonement for it, or did not make atonement for it. If Christ made atonement for the sin of unbelief in all men, it is inconceivable that any should perish on account of that sin. If Christ did not make atonement for it, then he made not atonement for all the sins of all men. To say then that Christ made atonement for all the sins of all men, and yet that many perish because of unbelief, is absurd.

That Christ made atonement for no man's sins in particular, but for sin in general, is a supposition as absurd as that we have now exposed. We are afraid the idea is too commonly entertained, that the death of Christ was only a public exhibition of God's displeasure at sin, introduced simply with a view to maintain the honour of the divine moral government. Not to mention other objections to this view of the subject, we remark at present that it leads to absurdity. Christ, according to this, did not die for *sinner*s but for *sin*. But sin, apart from sinners, has no counterpart in nature; it is a metaphysical abstraction, a nonentity. Sin is a moral quality, which, like all other qualities, supposes necessarily a subject to which it belongs; and it were every whit as rational to talk of redness existing apart from an object that is red, or roundness apart from an object that is round, as of sin apart from a sinner. Separate sin from sinners and you have a mere abstraction, for which it is dishonouring to the character of the blessed Saviour to suppose him to make atonement.

Besides, sin in general,—sin in the abstract, includes the

sin of angels as well as that of men. And, if Christ died only to make a public display of the divine abhorrence at sin in general, we see not why the extent of the atonement should be limited even to the human family; we see not why, besides comprehending the whole race of man, it should not also embrace all the fallen angels without exception. So absurd in itself, and so subversive in its tendency of the whole gospel economy, is the supposition we have thus endeavoured to overthrow.

8. But let us close our proof with a direct appeal to *the testimony of the divine word*.

What say the scriptures? The arguments already adduced, it is not doubted, are scriptural arguments. They are founded on views of the divine character, the covenant of grace, and the Saviour's work, which are taken from the word of God. But, in advancing them, we may be said rather to be 'reasoning out of the scriptures,' than to be appealing directly to the scriptures themselves. The former line of procedure serves to show the harmony of our doctrine with the system of revealed truth at large: the latter calls the attention to individual texts which have a direct bearing on the subject, and which, by confining ourselves to the other, would be in danger of being overlooked. We shall give a specimen of the texts which might easily be marshalled in overpowering numbers, and this we shall do in the order of the books of scripture in which they occur.

We pass over the old testament writings, with one remark of a general kind, namely, that they every where suppose and recognize a distinction between the people of God or the Israelites, and the Gentiles or the nations of the world: and that the benefits of the sacrificial rite, which prefigured the atonement of Christ, were exclusively limited to those who are included under the former description. This distinction is incorporated in the very first intimation given to man of the divine Victim, an intimation in which the seed of the serpent and the Seed of the woman are placed in striking and instructive contrast; nor is it ever afterwards suffered to drop out of sight. We wait not to advert, in particular, to such expressions as these, 'For the transgression of *my people* was he stricken,' 'He bare the sins of *many*;' but proceed to the writings of the new testament, to which we principally make appeal in this department of our argument.

Let the reader candidly peruse these words—'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father

which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I NEVER KNEW YOU: depart from me ye that work iniquity.' (Matt. vii, 21—23.) Here a broad line of distinction is drawn between two classes of the human family, with respect to one of which the Saviour makes the appalling affirmation, 'I never knew you.' The import of the words, according to scripture usage, it is by no means difficult to ascertain. The doctrine of the Saviour's omniscience precludes the idea that simple knowledge is all that is designed. The antagonist assertions, 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth,' and 'The Lord knoweth them that are his,' (Amos iii, 2; 2 Tim. ii, 19,) leave us no room to hesitate. The reference can only be to *a special saving cognizance*, of which some are the objects, and others not. But with what shadow of plausibility can such knowledge be denied, with regard to any for whom Jesus suffered, whose sins he actually bore in his own body on the tree? Are there any such whom he *never knew*?

In the following passages, the distinction made between *the sheep* and the goats or the wolves, for the former of whom only Christ is said to lay down his life, ought to be carefully marked and duly weighed:—I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd *giveth his life for THE SHEEP. I lay down my life for THE SHEEP.* But ye believe not, because ye are not of MY SHEEP, as I said unto you. MY SHEEP hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.' (John x, 11, 15, 26, 27, 28.) Besides the restriction of the atonement, to the sheep, the identity of those for whom he laid down his life and those to whom is given eternal life so that they shall never perish, is deserving of particular notice.

The singularly decided passage in our Lord's intercessory prayer has already been commented on, and here requires only to be noted:—'*I pray not for the world but for them which thou hast given me. For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.*' (John xvii, 9, 19, 24.)

Paul says, 'But God commended his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be

saved from wrath through him.' (Rom. v, 8, 9.) We know not how it could be more clearly taught that those for whom Christ died are justified by his blood and delivered from the wrath to come; but this cannot be affirmed of all. To the same purpose this apostle gives utterance to the challenge, 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.' The death of Christ is thus supposed to be the best possible security against condemnation: none for whom Christ died can ever be exposed to the curse; but there are some on whom the curse will press for ever: of course it cannot be said that for such Christ died.

The next text we adduce is this:—'For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' (2 Cor. v, 21.) It will be allowed, that by Christ being *made sin*, is meant his suffering for our atonement. But the object of his being made sin is, that those for whom he is so made, might be made the righteousness of God in him. These are of the same extent, as regards the persons interested in them. They are, in fact, the very same persons for whom he was made sin, and who are, in consequence, made the righteousness of God in him. Now, that all are not made the righteousness of God in Christ need not be proved; and we have only to draw the inference, that for all he has not been made sin.

Two other kindred passages may close this department of proof:—'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it.' (Eph. v, 25.) Two points, in favour of our position, are furnished by this text: in the first place, it is *the church*, and not the world, for which Christ gave himself; and, in the second place, the love of Christ, by which he was actuated in so doing, is *peculiar* and *exclusive* towards the church, as that of husbands is required to be toward their wives. The latter consideration completely sets aside the discreditable shift by which some have endeavoured to get rid of this passage, namely, by alleging that Christ's giving himself for the church does not imply that he gave himself for no others. On this principle, we should be obliged to admit that Christ's loving the church does not imply that he loved none else; and, then, what becomes of the passage as setting forth an example or pattern for the imitation of husbands? Analogous to this text is that of the same apostle, in his epistle to Titus:—'Who gave himself *for us*, that he might redeem us

from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a *peculiar people*, zealous of good works.' (Tit. ii, 14.) 'This requires no comment. Those for whom Christ gave himself are a *peculiar people*, and not the whole race of mankind indiscriminately.

III. Opposed to these arguments are certain OBJECTIONS to the doctrine of a definite atonement, which, it is proper, we should weigh with candour, and against which it becomes us to vindicate the position we have taken up.

1. It is objected that the restriction for which we contend is *derogatory to the honour and the merits of Christ*.

To this we reply, that it belongs not to man to determine the share of honour due to the Saviour. This is the prerogative of God. And, supposing it admitted—which it is not—that less honour would redound to Christ from his atonement being definite, if the honour of making a definite atonement is all that God designed he should have, or all which he himself claims or expects, what right have men to interfere and say it is not sufficient? On the principle on which this objection rests, might it be contended that Christ made atonement for fallen angels as well as for men. The thing with which we have to do is, not which of two suppositions reflects the greatest degree of honour on the Redeemer, but which is the fact. Jesus claims the honour only of what he performs. He makes not atonement for angels, and claims not the honour of so doing: and if he makes atonement only for some of the human family, the honour of so doing is all he requires, and more he will not receive.

But all this proceeds on the assumption, that what is alleged is the fact, namely, that the theory of our opponents is, abstractly speaking, more honouring to Christ than the doctrine for which we contend. This, however, is more than we are disposed to concede. The objection overlooks whence it is that the merit or honour of Christ's atonement proceeds; it proceeds not from its *efficiency*, but from its *sufficiency*. Its worth is to be estimated, not by what it *effects*, but by what it is *capable* of effecting. The latter arises from its intrinsic merit, and is, as we have seen, infinite: the former depends on the sovereign will of God, and may be held to be limited, as in fact it is, without detracting in the slightest degree from the honour and merit of the Saviour. The restriction of the atonement is attributable solely to the divine purpose, and leaves altogether unaffected the intrinsic merits of the Redeemer's work. Sufficiency and efficiency are not always co-extensive, even in the works of God. The evidences of revealed religion supply an apt confirmation of this

remark. Every believer in the bible must admit that these evidences are *sufficient* to convince all, but we know that they are *efficient* to convince only some. But the restricted extent of their *actual efficiency* is no valid objection against their *perfect sufficiency*. Our readers can easily apply this illustration to the point in hand.

Nor is this all. The objection may be fairly retorted on those who make it. It is, in our humble opinion, the doctrine of an indefinite atonement which reflects dishonour on Christ. We think it might safely be left to the candid decision of any unprejudiced judge to determine, whether it be more dishonouring to Christ to suppose, as our doctrine does, that all for whom he died shall be saved and finally secured in the possession of every gracious benefit; or to suppose, as the doctrine of our opponents does, that the greater number of those for whom he died shall be eternally lost, without deriving from his death a single saving blessing. No rational mind can hesitate to conclude, that it is more glorifying to the High Priest of our profession, to regard his atoning sacrifice as one which infallibly secures the eternal well-being of all for whom it was offered, than to regard it of such a nature as to admit of many for whom it was offered being doomed in justice to everlasting woe. Whether, we ask, is it more creditable to an intelligent agent to maintain that what he performs effects its design, or that it comes short to a great extent, of accomplishing the object for which it is wrought?

2. It is alleged against our view of the extent of the atonement that it supposes an *unnecessary redundancy in the merits of Christ's death*.

If Christ's death be, intrinsically considered, of value sufficient for all and yet designed only for some, does not this suppose a superabundance of merit, which is available for no end whatever, and with regard to which the question may be asked, 'To what purpose is this *waste*?'

To this we reply, in the first place, that, even admitting the divine intention with respect to the atonement to be unlimited, the same difficulty meets us with regard to a restricted application. Whatever is the extent of destination, it is admitted that the actual efficiency is limited. Now, as in this case the degree of available merit exceeds the extent of actual good done, every one must perceive that there is as much room as in the other case for the question, 'To what purpose is this waste?' The difficulty presses with as great force on the opinion of our opponents as on ours.

Again, it may be remarked, that it accords with the general



procedure of God in other departments of his works, to confer his favours with a profusion which to many may seem redundant and unnecessary. For example, he causes his rain to fall on barren deserts, sterile rocks, and the watery deep, as well as on fertile hills and valleys. There are many fertile tracts of land which have never been cultivated; much spontaneous fruit grows in regions where there is not an inhabitant. And how many flowers expand their blossoms and diffuse their fragrance, in wilds where there is not a human being to admire their beauty or inhale their sweets. Are we at liberty to say that, in such cases, there is a wasteful exuberance of divine goodness or of providential care? No more can it be said that, in the case before us, there is an unnecessary redundancy of merit. We must not, in the one case any more than in the other, presume to limit the Almighty, or to sit in judgment on the works of his hands; but firmly believe it will be seen in the end that he has done nothing in vain.

Moreover; let it be observed, that the objection proceeds on the mistaken supposition, that the atonement of Christ is an exact equivalent for the sins of men, and that, had the number to be saved been either more or less than they are, or had their sins been of greater or less amount, the sufferings of the Redeemer must have varied in proportion. Now, to this view of the subject there are insuperable objections. It is at variance with what we have before established, namely, the infinite intrinsic value of Christ's atonement. It overlooks the grand design of the atonement, which was, not simply to secure a mere commutative satisfaction to the justice of God, but to glorify all the divine perfections, and to make an illustrious manifestation of the principles of his government before the whole universe of moral creatures. It leaves no room for such an unlimited offer of Christ in the gospel, as to render those who reject him without excuse; for if the atonement of Christ bore an exact proportion, in point of worth, to the sins of those who are actually saved by it, then the salvation of any others was a *natural impossibility*, and no blame could attach to such for neglecting to embrace the proffered boon; indeed there would be no ground on which such an offer could be made. Nay, it would require us to believe, that a far greater display of the righteousness of God and his abhorrence at sin could have been made by the sufferings of men than by those of Christ; for, is, on the supposition in question, the number actually saved is limited, and the sufferings of Christ were an exact coun-

terpart of the sufferings due to the sins of that limited number, it was only necessary that the whole human race should have suffered for their own sins, to secure an amount of suffering greatly superior to that of the Saviour of sinners. For these reasons, we reject the theory of atonement against which the objection is pointed, and hold by the view already explained, namely, that the sufferings of Christ are to be regarded in the light of a moral satisfaction to the law and justice of God, which would have been requisite had there been but one sinner to be saved, and had that sinner had but one sin, and which would have been adequate had the number to be saved been to any conceivable extent greater than it is. But to this view of the subject the objection does not apply, as the merit of the atonement is not greater than according to this, is absolutely indispensable.

3. *The universal offer made of Christ in the gospel*, has been urged as another objection.

The fact on which this objection is founded we admit without reservation. We contend for the unlimited extent of the gospel call, and regard every attempt to restrict it as hostile alike to the letter and the spirit of the gospel. Here we take the phrases 'every creature'—'all the world'—'every one'—'whosoever will,' &c., in the fullest extent of acceptance of which they admit. The ministers of religion ought to esteem it a privilege and a pleasure, not less than a duty, to be permitted, as ambassadors for Christ, beseechingly to say to all who come within the reach of their voice, 'We pray you, in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God.' Nor is it denied that the general invitations of the gospel rest, on the atonement of Jesus Christ, as their basis. 'We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God, FOR he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin.' 'All things are ready—come unto the marriage'. (2 Cor. v. 20, 21; Matt. xxii. 4.) We do not pretend to be able to remove every difficulty, connected with the reconcilableness of the unrestricted offer of salvation and particular redemption. The subject involves all the difficulties connected with the profound abyss of the divine decrees, which it is not for short-sighted man to pretend to fathom. If we can only say what may be sufficient to nullify the objection, to show the unreasonableness of cavillers, or to remove the perplexity of humble inquirers, we shall not come short of our aim. With these views, we beg to submit with all deference, the following considerations.

It would not be a sufficient reason for rejecting, either the doctrine of a definite atonement, or that of an unlimited gos-

pel call, that we found it impossible to reconcile them with one another. That *we* are incapable of reconciling them does not prove them to be irreconcilable. God may be capable of reconciling them; creatures of a higher intellectual and moral rank may see their reconcilableness; or we ourselves, when elevated to a brighter sphere of being, may yet be fully equal to the difficult problem. Their perfect consistency with one another, is not the ground on which we are required to believe either the one or the other. This ground is, with regard to both, the testimony of God in his word. To this testimony we must yield implicit submission, and we must beware of the daring presumption of refusing to receive what God has made known, because of its appearing to our reason either unintelligible in itself, or inconsistent with some other acknowledged dictate of inspiration.

The principles of human obligation are not affected by the secret will of God. What *man ought to do*, is one thing; what *God will do*, is another thing. Now, the gospel call may be regarded as expressive of man's duty, rather than of the divine intention. God may and does command many things, which he knows the persons commanded will never fulfil. These things it is the duty of man to do, but it is not the secret will of God to accomplish. By the warnings, and remonstrances, and solemn admonitions of Noah, he called the antediluvians to repent and be saved from the waters of the deluge; and that it was their duty to do so, is not surely disproved by what we now know, from the fact, that it was not the secret design of God to save them. By means of his servant Moses, God commanded Pharoah to let Israel go, as a means of saving his own life and those of his people; it was his duty certainly to obey this command; but it was not the secret intention of God that the Egyptians and their king should escape the destruction of the Red sea. The Jews and Roman soldiers were under obligation, from the command 'Thou shalt not kill,' not to put Jesus of Nazareth to death; yet it was in consequence of being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, that he was taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slain. In like manner, may we not say, that the unlimited offer of the gospel proves only that it is the duty of all men to believe in Christ for salvation, and not that it is the design or intention of God that all should be saved by him or that he should obtain salvation for all.

The unlimited nature of the gospel call necessarily results from God's plan of salvation. It is God's method to save

men by faith. With his reasons for so doing we are not at present concerned. It is enough for us to know, that 'it hath pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them which believe.' Now, to this the unrestricted offer of Christ is essential, as otherwise men could have no warrant for faith. The warrant of faith is the testimony of God in the gospel. And, it may be asked, could not this testimony have been made only to those to whom it was his design to give grace to receive it? We answer,—not, without doing away with that mixed state of human existence, which God has appointed for important purposes;—not, without making a premature disclosure of who are the objects of his special favour;—not, without even subverting the very design of salvation by faith. For, on this supposition, the very communicating of the divine testimony to any one would amount to a virtual intimation of his own personal salvation; it would make that salvation as sure as it could possibly be made; and where, in this case, would there be room for that faith which is the substance of things *hoped for*, the evidence of things *not seen*? Thus does it appear, that, if God should choose to save some of the human family by faith in the gospel message, it is necessary to this design that the publication of this message be universal. We must either deny that God has a right to save any by means of faith in the gospel—and who are they that will take upon them thus to limit the Holy One of Israel?—or admit that an unrestricted gospel offer is perfectly consistent and indispensable.

The objection we are considering militates as directly against the limited application, as against the restricted intention, of Christ's atonement. It is asked, how can God offer to all salvation by Christ, if this salvation has not been purchased for all? We ask, on the same principle, how can God offer to all salvation by Christ, when, even supposing it purchased, it is his intention not to confer it on all? And when our opponents have given a satisfactory reply to the latter question, we shall have no difficulty whatever in replying to the former. A designed limited application, which our opponents admit, affords no broader a basis for the universal offer, than a designed limited purchase. The difficulty is only, by this means, shifted a step forward, where it presses, not only with all its original

weight, but with that of other encumbrances which it has gathered in its progress.

The ground on which the universality of the gospel offer proceeds, is the *all-sufficiency* of Christ's atonement. It is not said in the gospel, that Christ died with the intention that all should be saved, but that his atonement is a sufficient ground of salvation to all, and that all who rest on this ground by faith shall be saved. This is all that the gospel asserts; and there is nothing here but what is true, and fit to be made known to all. Nor is any thing more requisite to vindicate the universality of the gospel offer from the charge of inconsistency or insincerity. The atonement of Christ, possessing a glorious, infinite, all-sufficiency, is with propriety made known and offered to the acceptance of all. There is, in this case, no natural impossibility in the salvation of any man. The secret design of God, by which the application is restricted, has no casual influence in producing unbelief. The obstacles to salvation are all moral, that is to say, are such only as arise from the native rebellion and hardness of man's own heart. A sufficient ground of salvation exists; the appropriate means of salvation are provided; and, of course, a proper foundation is laid for man's accountability, so that, in rejecting salvation by Christ, he is absolutely without excuse. 'He that believeth not shall be condemned.'

Add to these considerations, that the universality of the gospel offer is necessary to glorify God. We are too apt to limit our views, in this matter, to the interests of man. But the gracious character of Deity, and the beauty of the scheme of mercy, are also concerned in it. By the universal offer, means of salvation are provided for all, and God's willingness to save all that come unto him is widely proclaimed. It is thus made known, that he is 'long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' He is revealed as 'God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.' And the sincerity of his own remarkable declaration is seen and vindicated,—'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?' It is, further, made to appear, that the reason, the sole reason, why men perish in their sins, is not, in any sense, because Christ did not

die for them, but because they would not avail themselves of the merits of his death, by believing the record which God hath given of his Son. 'The character of God is vindicated from every aspersion, and the blame of eternal misery is seen to rest with the unbelieving themselves. 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.'

4. The *universal terms* used in scripture, in speaking of the subjects of Christ's atonement, constitute the most plausible objection to the view we have adopted.

Before proceeding to consider the particular terms and phrases in question, we crave attention to some general remarks, applicable to the whole, and which, in our opinion, ought of themselves to go far, in the way of removing any difficulty that may be felt on that head.

First then, the difference betwixt the old and new testament dispensations, with regard to extent, is deserving of marked attention. The former was greatly restricted; it was almost exclusively confined to one people; and to this limitation the members of the church had been long accustomed. The new dispensation, was possessed of an opposite character; it was distinguished by a universal extension of its privileges; it threw down the middle wall of partition by which the Jews were kept separate from the other nations of the earth, asserted that there was no difference between the Jew and the Gentile, and opened its arms to Greek and Jew, Barbarian and Scythian, bond and free. But the previous state of things had given rise to deep-seated prejudices in favour of exclusive privilege, which it was no easy matter to uproot. Although the Saviour had manifested a regard for a Roman centurion, and for a woman of Canaan, and had even plainly declared 'other sheep I have which are not of this fold,' still the exclusive sentiment appears to have retained a firm hold on the minds even of his own disciples. They were Jews, and were manifestly reluctant to descend to a common level with others, in regard to the enjoyment of religious privilege; a miracle was wrought to convince an apostle that God is no respecter of persons, and to carry home to him the lesson, 'What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.' Acts xi. 9. If such narrow views were entertained by those who had the best opportunities of correct information, we need not wonder at the bigoted prejudices of others. The

preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles awakened the jealousy of the Jews, and to such a length did they carry their opposition, that they even persecuted the preachers, 'forbidding them to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved,' 1 Thes. ii. 15, 16. 'Take one specimen:—' And the next Sabbath-day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles: for so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.' Acts xiii. 44—47. Considering such a state of things, it is surely not difficult to account for the use of terms of extensive import, in speaking of the blessings of the new economy. To mark the contrast, the strongest language that could be employed became necessary. In these circumstances, we can conceive of nothing more natural than to use the phrases *all men*, *all the world*, &c., to denote men in general, without regard to national distinction. Nor let it be surmised that, in giving this explanation, we are supposing language to be employed which is not strictly true or correct. We make no such supposition; we reason on the commonly received principle of verbal interpretation: it is an ordinary occurrence to use a general designation, when it is intended to express a general principle, and not to include each individual comprehended in the general designation employed. Take, as an explanation of what we mean, these words uttered in reference to the conversion of Cornelius:—'Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.' What do they express? Not that to every individual of the Gentile world God had granted repentance unto life; but that the conversion of Cornelius, a Roman soldier, evolved and established the principle that Gentiles as well as Jews were eligible to the enjoyment of saving blessings. In precisely the same way, are we warranted to explain the phrases in question as meaning, not that Christ died for *all men* without exception, or for every individual in the world, but for all without distinction of national character. Bearing this in

mind, and remembering that it is the language of a Jew addressed to Jews, the words of John cannot be misunderstood:—‘If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for OUR sins, and not for OURS only, but also for the sins of THE WHOLE WORLD.’ (1 John ii. 1, 2.) The same principle will apply to many similar passages. The difference between *all without exception* and *all without distinction* is deserving of particular attention in this controversy. If we do not greatly mistake, it supplies the true solution of the apparent difficulty on which the objection before us is founded. That Christ made atonement for *all without distinction* is freely conceded; that he made atonement for *all without exception* cannot be maintained, as we have seen, without involving ourselves in the most palpable contradiction; nor is there any thing, it appears, in the language of scripture, which requires us to adopt such a supposition.

But further, it may even be admitted that there are certain advantages or privileges, not of a saving nature resulting from the death of Christ, the participation of which, by those who live under the gospel, may be held to be strictly universal. The preservation of the human race itself may be traced up to this source; and certainly we are indebted to it for the means of moral and religious improvement, for much valuable and useful knowledge, for a more full and clear exhibition of duty, for greater restraints on wickedness, and stronger incentives to righteousness, and benevolence, and purity; with many other things, contributing to the prosperity of society and the welfare of individuals, which unassisted reason or civil legislation could never have secured.\* The system of grace, established on earth and resting on the atonement of Christ, as its basis, surrounds, so to speak, ‘our guilty world with an atmosphere of natural and moral good, and scatters an endless variety of personal and social enjoyments.’ These advantages are strictly universal; and if the sentiment that Christ died for all men, were understood to have no higher reference than these, we might not feel ourselves called upon to dispute it. Still, at the same time, we should be disposed to question the propriety of the language employed to express the sentiment in question

\* Hill’s Lectures, vol. iii. p. 9.



Because certain benefits, not of a saving nature, spring to all men from the death of Christ, we do not conceive it proper to say that Christ died for all men. It is plain that, in this sense, the phrase expresses a meaning different altogether from that which it bears when used with reference to the subjects of saving grace, or the objects of God's purpose of mercy. And, with nearly the same propriety, might it be affirmed that Christ died for angels, for it is not to be disputed, as we shall afterwards see, that they also derive important advantages from the death of Christ, more especially an enlargement of knowledge and an accession of companions, which, but for this, they could never have enjoyed.

Besides ; it ought to be observed, that universal terms are not to be stretched beyond that with reference to which they are used. They denote all comprehended within a specified *whole*, but the whole itself may be limited. In this sense, the term *all* may express an endless variety of extension ; it may be all the members of a family, or all the citizens of a town, or all the population of a country, or all the inhabitants of the globe. Its meaning must be defined by that which is spoken of. That Christ died for all, is certainly affirmed ; but for all whom ? This is the question. Whether for all the human family ? or only for all that were given him by his Father,—for all his own, for all his church ? Because, in speaking of privileges secured for the people of Great Britain, a writer should happen to say that these privileges were secured for *all*, it would surely be unfair to infer that he meant they were secured for all the inhabitants of the earth. Not less unwarrantable is it, because Christ is said to have died for all, when the whole context is treating of the privileges of the people of God, to draw the conclusion, that he died for all the human family without exception. And it is here not a little noticeable, that, in the whole compass of revelation, so far as we are aware, it is never once said, in so many terms, that Christ died for *all men*, or for *every man*. In the received version, it is true, the words *men* and *man* occur, but there are no corresponding terms in the original ; *all* and *every one* are the words employed, leaving the sense to be filled up by the connexion. It may here also be remarked, that the Greek language possesses terms more strictly expressive of absolute universality than those which are used in

treating of the extent of Christ's death;\* so that we may infer, it was not the design of the inspired writers to express the greatest degree of universality, else these more extensive terms would have been employed.

Having made these general observations, we are now prepared for entering on a more close review of the particular passages of scripture, on which the objection we are considering is founded. These passages may be arranged into two classes:—Such as connect the death of Christ with *the world* or *the whole world*—and such as speak of his having died for *all men* or for *every man*.

The passages which connect the death of Christ with *the world* or the *whole world*, are six in number. It may be premised, that the term *world* is used in scripture *subjectively* for the material world, or the world *containing*; as in the expressions, 'the world was made by him,' and 'the field is the world.' (John i. 10. Matt. xiii. 38.) It is also used *adjunctively* for the world *contained*, that is, the men in the world; as when God is said to 'judge the world.' (Rom. iii. 6.) It is scarcely necessary to remark, that it is in the latter sense the term occurs in the present controversy. But even in this sense, its meaning is not always uniform; it sometimes means all men collectively, and at other times all distributively, that is, some of all classes. Nothing is clearer than that the phrases *the world*, *all the world*, and *the whole world*, often occur in circumstances where absolute collective universality is perfectly inadmissible. Such is the case in the following passages:—'There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed;' (Luke ii. 1;) where *all the world* can mean only the inhabitants of the Roman empire:—'The world knew him not;' (John i. 10;) where all the inhabitants of the earth cannot be meant, as there certainly existed, even then, some who knew Christ:—'Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing; behold the world is gone after him;' (John xii. 29;) where, as denoting those who waited on the ministry of Jesus, a very restricted sense only of the term can be applicable:—'The whole world lieth in wickedness;' (1 John v. 19;) where, though more extensive than in the last quotation, universality is totally inadmissible, as, at the time this language was used, there were, at

\* Πᾶς is the word most commonly employed. But it is allowed not to have the same intensity as ἅπας, σήμερις, or ἕκαστος, which we believe are not used in this connexion.

least, several thousand godly persons in the world ;—‘ All the world wondered after the beast.’ (Rev. xiii. 3.) At the time to which this language applies there were with the Lamb on mount Zion a hundred and forty and four thousand, who had not the mark of the beast in their forehead. Thus is it distinctly proved that the phrases in question do not *necessarily* denote universality. If absolute universality is to be understood, when they occur in reference to the death of Christ, it must be on some other ground than the scripture usage of the language. And if the extent of import to be attached to the words is to be determined by circumstances connected with the thing spoken of, we candidly submit whether the principles formerly advanced, from the purposes of God, the covenant of grace, the resurrection and intercession of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit, are not sufficient to warrant a restricted import; while the general observations, lately made, determine the nature and extent of this limitation. But let us look at the passages themselves in which these phrases occur.

‘ Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.’ (John i. 29.) Here, the fact that the Lamb of God does not take away the sin of every individual in the world, peremptorily demands that the term shall be taken in a restricted acceptance; while the circumstance of the address having been made originally to Jews, sufficiently accounts, on a principle formerly explained, for the use of an extensive term. John was sent to announce a new order of things, widely different, in point of extent, from the levitical economy, which had now waxed old and was ready to vanish away.

‘ For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.’ (John iii. 16, 17.) The same remarks apply to this passage as to the last. The latter expression in it explains what is meant by the world. We have only to ask, whether every individual in the world is actually saved by God’s only begotten Son, to ascertain the extent of that world which is the object of God’s redeeming love; for it must be blasphemy to suppose that the design for which God sent his Son into the world, could, even in the slightest degree, be thwarted.

‘We have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.’ (John iv. 42.) This expresses the opinion of certain Samaritans, and, as they were believers, it may be supposed to be according to truth. It represents Jesus as *the Saviour of the world*. If the appellation be understood to denote only fulness of merit or sufficiency of means for salvation, there can be no difficulty in explaining it. But if it be supposed to denote the actual procurement of salvation, then the ultimate fact comes in to determine that the term ‘world’ shall be taken in a restricted sense, for it is not more a solecism in language than revolting to every right and honourable conception regarding Christ, to speak of him as the *Saviour* of those who are *lost*.

The same remarks apply in all their force, to the Saviour’s own words:—‘The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.’ (John vi. 51.) An express contrast is designed between the privileges of ancient Israel and those of which Jesus was to be the immediate author, which sufficiently accounts for the universal term in this place; while, as in all the other instances, the fact obliges us to adopt a limited interpretation.

The same principles must guide us in explaining the apostle’s words:—‘God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.’ (2 Cor. v. 19.) It is enough, here, to ask whether *all* without exception are reconciled to God?—whether *all* participate in the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin?

‘If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.’ (1 John ii. 1, 2.) This seems, at first sight, the strongest passage of all in support of the objection, yet there is not one, which when viewed in its connexion, is more easily explained in consistency with the view we have adopted. The chief explanation has already been brought forward, in speaking of the comparative extent of the new and old testament privileges. The contrast is here plainly marked—‘*our* sins; the sins of *the whole world*.’ The aim of the passage, too, is clearly to afford consolation to believers when they fall into sin, not to hold out encouragement to the wicked to commit iniquity. ‘Propitiation’ itself supposes an actual deliverance from the wrath of

the Almighty, in which we are certain all do not share, for we read of some on whom the wrath of God abideth for ever. Moreover, the propitiation for sin is connected with advocacy, by which, as before explained, the reference of the former term is necessarily limited. To the passages before adduced, in which the very same phrase occurs in a connexion which necessarily precludes absolute universality, we here beg leave to add other two:—‘I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon *all the world*.—The great dragon, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth *the whole world*.’ (Rev. iii. 10; xii. 9.)

The second class of texts, on which the objection in question is founded, consists of those in which Christ is said to die for *all men* or for *every man*. We must here remind the reader of the established canon of criticism before laid down, namely, that the extent of import attaching to universal terms depends on the subject in reference to which they are used. Now, the term *all* is often employed in scripture in a restricted, or distributive sense. For example, when Paul says, ‘For *all* seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ’s,’ (Phil. ii. 21;) the term must be restricted to those selfish persons of whom he complains in the context; yet the term itself is as naked and general as in any case in which it is used in connexion with the death of Christ. Again, when the same writer says, ‘marriage is honourable in *all*,’ (Heb. xiii. 4;) the term must likewise be restricted, as there are not only many who enter into marriage dishonourably, but many who never marry at all. Further, when he says, ‘I exhort, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for *all men*,’ (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2;) that the term is to be understood not collectively but distributively, is plain from what follows, ‘for kings and for all that are in authority.’ Keeping these things in mind, the passages in which similar language is used in connexion with the death of Christ, can give us no difficulty. But it may be proper to look a little more closely into these passages themselves.

‘And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.’ (John xii. 32.) The word ‘men’ is a supplement; the original is ‘all,’ (*πάντας*;) leaving the sense to be filled up agreeably to the nature of that which is spoken of. What is spoken of is, the attractive power of the

Saviour's cross, in drawing men to him. This power is exemplified in justification, regeneration, communion, and perfect salvation; and is rather moral than legal in its nature. It is the *actual efficacy* of the crucifixion of Christ that is the subject of this assertion, and this, by the acknowledgment of all, is limited with respect to the number of its subjects. Besides, the words were spoken in consequence of certain *Greeks*, who had come up to worship at the feast, having expressed a desire, through Andrew and Philip, to be introduced to Jesus; from which it is fair to infer that the 'all' here means all *without distinction*, not all *without exception*.

'The free gift came upon all men unto justification.' (Rom. v. 18.) Here, also, the actual result, justification, is spoken of. Are all men, without exception, actually justified, that is, delivered from condemnation and accepted of God?

'For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.' (1 Cor. xv. 22.) It would be out of place here, to enter into the controversy, whether the death in this passage means any thing more than temporal death, and the life any thing more than the bodily resurrection which is common to the righteous and the wicked. There seems to us to be very satisfactory grounds for rejecting this view.\* But we submit the following remarks, as, in our humble opinion, sufficient to neutralize the objection founded on this and similar texts in the writings of Paul.—There is good reason to believe that the comparison or parallelism instituted between Adam and Christ refers to the public representative capacities of both; which brings the matter to the question, whether Christ stood in a federal relation to the whole human race. If he did not, because the *all* represented by Adam are all without exception, to conclude that the *all* represented by Christ must be so too, is an unfounded inference. The comparison is, also, obviously meant to be understood with reference to the actual efficacy of what is performed by each: and as the offence of Adam has not merely procured condemnation for all, which may or may not come into operation, according to circumstances, but has actually brought all in him under the curse of death, so we are bound to admit that the *all* who are made alive in Christ, are not merely—according to the

\* Wardlaw's *Essays*, pp. 247—270.

supposition of our opponents—those for whom Christ has procured life, but those on whom this blessing is actually bestowed.\*

‘For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.’ (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) What does this passage affirm? Not that Christ died for *all who were dead*, but that *all for whom he died were previously dead*. There is a vast difference betwixt these two things; the latter, however, is all that is either affirmed or supposed, and leaves room for the supposition, that there might be many more who were dead than those for whom Christ died. Moreover, the passage establishes the inseparable connexion between the death and resurrection of Christ—‘him who died for them and rose again’—which, as before shown, necessarily requires a limitation in the number of those for whom he died.

‘Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.’ (1 Tim. ii. 6.) The context leaves no room to doubt that the universal term is employed, in this instance, distributively, as meaning all without distinction. The reference, in what goes before, is to kings and persons in authority, (v. 2;) and, in what follows, to the ‘gentiles.’ (v. 7.) And this explains the apparent difficulty, (v. 4,) ‘who will have all men to be saved,’ as if there were a contrariety between the ‘secret and revealed will of God,’ or between the purpose of Deity and the real state of things. We are exhorted to pray for men of all ranks and descriptions; for it is God’s will that men of all ranks and descriptions should be saved; and of this we have sufficient evidence in Christ’s having given himself a ransom for all ranks and descriptions of men. Such is plainly the connexion of the various clauses in this chapter, and how far is it, in this view, from giving any support to the doctrine of indefinite atonement!

‘We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.’ (1 Tim. iv. 10.) A Saviour is one, not merely who designs to save, but who actually effects salvation; and as all men without exception are not actually saved from sin, the term ‘Saviour,’ in this

\* Such as wish to pursue this subject will find an able and satisfactory disquisition on the passages in which a parallelism is instituted betwixt Christ and Adam, in Dr Wardlaw’s *Essays*, pp. 297—310.

passage, must have some other meaning. It means *Preserver*; and in this sense the living God is the Saviour of all men without exception; he upholds them in being, he sustains them in temporal life, in him they live, and move, and have their being; while he extends a peculiar care to believers who are partakers of his special grace.\*

‘We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.’ (Heb. ii. 9.) The word *man* here is not in the original; the phrase runs *for every one*,—*ὑπὲρ πάντων*. Now, the rule with regard to universal terms is, not to extend them beyond the subject of which the writer happens to be treating; and, in the case before us, the persons spoken of are the ‘sons’ whom the Captain of salvation brings to glory,—‘they who are sanctified,’—his ‘brethren,’—‘the children which God had given him;’ from all which we are surely warranted to presume the meaning of the disputed expression to be, that Jesus tasted death for every one of *these*, and not for every one of the human race. Nor is this interpretation different from what we are required to adopt in similar instances, in which even stronger language is employed in the original. ‘But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man (*ἐκάστῳ*) to profit withal.’ (1 Cor. xii. 7.) This cannot possibly be understood universally. Neither can the following, where even the term *man* occurs in the Greek,—‘Whom we preach, warning every man (*πάντα ἀνθρώπων*) and teaching every man,’ (*πάντα ἀνθρώπων*.) (Col. i. 28.)

These, we believe, are all the passages in which the phrases in question occur, in connexion with the death of Christ. Or, if there are any others, they are to be explained on the same principles. The sources of explanation are chiefly two: *that universal terms are not to be extended beyond the subject in reference to which they are used*—and, *that ‘all,’ with special reference to the greater extension of new testament blessings, means all WITHOUT DISTINCTION, and not all WITHOUT EXCEPTION.* These canons kept in view and applied, will serve to explain every difficulty which may be supposed to arise from the use of universal terms, in speaking of the subjects of Christ’s death.

\* See Ps. xxxvi. 6: “O Lord, thou *preservest* (in the Greek Septuagint, *σώσεις*, wilt save) man and beast.”—ED.



5. There remains but one other objection, that, namely, which rests on those passages of Scripture which seem to imply a *possibility of some perishing for whom Christ died.*

If such a thing could be shown to be fact, or even proved to be possible, then would the doctrine of a definite atonement be overthrown, and the theory of universality would possess a high degree of probability. But the passages referred to, when closely examined, give support to no such idea. Let us give our attention for a little to these passages.

‘Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition: that the Scripture might be fulfilled.’ (John xvii. 12.) Here, it is supposed that one of those who were given to Christ to be redeemed by his blood is said to be lost. The explanation of this passage depends on the view taken of the phrase, ‘those that thou gavest me.’ If this refers officially to the giving to Christ of certain persons to be his apostles, then there is nothing which impugns our doctrine in what is expressed, namely, that Judas, one of the apostles, had apostatised and fallen from his apostleship. But we apprehend that by those given to Christ, we are to understand the elect of God, the redeemed from among men, who in the context are said to have ‘kept his word,’ and to have ‘believed in him.’ To this number, Judas, who was always a hypocrite, never belonged. The particle *but* (εἰ μὴ) is thus not *exceptive* but *adversative*; it does not suppose the son of perdition to be *included* in the number of those given to Christ, but to be *contrasted* with such; the language is elliptical, and the ellipsis requires but to be supplied, to render the passage one of the strongest in the Bible in our favour:—‘those that thou hast given me I have kept, and none of them is lost. But the son of perdition *is lost*, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.’ Such is the force of the particle in many other passages, which may serve to illustrate and confirm this explanation:—‘No man knoweth the Son, but the Father—(εἰ μὴ ὁ Πατήρ, i. e. but the Father knoweth the Son;) neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son;’ (Matt. xi. 27;) (εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱός, i. e. but the Son knoweth the Father.) ‘Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias—but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, (εἰ μὴ εἰς Σάρπητα,) a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow’ (Luke iv. 25, 26.) That the

particle is here adversative, not exceptive, is plain from the circumstance that *Sarepta* was not in *Judea*, and of course the widow who abode there was not a widow in *Israel*; the manner in which God treated this widow, by sending to her his prophet, is *contrasted* with his treatment of the many widows in *Israel*, to whom he sent him not. Thus, also, in the passage which immediately follows:—‘Many lepers were in *Israel* in the time of *Eliseus* the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving (εἰ μὴ) *Naaman* the *Syrian*.’ (Luke iv. 27.) *Naaman* the *Syrian* was not a leper in *Israel*; the force of the passage lies in the implied contrast;—‘none of THEM was cleansed. But NAAMAN THE SYRIAN was cleansed.’ Take two other examples of the adversative force of the particle:—‘And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only (εἰ μὴ) those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads,’ i. e. only those men shall they hurt. ‘And there shall in no wise enter into it, any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but (εἰ μὴ) they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life:’ i. e. they shall enter into it. (Rev. ix. 4; xvi. 27.) Surely, after these passages are considered, no candid person will insist that *Judas*, the son of perdition, was included among those who were given to Christ to be redeemed by his blood; for, on the same principle might it be maintained, that the Father was a man, that *Sarepta* was a city of *Judea*, that *Naaman* the *Syrian* was a leper in *Israel*, that the men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads were grass or trees, and that those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life were persons who are defiled, and work abomination, and make a lie. That a mere English reader might be led, by the passage under consideration, to adopt the idea, that those for whom Christ died may possibly perish, would not be wonderful, although the texts in which a parallel phraseology occurs might have prevented even such from error; but that persons conversant with the original language should take such a view of it, is utterly inexcusable, inasmuch as the very opposite is what the original terms import.

‘But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died.’ (Rom. xiv. 15.) Similar to this is a passage in another epistle of the same writer.

which must be explained on the same principles:—‘And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?’ (1 Cor. viii. 11.) These texts seem at first sight to be formidable; but they are capable of being satisfactorily explained. It occurs to remark, at the outset, that if they actually imply that those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ may finally fall away and perish, then do they directly contradict other passages of Scripture, which as expressly teach us the contrary of all this; such as the following:—‘All that the Father hath given me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. This is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing.—I give unto them eternal life, and they shall NEVER PERISH, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.—Who shall also CONFIRM you unto the end, that ye may be blameless unto the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.—The Lord is faithful who shall STABLISH you and keep you from evil.—Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.’ (John vi. 37. 39; x. 28. 1 Cor. i. 8. 2 Thess. iii. 3. 1 Pet. i. 5.) Such as maintain the possibility of any for whom Christ died perishing, will find it difficult to explain these passages in consistency with this opinion; but they are as much bound to reconcile the passages on which they found the sentiment in question with those we have now adduced, as are the advocates of a definite atonement to reconcile the same passages with the sentiment they have espoused. Nay, we greatly mistake if the latter be not a much more easy task than the former.

The true explanation of these passages seems to be, that the *tendency* of the wicked conduct denounced is what is pointed out.—The tendency is to destroy, or make to perish, the brother for whom Christ died. All sin tends to the destruction of the soul; and such, in every case, would be its effect, were there nothing to prevent it. This is the case with the sins of the people of God, as well as those of others; and nothing but the justifying righteousness of the Redeemer in which they are interested by faith, prevents this end from supervening. Such, of course, is the case with the temptations to sin to which they are exposed from others: the tendency of these temptations is to bring about their destruction, to cause them to perish. Because such a consummation shall not be permitted to take place, it is not less true that it is the tendency of the conduct in

question to lead to it. And, in speaking of a line of evil conduct, and setting forth its enormity with a view to deter from pursuing it, what more natural or fitting than to describe it by its evil and pernicious tendency! It is thus that he who believeth not God is said to make God a liar. The tendency of the conduct is to such an end; but the end itself can never be in reality. So in the case before us; the tendency of the conduct described is to cause the brother to perish for whom Christ died, although such is the grace of God that this consummation shall never be permitted to take place.

‘Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace.’ (Heb. x. 29.) The apostle is showing the aggravated criminality of apostasy from the gospel. One aggravating circumstance is, that the apostate treats with contempt the blood of the covenant; which blood is said to be, as magnifying still more the crime, that ‘wherewith he was sanctified.’ The question here is, who is it that is referred to by the pronoun ‘he?’ Who is it that was sanctified? Is it the apostate himself? or is it the Son of God? The former is, of course, understood by those who adduce the passage as an objection to the doctrine of a definite atonement. But this we are disposed to question; the immediate antecedent is the Son of God; thus understood, the passage is rendered more strongly expressive of the writer’s object; and this is the view which is taken of it by some of our best writers. That the blood, which apostates from the gospel profane, is that by which the Son of God was himself consecrated or set apart to his mediatorial offices, is surely a consideration fitted to deepen their crime. But, admitting that the apostate himself is meant, the passage presents no opposition to our doctrine. In the first place, the word ‘sanctified,’ often means nothing more than consecration to the service of God, which may apply to hypocrites as well as true saints, in respect of their profession of the gospel; making that profession, they avowedly set themselves apart to the service of the Most High. And in the second place, supposing the word *sanctified* to be used in its more frequent acceptation to mean inward purification of the soul, may we not understand the apostle here to reason regarding the

guilt of apostasy, on supposition of the truth of what the apostate professes? The hypocrite professes to be sanctified by the blood of the covenant, claims the character of one who has felt the cleansing virtue of the blood of the Son of God, and, supposing it for a moment to be true, how does it aggravate his guilt, that he by his apostasy counts this very blood, wherewith he professes to be sanctified, a common thing? Nothing can be more natural than such a train of reasoning; and, in this light, the passage presents no opposition to the view of Christ's death for which we contend.

'But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.' (2 Pet. ii. 1.) Some are of opinion that 'the Lord' here does not refer to Christ; and certainly the original term (*δεσπότιν*) is not that by which the Saviour is commonly designated. Others, again, think that the *buying* here does not refer to the meritorious purchase which Christ made of the church with his blood, but to the redemption from Egypt or some other thing of inferior importance. But we are willing to admit that Christ is 'the Lord' spoken of, and that the purchase of redemption by his blood is what is meant by the word 'bought:' and yet we see nothing in the text that opposes our doctrine. It is not necessary to suppose that the false teachers who were to bring on themselves swift destruction, were *actually* bought with the blood of Christ. It is enough for the apostle's purpose that they were *professedly* so. He argues against them *on their own principles*, and shows thus that their conduct was heinous and dangerous in the extreme. And in doing so, he only follows the example of the Saviour himself, who confuted the Pharisees who professed to be righteous and were not, on their own acknowledged principles:—'I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.' (Luke xv. 7.) Are we to conclude, from this, that there were any such *just persons who needed no repentance*? Surely not; but there were persons who made pretensions to this character; and against these was the reproof contained in the passage directed. Neither are we, from the expression under consideration, to conclude that the persons spoken of were actually '*bought*' with the

price of Christ's blood ; but there were persons who pretended to be so and yet acted inconsistently with the supposition ; and such pretension certainly tended to enhance the enormity of their guilt

Thus have we brought to a conclusion the argument respecting the extent of Christ's atonement. We have endeavoured clearly to exhibit the state of the question : have stated, it is hoped, with fairness, the difficulties with which the subject is beset ; and have brought forward what has seemed to us sufficient to refute what we conceive to be error, and to support what we conceive to be the truth on this important point. It is to be feared that, in the case of many, the opposition shown to a definite atonement, springs from objections to the doctrine of divine sovereignty, and we have reason to be on our guard against this fruitful source of error. Let us beware, too, of being carried away with the mere sound of scripture language, to the overthrow of the analogy of faith. Let saints rejoice that not one of those for whom Christ died shall come short of eternal life ; for, whom God did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, them he shall certainly glorify. But let it not be thought, from any-thing we have said, that we have a wish to limit unduly the saving virtue of the Redeemer's blood. We repeat, that, in intrinsic worth, we regard it as infinite ; nor would we be understood to mean that its actual efficacy is not greatly extensive. We deny that it is universal, but we rejoice to think, notwithstanding, that it extends to a multitude which no man can number, of redeemed men, who, gathered from every nation, and people, and kindred, and tongue, shall, with harmonious voices and grateful hearts, sing praises to the Lamb that sitteth on the throne, for ever and ever.

## SECTION IV.

## RESULTS OF CHRIST'S ATONEMENT.

THE results of the great doctrine we have thus endeavoured to explain, establish, and defend, are so numerous and diversified that an attempt fully to discuss, or even to enumerate them all cannot be presumed. But the present work might be deemed to be essentially defective were these altogether passed over without notice. We beg the reader's attention to the following.

I. *The atonement serves to illustrate, in the most interesting manner, the CHARACTER OF GOD.*

Even the *natural* perfections of Deity are thus illustriously manifested. What *wisdom* is shown in devising a way by which the grand object of redeeming mercy might be gained, in consistency with legislative rectitude, and the seemingly inharmonious conjunction of characters might be effected—'a just God and a Saviour!' No mortal mind, no angelic intellect could ever have conceived this plan, could ever have solved this problem. Well may it be characterized as a display of 'the manifold *wisdom* of God;' nor can we express ourselves regarding it in more appropriate terms than by saying, 'He hath abounded towards us in all *wisdom*.'

In it we see the *power*, not less than the wisdom, of God. Powerful love, love stronger than death, must it have been, which moved the appointment of such a plan of salvation. Such a load of guilt as pressed on him who 'bare our iniquities,' such a weight of wrath as was endured by him whom 'it pleased the Father to bruise,' could have been borne by no power less than almighty. The curse which he sustained was sufficient to sink the whole guilty world of sinful men to the depths of perdition. What even when inflicted on angels who 'excel in strength,' requires to be broken up into portions and dealt out through the successive ages of eternity, was poured forth on the head of Emmanuel at once and in one unbroken torrent of accumulated vengeance. Nor do the effects resulting from the atone-

ment of Christ, in his taking the prey from the mighty, calling into being a new creation, and performing all those acts of almighty grace which evince the gospel to be 'the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,' give a less striking display of omnipotence.

Here also the *moral* attributes of God shine forth. Nowhere else do we meet with such a display of divine *holiness*. He is manifested, indeed, to be the Holy One, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, who cannot look upon sin; for such is the immaculate purity of his nature that moral guilt must not be cancelled by a sovereign act of will, nor moral pollution wiped away by a mere effort of power, but sin signally stamped with the brand of Jehovah's deepest abhorrence by the substitutionary sufferings of his own Son. By God's sparing not his own Son but delivering him up for us all, we are more impressively taught the inviolability of divine *justice* than we could be by laying open the caverns of endless despair, and disclosing to view the horrid and appalling scenes of suffering and wo which they present. In the cross of heaven's spotless Victim we read most plainly that God will by no means clear the guilty. The wrath of God is here revealed as it is nowhere else, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The immovable determination of the divine nature, to visit every deviation from rectitude with its merited and appropriate award of judgment, is unanswerably demonstrated. Nor can any thing be conceived, better fitted to fill with terror such as perseveringly outrage the authority of the divine law, for, if the sword of justice was made to awake against the Shepherd, and smite the man who is Jehovah's fellow, who, continuing in a course of sin and unbelief, can expect to escape the vengeance of eternal fire? If such things were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

But it is the *gracious* character of God that is principally exhibited in the atonement of Christ. Compassion, mercy, love, grace, beam with refulgent splendour from the cross, and from the cross only. Wisdom and power, holiness and justice, though here transcendently magnified, are elsewhere displayed to a certain extent: but the atoning sacrifice of Christ is what alone gives any intimation, even the slightest, of forgiving mercy and redeeming love. If left to creation and providence, our anticipations might well be of a different character, seeing the pains and privations, and



sorrows, and death, which everywhere prevail, would seem to announce God's fixed determination to avenge the quarrel of his covenant. But, in the face of the suffering Saviour, we read distinct intimations of mercy and love. Gethsemane and Calvary thus disclose what the fairest scenes in nature can never exhibit. The 'human face divine,' even when marred with grief, and lacerated with thorns, and foul with weeping, and pale with death, reflects more of the divine glory than the sun when shining in his strength. The hour of midnight gloom, and darkness, and desertion which came upon the holy soul of the Redeemer, was, so to speak, the noontide of God's eternal love, the meridian splendour of mercy to perishing men, the reign and triumph of superabounding grace,—'God commendeth his love toward us in that, when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' 'Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.'

II. *It vindicates the honour, and establishes the principles of the Divine moral government in general, and of the moral law in particular.*

The homage to his excellence which the Lord of the universe demands of all his rational creatures, of whatever class, together with a duly apportioned expression of his approbation or disapprobation, according as their conduct meets, or falls short of, his demands, constitutes what we understand by the Divine moral government in general. The moral law, again, is that special moral constitution given to the human race in particular, comprehending the divine requirements obligatory on man. The one is just a branch of the other, and, as far as their claims, sanctions, and obligations are concerned, they may be regarded as identical.

The original claims of God's moral government and law are high,—entire affection, and perpetual and devoted obedience. These claims are founded on the undoubted supremacy, intrinsic excellence, and inherent proprietorship of God. No testimony to their equity could be more unequivocal than that which the death of Christ supplies. Had they not been at first perfectly equitable, had they been essentially unjust, or even in the slightest degree over rigorous, their tone would certainly have been relaxed, rather than that the Son of God should be subjected to suf-

fer the accursed death of the cross. His being so subjected thus proclaims in the most determinate accents that the law is holy, just, and good.

The sanctions of the Divine moral government are necessary, as well as its claims. Without these, neither could the displeasure of the supreme moral Governor at the breach of his law be adequately expressed, nor could the subjects of this law ever be deterred from sin. While it is obvious, that to effect these ends they require to be awful, it is equally plain, that the moral Governor himself is alone entitled to determine what shall be thought adequate. This he did by giving forth the appalling declarations, 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die' — 'cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.' But the doctrine of atonement, which supposes this curse of the law to be borne by the Son of God himself, surely strikingly demonstrates, that these sanctions, however awful, were nothing more than just, nothing more than necessary; that they were dictated by no little feeling of revenge, founded on no pitiful calculation of expediency, and were utterly incapable of being departed from in any one instance.

Thus, the permanent obligation of the requirements and sanctions of the supreme moral government was satisfactorily and for ever established. It appears that these obligations are not to be violated with impunity, nor altered, nor abated in the slightest degree. No abrogation, or abridgment, or modification of them can take place out of respect to man's disinclination, or to what is called *human frailty*. Though palpably irrational, the heart of man has been wicked enough to conceive this monstrous supposition; and, but for the direct confutation it receives from the vicarious sufferings of the Redeemer, there is reason to fear that the base and pernicious principle would have been extensively adopted. But for these sufferings, on the supposition that man had been saved, it must have gone forth to the moral universe, that the law, though requiring perfect obedience, would be satisfied with less, and though denouncing condemnation on every guilty violator, would permit the perpetrator to escape with impunity. And the consequence of this announcement must have been, to give such a view of the Lawgiver and his law, as could not fail to encourage moral subjects, of every order, to revolt, and embark in the most hardened and extensive rebellion. The

atonement, on the other hand, proclaims the stability of the law and the unflinching rectitude of the Lawgiver. It assures us that the one is not to be insulted, nor the other to be trifled with; that either God must be obeyed, or the consequences of disobedience must be borne; that the throne of the divine moral government is strictly inviolable, and that his rectoral powers are not to be let down to the most presumptuous mortal on earth, or to the most ambitious archfiend in hell. The law is magnified and made honourable. Christ appears to be the end of the law for righteousness. He came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it. And God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness.

III. *It affords a demonstration of the exceeding evil of sin.*

That sin could not be pardoned without a satisfaction, and that no satisfaction could suffice but the death of God's own well-beloved Son, are surely demonstrative of the dreadful and malignant nature of moral evil. No proof equal to this was ever given. Abstract reasonings from the infinite excellence and holiness of God, and practical comments on the overthrow of angels, the drowning of the Antediluvians, the burning of Sodom, and the extermination of the Canaanites, must all yield to the affecting scene of Calvary. Even the most profound study of the law itself, to which sin is opposed, could convey no such impression of its deep demerit. The cross is 'the mirror which reflects the true features and lineaments of moral evil.' It is when looking upon Him whom we have pierced, that we see sin in such light as to induce us to mourn as one mourneth for a first-born, and to be in bitterness as one that is in bitterness for an only son. Men, in their ignorance and partiality, may conceive of it as a small matter, and speak of it as 'a little thing;' they may palliate their offences and plead excuses for them as if they were too light to be noticed, or too trivial to be severely punished. But let them seriously weigh the momentous truth, that Christ died for our sins, that the Son of God had to pour out his soul unto death before a single transgression could be forgiven; let them recall the contradiction of sinners and the fury of devils, the agonies of the garden and the tortures of the cross, the desertion of his friends and the hidings of his Father's face, to which he had to submit before one iniquity could be pardoned, and then say whether sin does not now assume a new cha-

racter ; whether it does not appear to be an evil and a bitter thing ; whether they are not better prepared to appreciate the language in which it is spoken of as ‘ exceeding sinful ’ — ‘ the abominable thing which God hates.’ It is thus that we learn to entertain right views, and to cherish right feelings, with regard to moral evil. Grief, and shame, and abhorrence can only be inspired by a believing view of this doctrine ; and thus only can those pungent convictions for the past, and those vigorous determinations to resist it in future, be felt, which are the essential characteristics and ingredients of genuine repentance. Nowhere do the tears of godly sorrow flow with such profusion as at the foot of the cross ; nor is there another station so well calculated to nerve the penitent with the resolution to say, ‘ I have done iniquity, I will do so no more.’ O, who is there that, living under the habitual influence of the cross of Christ, is not induced to hate sin with a perfect hatred ? Who is there, with the sufferings of a crucified Saviour full in his view, that can bring himself to love sin, or roll it as a sweet morsel under his tongue : that is not rather impelled to purify himself from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord ?

IV. *It infallibly secures the perfect and everlasting salvation of the chosen of God.*

This is the grand benevolent purpose of the divine will, whose nature, preparations, and consequences bespeak its transcendent magnitude and importance ; and every barrier to which, whether arising from the perfections of Deity, or the principles of the divine government, or the moral corruption of man’s nature, has been removed by the blood of atonement.

Every legal obstruction to the salvation of man is thus taken away. Guilt is atoned ; redemption from condemnation is procured ; and every demand which the law can prefer against the sinner, whether of requirement or of sanction, is completely answered. ‘ He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.’ ‘ We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.’ No impediment to the most ample pardon now exists. ‘ There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.’ Through faith in the atoning death of Emmanuel, those who before could only give vent to the shriek of horror, may now sing in full anthem, ‘ Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to

God by thy blood.' And the sinner, who formerly crouched, and trembled in every nerve at the sanctions of the law, may now lift his head in humble confidence, and, bidding defiance to a whole universe of accusation, say, 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.'

The moral obstructions to man's salvation are thus also removed. God's benevolent design embraces sanctification as well as pardon. There must be emancipation from corruption as well as from the curse; an active, vital, and prevailing holiness, as well as forgiveness. Now, Christ 'gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from ALL iniquity, and *purify* to himself a peculiar people, zealous of *good works*.' 'The blood of Jesus Christ *cleanseth* from all sin.' 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, *condemned sin in the flesh*.' 'We are *sanctified* through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.' 'Wherefore Jesus, that he might *sanctify* the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.' With such passages as these before them, it is wonderful that the doctrine of atonement should ever have been represented by its enemies as hostile to the interests of morality, or that any who profess to believe it should ever have taken occasion from it to indulge in sloth or wallow in licentiousness. The moral influence of the cross is great and direct, through the accompanying power of the Spirit. It restores to the favour of God; lays restraints on the springs of moral corruption; weakens the power of temptation; dissuades from the practice of sin; and furnishes the most powerful motives to sincere, constant, and universal obedience. Its tendency to inspire a hatred of sin has already been remarked. Nor does it supply a less energetic stimulus to the cultivation of personal holiness. The view which it gives of the divine purity, and justice, and love, the demonstration it furnishes of the rectitude and inviolability of the divine law, and the obligations of gratitude and love under which it brings us, are all directly favourable to the interests of moral obedience. It is even the grand instrument of bringing about a moral regeneration of nature; it being by the influence of this doctrine, that the divine Spirit melts and subdues the adamant heart of the sinner, and transforms it into the image of Christ.

It no less infallibly secures the happiness of man, here and hereafter. The sovereign purpose of God extends to man's deliverance from misery, as well as from guilt and pollution. And, by the sufferings of the Son of God in our stead, was foundation laid for whatever can contribute to his present or eternal felicity. That communion with God, which is the source of all true enjoyment, is to be had only through this medium. 'Through him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.' 'Seeing that we have a great high priest, let us *come boldly* unto the throne of grace.' 'Having an high priest over the house of God, let us *draw near* with a true heart, in the full assurance of faith.' Those prayers and praises, by means of which the intercourse with heaven is kept up, are accepted only for the sake of the Angel with the golden *censer*, who ministers at the golden *altar* which is before the throne, and out of whose hand the smoke of the *incense* ascends up before God. It also opens up a well-spring of consolation to the believer, amid the innumerable ills to which he is exposed in this evil world. When burdened with guilt, it 'purges the conscience from dead works.' When beset with Satan's wiles, it affords him comfort to reflect that, 'in that the merciful and faithful high priest himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.' When visited with afflictions and trials, he is comforted and upheld with the thought that 'we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.' When in the arms of death, and the soul about to be dismissed from the body, a believing view of the Son of man standing on the right hand of God, 'a lamb as if he had been slain,' can enable him calmly to resign himself, in the spirit and language of the proto-martyr, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Nay, when anticipating the day of final account, and conceiving himself to stand before the bar of a righteous God, he can possess himself in patience, seeing he knows that there shall be 'no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,' and that the blood of the covenant shall secure for him an honourable acquittal, and infallibly protect him from the wrath to come: the tribunal of eternal justice appears to be encircled with the rainbow of mercy, and, instead of the shriek of shuddering horror, he is enabled to give expression to the language of confident hope and exulting anticipation, 'Thou wilt show me

the path of life : in thy presence is fulness of joy ; at thy right hand there are pleasures for ever more.'

It is, besides, the procuring cause and sole security of eternal glory. 'Through faith in this blessed truth alone can any of our outcast family 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' Heaven is procured, prepared, taken possession of, and retained, by means of the atonement. The blood of the covenant constitutes the title to its possession. The heavenly things themselves are purified with better sacrifices, than those by which the patterns of things in the heavens were purified. We have boldness to enter into the holiest of all only by the blood of Christ, and to the Lamb in the midst of the throne are the redeemed indebted for the permanency of their glory and bliss. Those immortal honours, those glorious hopes, those perennial enjoyments, which are imaged by crowns of glory, palms of victory, harps of gold, and rivers of life, have all their meritorious source in the cross. Heaven has every thing about it to deepen the recollections of Calvary ; and, could we conceive a soul suddenly snatched from the foot of the cross to the sanctuary above, it would undergo no violent change of feeling, for it would still breathe the atmosphere and be surrounded with the symbols and memorials of atonement. Yes: the central object of attraction to men and angels is 'the *Lamb* in the midst of the throne.' 'The robes of the redeemed are 'made white in the blood of the *Lamb*.' 'Worthy is the *Lamb* that was slain,' is the burden of the celestial song. And those enlivening, gladdening streams which send forth into the heart an ever-swelling tide of unmingled bliss, 'proceed out of the throne of God and of the *Lamb*.' 'Not one thought in the crowd of eternal ideas, not one note in the compass of eternal anthems, not one moment in the round of eternal ages, can there be, but refers to Christ crucified. Heaven is no place for flight from the recollections of Calvary ! It is filled with the apparatus and monuments of atonement ! Its atmosphere is brightened by it—redolent of it—vocal with it.'

*V. By the atonement, a way is opened up for the honourable egress of divine mercy in the bestowment of salvation ; sinners have ample encouragement to rely on this mercy ; and foundation is laid for every pious emotion in the breasts of saints.*

The exercise of mercy in consistency with the claims of

justice, is the perplexing problem which only the doctrine of atonement solves. To the flow of the former the demands of the latter seem to present insuperable barriers. These demands must be satisfied, and, if satisfied in those on whom they primarily take hold, the way of mercy is necessarily shut up.

‘Die man, or justice must, unless for him  
Some other, able, or as willing, pay  
The rigid satisfaction, death for death.’

It was the revelation of the all-momentous fact of Christ’s atoning death, that enabled the gifted poet to hint even at this method of extrication from the above dilemma. Nought else could supply a reconciling principle. No tears of penitence however copious, no prayers however fervent, no good works however sincere, could warrant ‘a just God’ to ‘justify the ungodly.’ The sufferings of Christ solve the difficulty; by these every obstruction to the consistent exercise of mercy is removed; the stream of the Lord’s blood has opened up a channel in which full, free, and abundant grace might flow unobstructedly and for ever to the very chief of sinners. ‘God is *in Christ* reconciling the world to himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses.’ Not only *is* this the way by which God has seen meet to make an harmonious display of the perfections of his nature, but it may even, without presumption, be affirmed to be the *only* method by which he *could* do so. It is not, indeed, for us to limit the Mighty One, whose understanding is infinite. Yet, considering the constitution of things, and the peculiarity of the case, we may safely affirm, that the method which he *has* adopted is the best that *could* have been adopted; and, as it is impossible that a Being infinitely wise can do other than what is best, it follows that it was the *only* plan which even divine wisdom could employ. The necessity, be it observed, which is here supposed, is a *moral* necessity; and, in asserting that God could not save men otherwise than by the atonement of his Son, we no more impeach the perfection of his nature, than when we say that he cannot lie, cannot love sin, cannot contradict himself: we just affirm that *he cannot but do what is best*.

By the atonement every encouragement is held out to sinners to rely on the divine mercy in Christ for salvation. If the view which it exhibits of the rigours of justice and the inviolability of the law are fit to cause the sinner ‘medi



tate terror,' the view which it, at the same time, gives of the greatness of God's mercy and of his willingness to save to the uttermost cannot but awaken hope. If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, will he refuse to receive such as come to him humbly soliciting pardon? The gift of his own Son is such a demonstration of his merciful design that no sinner need despair; and the merits of Jesus Christ, the intrinsic worth and sufficiency of his sacrifice, are sufficient to inspire the hope of forgiveness, even should our sins be in number as the sand of the sea, and in aggravation as crimson and scarlet. 'It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief.' 'He came not to call the righteous but *sinners* to repentance.' No degree of guilt can exceed the worth, no depth of pollution surpass the cleansing virtue, of the Saviour's blood. To the timid, the conscience-stricken, the heavy-laden, the bowed down, he says, 'Come unto me, and I will give you rest.' And even should 'the whole head be sick and the whole heart faint, and from the sole of the foot even unto the crown of the head there be no soundness,' his call is still, 'Come now and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' Unbelief and despair are thus totally without excuse.

As the atonement is the hope of sinners, so is it also the source of every pious emotion in the breasts of saints. It is the very object of faith, 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' It is the spring of repentance; 'they shall look on me whom they have pierced and they shall *mourn*.' The wisdom it displays, the amazing love it discloses, and the mighty power which it exhibits, are all fitted to fill the bosom with adoring wonder. Gratitude, the strongest gratitude, is awakened by a view of the magnitude of the blessings with which it is fraught, and the sacrifices which required to be made in order to secure them. Who that thinks of the Son of God, who, being in the form of God, and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, yet made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;—who, that remembers that, though rich,

for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich, but must feel impelled to 'offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of his lips, giving thanks to his name?'—It is eminently fitted to warm the heart with love. We must love him who has so loved us as to give himself a ransom for our sins. Cold must be that heart, obtuse must be those affections, which are not kindled into an irrepressible glow by the atonement of Christ. The love of Christ must constrain all who rightly understand this subject, to love him in return. 'Whom having not seen we love,' expresses the spontaneous feeling of every saint. No believer but will be willing to say, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.' This is indeed the test of personal Christianity. 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha.' 'Love the Lord, all ye his saints.' How is it possible to come under the ardent rays of this burning love, and not feel induced to reflect its beams in kindred and reciprocal emotion! How is it possible for a gracious soul to treat love so dignified with neglect, love so free with ingratitude, love so productive with contempt, love so ardent with indifference, love so constant with even wavering affection!

Nor can any thing be conceived better calculated to produce true humility, than the doctrine that man is utterly incapable of saving himself, and that such were his guilt, and corruption, and misery, that less could not suffice for his escape than the awful sufferings of the Son of God. Oh, who that duly considers this but must be deeply humbled and self-abased! What better fitted to stain the pride of human glory, and to fill with all lowliness of mind! The man who firmly believes and cordially embraces this truth, must see himself to be nothing, yea, and less than nothing. Self-righteousness, self-sufficiency, self-complacency, self-dependence, can never be made to comport with Christ's having given himself a ransom for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.

It is no way at variance with this, that the doctrine should be viewed as calculated to fill the soul with hope, and joy, and exulting triumph. No limits can be set to the rapturous gladness which it is its native tendency to inspire. In the lowest depth of his humiliation, the believing soul, looking forward to the blessings, and anticipating the triumphs the cross of Christ is destined to secure,

rejoices in hope of the glory of God. Seeing in it every reason for the highest moral delight and complacency, and feeling that all besides is nothing in comparison, he takes up the passionate yet dignified avowal, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

VI. *The atonement more or less affects all the divine dispensations toward our world.*

Even the creation of the world, there is every reason to believe, was with the view of its being a theatre on which to exhibit the work of man's redemption by the eternal Son. It is the workmanship of his hand. This is the purpose which it serves; and that it was framed with a view to its serving its purpose is surely no disputable assertion. Difficulties connected with that profound mystery, the origin of moral evil, may encumber this statement. But we are not bound to remove every difficulty from such a subject before being entitled to demand for it the assent of the mind. The apostle, in express terms, not only claims for Christ the honour of the world's creation, but asserts the purpose of its creation to terminate in Him:— 'All things were created by him, and for him.' He is the *final* as well as the *efficient* cause of this world's creation. Our earth was selected as the chosen spot on which the mystery of redemption was to be displayed; and all the scenes of the mediatorial economy were here exhibited. The advent of the promised Messiah took place here; here was led his instructive life; here were wrought his wondrous miracles; here were spoken his still more wondrous addresses; here were borne his mysterious sufferings; here was accomplished his awful decease; and here were achieved his glorious victories over men and devils, over sin and death. This is indeed the glory of our world. That it was the abode of Christ and the scene of redemption, throws over it a surpassing lustre, imparts to it a matchless honour. 'It is the glory of the world that he who formed it dwelt in it; of the air, that he breathed it; of the sun, that it shone on him; of the ground, that it bore him; of the sea, that he walked on it; of the elements, that they nourished him; of the waters, that they refreshed him; of us men, that he lived and died among us, yea, that he lived and died for us.'\* Yes; and we may add, had it only been that it was stained with his blood, it was honoured by him beyond all human conception.—It is through the

atonement, also, that the things of this world come to be properly enjoyed, as it lays a foundation for that covenant-right to their possessions which is essential to all true enjoyment. The righteous enjoy the good things of the present life, because they know they are secured for them by the blood of Emmanuel, and are taught to use them as the provision of a temporary state, looking forward to a better and an enduring portion in the skies. And thus it is, that to them the rose of the garden appears to wear a deeper blush, and the lily of the field to reflect a purer tint, and the sun to shine with a richer splendour, and the morning star to sparkle with a brighter beam, because they are the handiworks, as they are the consecrated emblems of him who died on Calvary.

—————“ One spirit—His,  
 Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows,  
 Rules universal nature. Not a flower  
 But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,  
 Of his unrivalled pencil.—————  
 His presence who made all so fair, perceived,  
 Makes all still fairer.”

COWPER.

The dispensation of providence regards the atonement as its centre. Redemption is the grand central point of providence, and atonement is the central point of redemption. The whole apparatus of redemption owes its being and its efficacy to the death of Christ; and every movement of the complicated wheels of providence derives its impulse from redemption. Preceding events look forward, succeeding events point backward, and meet as in a common centre in the cross. The course of providence for four thousand years before the advent of the Son of God prepared the way for this stupendous event; and the train of occurrences since only serves to follow up the great design of his coming. ‘The Lord reigneth—the government is upon his shoulders.’ ‘The world is, therefore, not a wandering star, abandoned in wrath, discarded from use, rushing to destruction, but is still held for a design, and turned to an account the most glorious. Its Maker has not denounced nor disowned his property. It may be a rebel, but he is still its sovereign; it may be a recusant, but he is still its Lord.’\*

The dispensation of mercy, in all its several stages, stands, of course, in intimate connexion with the cross of

Christ. Revelation, the record of these progressive dispensations, is everywhere sprinkled with the blood of atonement. History, type, prophecy, song, epistle, all breathe the sweet-smelling savour of this one theme; and their varied contents derive a character of unity from this pervading circumstance.

From Adam to Moses, the practice of sacrificing, we have seen, existed. Adam, Abel, Noah, Lot, Abraham, all presented their burnt-offerings, which, from the substance of which they consisted, and the language in which they were spoken of, appear to have been both designed and understood to prefigure the great Christian Expiation. Without this they have no meaning, no worth; but are a cruel mockery of man's misery, and a deception of human hopes.

The Mosaic economy had innumerable rites and institutions, calculated to convey distinct ideas of propitiation and vicarious suffering. But, without the atonement of Christ, they were meaningless, useless, hurtful all. The whole system was nothing better than a pompous parade of gaudy ceremonies; a criminal waste of valuable property; a wanton infliction of unnecessary pain on sentient unoffending creatures. The atonement of Christ is what gives it all its significancy, utility, and consistency.

The peculiarity of the new testament dispensation consists in a free, full, unhampered proclamation of mercy and salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, to all men. It is an offer of eternal life and every spiritual blessing to them that believe. 'Holding forth the words of eternal life.' 'Come unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God, and beside me there is no Saviour.' But on what ground do these universal proffers proceed? Whence derive they their consistency and their power, but from the perfect, all-sufficient atonement of the Son of God? 'We preach Christ *crucified*.' 'I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him *crucified*.' 'God forbid that I should glory save in the *cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ.' This is the language held by its ministers; and, indeed, every individual benefit it bestows, they are accustomed to speak of in language which marks the same connexion. Is it redemption? 'We have *redemption* through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' Is it reconciliation? 'God hath *reconciled* us to himself by Jesus Christ.' Is it peace? 'We have *peace* with

God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Is it justification? 'Being *justified* freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' The gospel minister's commission is sealed with the blood and stamped with the cross of Emmanuel; nor can he ever execute it, in consistency with the character and glory of God, unless he exhibit the sacrifice of Christ as the chief article of his message, the burden of his doctrine, the central orb of the Christian system, which gives to every part its living energy, and binds the whole together in sweet and indissoluble union.

The divine forbearance toward our guilty race is greatly more extensive than either the efficacy or revelation of the dispensation of mercy. The history of the world is one continued illustration of this fact. The loud warnings which are uttered in the ears of mortal offenders, the apparent reluctance with which the sovereign Judge proceeds to execute his threatenings, and the manifest reservation even with which they are inflicted, bespeak the long-suffering and forbearance of God. 'Judgment is his work—his strange work.' 'Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed.' 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim?' 'Yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.' Now, how are we to account for this, in consistency with the character of God? On the principle of the atonement alone. Natural benevolence does not explain it, as this would have dictated the same course toward the angels who sinned, whereas the dispensation of forbearance is limited entirely to our race. Nor is it that He is waiting to see whether man will not clear himself of guilt, and return of his own accord to the path of duty. No. He knows that forbearance, in itself, can never secure salvation. Man may as soon annihilate himself or create a world, as emerge from guilt to innocence by his own merit, from corruption to holiness by his own power. It is with no such view, then, that the Almighty forbears to execute his just judgments on the workers of iniquity. The atonement of Christ explains the phenomenon, and gives consistency to this part of the divine procedure toward fallen man. The atoning death of Christ renders the salvation of men possible; and the execution of justice is suspended, that men may have time and opportunity to repent and be saved, for God is not willing that

any should perish, but rather that they should turn unto him and live. But for the atonement, mankind had known as little of the divine forbearance as the fallen angels; the guilty pair had perished as soon as they had sinned; the instant of their disobedience and that of their death had been the same; at the eating of the forbidden fruit, not merely had 'sky lowered and muttered thunder,' but the bolt had leapt from the heavens, and bursting on their heads, crushed them in their impotent rebellion.

Even the final judgment will exhibit a connexion with the work of Christ. Not only is all judgment committed to the Son, as part of his mediatorial reward; but the equitable condemnation of the unbelieving and impenitent will derive its character and force from this source, while the sovereign acquittal of the righteous will rest upon the atonement as its proper foundation.

The eternal state, whether of bliss or of misery, will derive a character from this circumstance. In heaven, the relations of the redeemed to God, and to the Lamb, shall take their rise from the atonement; all the communications of knowledge, and holiness, and felicity, shall flow through eternity in this channel; while every service they perform shall find acceptance with God only on this ground. And in hell, it is not to be questioned, that the miseries of the damned shall be inconceivably aggravated by the contemptuous disregard they have shown to the way of escape provided for them by God in the death of his Son. The rejection of Christ gives a highly aggravated character to their sin; and the remembrance of this rejection will give weight and pungency to their misery. The blood of Christ, which extinguishes the fire of Tophet as regards such as believe, will have only the effect of making its flames burn more intensely as regards the finally impenitent. The thought of having despised Christ, and counted the blood of atonement a common thing, will haunt the wretched memories of the wicked for ever and ever, inflicting on them, without cessation or diminished intensity, the horrific effects of its torturing power. 'If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin.' 'He that despised Moses' law died without mercy: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of

the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace ?'

VII. In fine. *The atonement of Jesus Christ will form a theme of interesting and improving contemplation to the whole universe of moral creatures throughout eternity.*

The *saving* effects of this blessed fact are limited, it is true, to our race : not so its *moral* effects. These are wide as the universe. It is not the redeemed from among *men* only that sing praise to the Lamb ; angels, beings of a higher order, more ethereal in their nature, and of more elevated endowments, strike their harps to the song, ' Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.' Angels desire to look into this mystery, and claim right to celebrate the praises of the Redeemer of men. And well they may. By the atonement of the Son of God, new and enlarged discoveries are made to them of the character of God. ' Unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places are made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.' Without this, they could never have known even what they do of the natural and moral perfections of the Deity ; and of his gracious character they could not have had so much as an idea. But here they have a display of infinite sovereignty, in saving men at all, and not leaving them, like the rebels of their own class, to perish in their sins ; and of infinite love and mercy, in choosing for salvation, of the two races of sinful creatures, that which occupied the lowest place. These are views for which they are entirely indebted to the scheme of atonement ; for had none been saved, they could have had no knowledge of mercy ; had both orders of fallen creatures been saved, they could not have had the same display of sovereignty ; and had angels been preferred to men, they could not have known that the mercy of God was the greatest possible. Marvellous wisdom ! which thus, by overlooking the order of angels, gave them a brighter manifestation than could otherwise have been given of the character of God ! What a scheme this for intelligent creatures of the highest rank to revolve through eternity ! As moral creatures, too, angels cannot but feel interested in the atonement, which establishes the inviolable rectitude of the divine government. As benevolent in their dispositions, they must also take delight in what confers such an amount of dignity, and holiness, and happiness, on so large a number of human beings. And we have only to reflect, that the redeemed from among



men are, in virtue of their redemption, introduced to the companionship of angels, to see that these celestial beings have another most powerful reason for contemplating, with the deepest interest, the atonement of Jesus. The things in heaven and things in earth are thus brought together into one. Men and angels are, in consequence, to engage in the same exercises, partake of the same privileges, share in and reflect the same glory. And it admits not of doubt, that this companionship will prove a source of knowledge and of happiness to even the 'elder sons of light.'

Thus extensive does the subject we have had under review appear to be in its influence. Men, some men only, are the subjects of Christ's atonement; but its moral bearing embraces not merely the human race, but the whole moral family of God. As a source of instruction, social happiness, and moral delight, it reaches far beyond the bounds of our earth. It not only scatters blessings over the plains of this lower world, but calls forth the benedictions of angels, awakens the sympathies of the heavenly hosts, and animates celestial beings to jubilant songs of thanksgiving and praise. Who, then, dare represent it as unimportant? Who can estimate the consequences of treating it with neglect? Rather let us count it all our salvation and all our desire. 'To them that believe he is precious.' 'How shall we escape if we neglect so GREAT SALVATION!'

THE END.

ON THE  
INTERCESSION

OF

JESUS CHRIST,

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM SYMINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

---

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1837, by  
ALEXANDER W. MITCHELL, M. D.,  
in the office of the Clerk of the District Court for the  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

---

# INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

---

## REALITY OF CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

INTERCESSION is the correlate of atonement. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that those who deny the doctrine of Christ's atonement, should have maintained the position, that his intercession is only figurative. This is the view taken of the subject by Socinians, who resolve the intercession of Christ into his kingly office, understanding by it nothing more than the exercise of his regal power in communicating to men the blessings of his mediation. That the Saviour possesses and exerts such a power, is not by any means denied, but that it is the same thing as his intercession, and is all that is meant by this part of his work, may fairly be disputed on the most satisfactory grounds.

The relation which intercession bears to atonement has just been remarked. They are correlate ideas. They stand to each other in much the same character as do the ideas of creation and providence. The providence of God consists in upholding all things, or maintaining in being the creatures he has made : it is best conceived of as a continued putting forth of the creative energy. So the intercession of Christ is the continued efficacy of his expiatory merit ; on which account it has been spoken of by some of the ancient writers as a perpetual oblation. If the providence of God were suspended, all created being must be annihilated ; and if Jesus were not to make intercession, the merit of his atonement would prove utterly unavailing. The arguments by which the reality of atonement has been established, thus support the reality of intercession. Admit the necessity and truth of Christ's atoning sacrifice, and the certainty and prevalence of his intercession within the vail naturally and irrefragably follow.

Christ's intercession, is, indeed, essential to the fulfilment of the covenant of grace. As ' mediator of the covenant,' every thing which he performs as a priest has a relation to this divine economy. The sacerdotal functions of oblation and intercession have regard respectively to the condition and the administration of the covenant. The stipulated condition of the covenant is, that satisfaction shall be made to the law

and justice of God for the sins of those who are redeemed, and this is done by the sacrifice of Christ. The administration of the covenant comprehends whatever is concerned with putting and maintaining the covenant children in possession of the blessings of redemption: and this takes its rise directly and immediately from the intercession of Christ. True it is, the agency of the Spirit and the instrumentality of means are concerned in this object: but, in the economy of man's salvation, the intercession of the Mediator is necessary alike to the operation of the one, and to the efficacy of the other. It is so arranged by infinite wisdom that all the good done to the souls of men, in connexion with the covenant of grace, shall be begun, carried forward, completed, and maintained through eternity, in relation to Christ's intercession.

The perfection of his priesthood also demonstrates the reality of his intercession. That Christ's intercession belongs to his priestly, and not to his regal, office, is a necessary proof of its reality. And that it constitutes one of his sacerdotal functions, appears from the connexion in which it is spoken of:—'He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors,' (Is. liii. 12.) To bear sin, means, we have seen, to make atonement, and it is here connected with making intercession. 'Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ who died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' (Rom. viii. 34.) Christ died as a priest, and here his intercession stands connected with his death. But the connexion is expressed in so many terms, in the following words:—'This man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable *priesthood*; WHEREFORE he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make *intercession* for them,' (Heb. vii. 24, 25.) Moreover, he is spoken of as being a priest in heaven. Not on the cross only does he act in his sacerdotal character:—'He shall be a PRIEST UPON HIS THRONE,' (Zech. vi. 13.) His priestly office claims the stamp of perpetuity;—'Thou art a PRIEST FOR EVER, after the order of Melchizedek.' (Ps. cx. 4.) Heaven is the scene of his priestly acts:—'We have such an HIGH PRIEST who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the HEAVENS.' (Heb. viii. 1.) If, then, Christ is a priest on the throne of the heavens for ever, there must be some sacerdotal act which he performs in this situation. And what is this act? Oblation it cannot be; he offered himself a sacrifice for sin *once* for all; by *one* offering he perfected for ever them that are sanctified: and this one oblation was made upon earth. It can only, then, be

intercession ; and if it is denied that Christ is thus occupied in heaven, the name Priest is an empty sound, and you fix on him the degrading stigma of holding an office without a function, of accepting a title without a corresponding work. If farther proof be necessary, it is derived from the fact, that the intercession of Christ is ever represented as proceeding on the ground of his atonement. One passage may suffice in proof of this assertion ; that, namely, in which his propitiation is exhibited as supporting his all-powerful, comforting advocacy ;—‘ If any man sin, we have an **ADVOCATE** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ; and he is the **PROFITIATION** for our sins.’ (1 John. ii. 1, 2.) But the best evidence of all, is that which is furnished by the act of the high priest under the law. It was not enough that he offered sacrifice on the brazen altar in the outer part of the tabernacle, on the day of expiation ; he must afterwards enter into the holy place, and burn sweet incense on the golden altar, after having sprinkled it seven times with the blood of atonement. ‘ And Aaron shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony that he die not.’ (Lev. xvi. 12, 13.) The import of this significant ceremony we are not left to conjecture. ‘ Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true ; but into heaven itself, now to *appear in the presence of God for us.*’ (Heb. ix. 24.) ‘ And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden *censer*, and there was given unto him much *incense*, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the *golden altar* which was before the throne. And the smoke of the *incense* which came *with the prayers of the saints*, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.’ (Rev. viii. 3, 4.) The intercession of Christ was significantly prefigured by this solemn act of the ancient high priest : and as the latter was, without doubt, a sacerdotal act, so also must be the former. In this way does it appear, that, for the reality of Christ’s intercession, we have the same evidence as for the reality of his priesthood. If the one is figurative, the other is also figurative ; if the one is real, the other is also real. And, unless it is meant to reduce the whole sacerdotal character of the Redeemer to a thin shadow, a mere figment, his intercession must be held to be a true and proper intercession.

We might even contend that the circumstances of the

people of God render the intercession of Christ necessary. Numerous and daily are their wants: they are made up of wants: their necessities are innumerable and constant. Blessings to supply these necessities, it is true, are procured by the atoning sacrifice of the Redeemer. But who shall apply to God for the bestowment of these purchased benefits? They cannot themselves; they have neither merit, nor skill, nor even at first inclination to apply for any such thing; they cannot plead their own cause; they are altogether unfit to appear in the presence of God for themselves; another must appear *for* them. Without the intercession, the purchase of Christ had thus been in vain, and the elect of God must have remained strangers for ever to a single saving blessing.

The passages, then, which speak of the work of intercession, we regard as descriptive of a high and glorious function which is actually performed by the Saviour of sinners. A function, without a believing knowledge of which, we can neither behold the Saviour's glory, nor understand the nature of man's salvation, nor experience the comforts of the redeemed.

It is no valid objection to the view we have given of this subject, that God loves his people, and has determined to confer on them the blessings purchased by his Son. If so, it has been asked, where is there need or room for Christ's intercession? The objection proceeds altogether on a mistaken conception regarding the use and object of the Saviour's intercession. It is not to awaken the love of the Father; it is not to obtain a decree in favour of those who are its subjects, that constitutes the object of this mediatorial function. Far be the impious thought! Its very existence is a fruit of God's love—an evidence of his gracious purpose. It is, that his Almighty love may be displayed, his sovereign decree fulfilled, in a way most consistent with the divine glory, most compatible with the honour of the divine government, most productive of the good of man, and most consonant with the interests of the moral universe at large. It is the method by which God has wisely determined to express his affection and fulfil his purposes of mercy toward fallen men. And no objection on this ground, can be urged against the intercession of Christ, which will not apply with equal force against our presenting a prayer on our own behalf, or on that of our fellow men.

Neither is there any validity in the objection, that intercession supposes something derogatory to the honour of the Redeemer. It is true, that the act of petitioning, in one point of

view, implies inferiority in the petitioner with reference to the person petitioned. But, in the case before us, there is no inferiority supposed inconsistent either with the personal dignity or with the mediatorial glory of the Son of God. His person is divine, and on this the value of both his sacrifice and intercession greatly depends; but as they are official functions, whatever inferiority they may possess is wholly *official*, and affects not in the least his dignity as God. If it is not incompatible with his divine Majesty to offer himself as an oblation, no more can it be so to plead the cause of his people. If it was not derogatory to the honour of the Redeemer to assume the office, it cannot be derogatory to discharge its functions. The discharge of official duties can never disgrace an official functionary, unless the office itself be discreditable. 'This part of service is expressly represented as required of the only begotten of the Father, 'Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession;' (Ps. ii. 8.) and so far from being dishonoured by such a requirement, it is the very purpose for which he lives in official glory. 'He ever LIVETH to make INTERCESSION for them. (Heb. vii. 25.) It is to be remembered, too, that, in making intercession, he pleads not for himself, but for others. The humiliation attaching to personal supplication has no place here. To petition on behalf of another is compatible, not only with equality, but even with superiority in the petitioner over him with whom he intercedes. And, then, it is to be borne in mind, that an essential distinction exists, in respect of their nature, between the prayers presented by Christ in his state of humiliation, and those in his state of exaltation and glory. On earth, 'he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death; but no infirmities of this kind attach to his intercessory prayers on high; there all tears are wiped away from his, as from his people's eyes; there is nothing of servility or servitude supposed in these; they partake more of demand than of petition, of claim than of request; and evince rather the dignity of a claimant urging a right, than the poverty of a suppliant begging an unmerited favour. 'Father, I WILL that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.' Say not, then, that there is any thing degrading in the supposition that Christ should make intercession. No. While his Church has a want, while his people's necessities continue, he will count it his delight, his pleasure, his honour, his glory, to present their case to his



Father, and to secure for them the bestowment of every needed boon.

#### NATURE OF CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

To intercede, means literally to 'pass between.' The term is used figuratively, to denote mediating between two parties with a view of reconciling differences, particularly in the way of supplicating in favour of one with another. In this sense, 'intercession' is frequently affirmed of Christ in the Scriptures:—'Who also maketh intercession for us, (Rom. viii. 34.) 'He ever liveth to make intercession for them. (Heb. vii. 25.) The verb employed in these passages (*ἐντυγχάνειν*), when connected with the preposition that follows (*ὑπέρ*), includes every form of acting in behalf of another; it is improper to limit it to prayer, as it denotes mediating in every possible way in which the interests of another can be promoted. But other terms are employed in speaking of the same thing. It is expressed by *asking*:—'Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.' (Ps. ii. 8.) It is expressed by *praying*:—'I pray (*ἔρωτῶ*) for them; I pray not for the world;' (John xvii. 9.) which shows that supplication is included, though not to the exclusion of other ideas. It is also described by *advocacy*:—'If any man sin, we have an *advocate* (*παράκλητον*) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' This is a law term, which was in common use among the Greeks and Romans, to denote one who appeared in a court of justice to maintain the cause of a person accused,—an attorney, a pleader, a spokesman, a patron, who, placing himself in the room of his client, advocated his interests with all zeal and ability. The term is expressly applied to Christ in the passage quoted; and, in his own words, it is distinctly supposed to belong to him, when, consoling his disciples in prospect of his own removal from them, he says, 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you ANOTHER *comforter* (*ἄλλον παράκλητον*).' But, with reference to him, there must be understood this difference, that *his* plea is not the innocence of his clients, but his own merits; *his* appeal is not to absolute justice but to sovereign mercy; what *he* sues for is not a legal right to which they are entitled, but a free favour to which in themselves they have no claim.

How the intercession of Christ, thus explained, is conducted—in what form this asking, praying, advocacy, is

carried on, it does not become us either anxiously to inquire, or dogmatically to affirm. It becomes us rather to content ourselves with the account given of it in Scripture. Beyond this, it is useless, and worse than useless, to conjecture.

It may be remarked, that, for one thing, Christ is said to *appear in the presence of God* for his people. ‘Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to *appear in the presence of God for us.*’ (Heb. ix. 24.) To this there seems to be an obvious reference in the preternatural vision of Stephen, ‘Behold I see the heavens opened, and *the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.*’ (Acts vii. 56.) The same also is the reference in the apocalyptic vision, ‘And another angel came and *stood* at the altar, having a golden censer, &c.’ (Rev. viii. 3.) His presenting himself before God is denoted by his *appearing*, and *standing*, language which plainly enough marks some sort of official activity. This is the first thing implied in his intercession; when our case is called, so to speak, at the bar of heaven, he *appears* in our room; when we are summoned to appear, he *stands* up in our name.

But appearance is not all. He is farther said to *exhibit his atoning sacrifice*, as the ground on which the blessings for which he pleads are to be conferred on his people. The Hebrew high priest’s entering into the sanctuary, on the day of expiation, prefigured the intercession of Christ. But it was not a simple appearance within the holy place that was made by this typical functionary; he carried with him the blood of the victim which had just been offered in the outer apartment, and sprinkled it seven times on the mercy-seat and the ark of the covenant. Without this his appearance could be of no avail, his entrance could have no efficacy; corresponding to which is Christ’s *presenting the memorials of his atonement* before God in heaven. ‘Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but **BY HIS OWN BLOOD**, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.’ (Heb. ix. 11, 12.) To the same circumstance does the apostle refer when he says, ‘It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but **THE HEAVENLY THINGS THEMSELVES WITH BETTER SACRIFICES** than these.’ (Heb. ix. 23.) By his blood and sacrifice, represented in these passages as carried by him into heaven, it is

almost unnecessary to remark, we are not to understand the material blood which flowed in the garden and on the cross, but the merit of his sufferings and death, the virtue of his atonement, the substance of his sacrifice, the whole essence of his passion. The intercession is founded on the oblation. The former is nothing without the latter. It may, without impropriety, be said that it is the sacrifice which intercedes: it is the blood of Jesus Christ in heaven which cries to God on our behalf; 'the blood of sprinkling SPEAKETH better things than that of Abel.' (Heb. xii. 24.) Even in the midst of the throne, he stands 'a Lamb as it had been slain.' (Rev. v. 6.) The vestments of mediatorial exaltation conceal not the marks of mediatorial suffering; the diadem of glory hides not the impression left by the crown of thorns; he is still red in his apparel, and his garments dyed with blood; the scars of conflict are visible in the body of the Conqueror. His wounds are still open, and every mouth pleads our cause with God. His death pleads for our life; his blood cries for our safety; his tears procure our comfort; and everlasting joy is borne to us on the breeze of his deep drawn sighs.

It is not difficult for us to understand, how intercession is made for us in heaven by the memorials of the Saviour's sacrifice. The language of signs is no strange thing among men. God has condescended to allow himself to be addressed in the same way:—'The bow shall be in the cloud, and I WILL LOOK UPON IT that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.' (Gen. ix. 16.) Or, to adduce an example more directly bearing on the present subject:—'And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are; and WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD, I will pass over you.' (Exod. xii. 13.) It is when he *sees the blood of the everlasting covenant*, that Jehovah passes by those who were deserving of destruction. Even profane history has been happily adduced in illustration of this subject. Amintas had performed meritorious services in behalf of the commonwealth, in course of which he had lost a hand. When his brother Æchylus is about to be condemned to death for some offence of which he has been guilty, Amintas rushes into the court; without uttering a syllable he holds up the mutilated limb; the judges are moved; and Æchylus is set free. Thus the sacrifice of our Redeemer,—the wounds in his hands and his feet, and his transfixed side, plead the cause of his people with perfect clearness, and infallible power. The advocate and the propitiation are the same:—'We have an *advocate* with the Father—He is the *propitiation* for our sins.'

In the intercession of Christ there is also included an *intimation of his will* that the purchased blessings of redemption be conferred. In whatever form conducted, it supposes substantial prayer or petition. There is the expressing of a wish, the intimating of a request. 'Father, I WILL that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.' (John xvii. 24.) 'Simon, Simon, satan hath desired to have you that he might sift you as wheat: but I have PRAYED for thee that thy faith fail not.' (Luke xxii. 31, 32.) This seems to correspond to that part of the function of the Levitical high priest, which consisted in burning incense on the golden altar, within the sanctuary, on the day of expiation. It was appointed that he should 'take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of SWEET INCENSE beaten small, and bring it within the vail, and put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony.' The intercessory prayers or requests of the Saviour himself, not the prayers of his people which he presents, constitute the antitype of this expressive symbol. Incense and the prayers of saints do not yield corresponding ideas. It is the prayers of Christ which breathe the sweetness, and produce the effects, of incense. Accordingly, in the vision of the angel seen by John, 'the smoke of the incense came up WITH the prayers of the saints out of the angel's hand;' thus demonstrating that the incense and the prayers of the saints do not mean the same thing. And what can we understand by this cloud of incense, but those innumerable intimations of the Saviour's will, which, in performing his work of intercession, ascend to God with so sweet a savour, and such glorious results?

We take not upon us to determine the question, whether these requests of Christ are conveyed vocally or symbolically, by words or by signs. Indeed, we are inclined to think the question is unworthy of being entertained at all. It seems foolish and useless, if not hurtful and presumptuous, to speculate on this point. The majority of sober writers incline to the opinion, that the intercession is conducted silently, without the use of spoken language altogether. Without calling in question the soundness of this conclusion, we must be allowed to say that we are little satisfied with some of the arguments by which it is supported. To say that words are *unnecessary* to convey to God the Saviour's will, is saying only what might with equal truth be affirmed of the exhibition of his sacrifice. It is not because it is *necessary* to ex-

press his will, that Christ appears before God a Lamb as if he had been slain. It is not to remind God of what he would otherwise forget, or to make known to him what he would not otherwise know, or to incline him to that to which he would be otherwise indisposed, that Christ's intercession is introduced at all. No. It is to illustrate the divine majesty and holiness ; to display the wisdom, grace, and merit of the Son ; and the more to impress the redeemed themselves with their obligations to deep and lasting gratitude ;— these are the purposes which this part of the mediatorial economy is designed to subserve. And if for ends like these vocal utterance could be shown to be better adapted than silent symbols, we can see no reason why it should not be supposed to be used. Besides, what are words but signs ? They are nothing more than symbols ; symbols, it is true, of a particular kind, but, after all, only symbols of thoughts and ideas. We are not to be understood, in these remarks, as maintaining the position that vocal language *is* employed by Christ in making intercession ; we only object to some parts of the reasoning to which those who oppose this view of the subject have recourse. We express no opinion of our own. We regard the whole question as vain and trifling. Without indulging in foolish conjectures, it should be enough for us to know, that the intercession of our Divine Advocate is conducted in the best possible way, for promoting the glory of God, his own honour, and the good of his people. And one thing is certain, that such is the efficacy of the Saviour's blood, such the value of his death, such the merit of his sacrifice, that the memorials of his atonement, exhibited before God in heaven, advocate our cause more powerfully than could ever be done by the language of men. No tongue of orator, or eloquence of angel, can ever plead so effectually in favour of guilty sinners, as 'the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel.

#### MATTER OF CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

The *persons* for whom, and the *things* for which, Christ intercedes, are different points, which are, nevertheless, intimately connected with one another. The latter is determined by the former, and on this it may be proper to offer a few remarks before proceeding to what may be regarded as the principal subject of this section.

In general, however, it may be remarked, both with re

gard to persons and things, that the extent of intercession must be regulated by that of atonement. As it is unreasonable to suppose Christ to make atonement for any for whom he does not intercede, so it were preposterous to allege that he intercedes for any but those for whose sins he has atoned, or that the matter of his intercession includes any thing not purchased with his blood. Intercession and atonement are correlates, not merely in nature, but in extent. For whomsoever and for whatsoever he has procured by his blood, does he plead before the throne of God. This is a leading principle which may serve to guide us in the observations we have to offer on this department of our subject.

With respect to persons, we observe, that Christ makes intercession for *the elect only, and for all and each of the elect*. That he intercedes for the elect only is abundantly plain from the speciality of God's sovereign purpose of mercy, from the definite extent of the atonement, and from the explicit testimony of the Scriptures. Indeed, wherever the intercession is spoken of, this limitation of the objects is expressed or clearly implied. Paul says, 'who also maketh intercession FOR US.' Not for all, observe, but for the *elect* spoken of in the preceding verse. Again, 'He ever liveth to make intercession for THEM.' For whom? For them only who, as he says in the clause immediately going before, *come unto God by Christ*. To the same purpose is the testimony of John;—'If any man sin, WE have an advocate with the Father;' speaking in his own name and that of the Christian brethren to whom his epistle is addressed. With this agrees the language of Christ's intercessory prayer on earth:—'I pray for THEM: I pray not for the world.' Who they are that are here referred to by the pronoun *them*, may be judged from the expression that occurs so frequently throughout the prayer—'the men which thou gavest me out of the world.' It is utterly absurd and pernicious, as well as unscriptural, to suppose that he makes intercession for those who live and die in unbelief, who continue to disown his mediatory office, and to place reliance on other grounds of salvation than his infinite merits. With regard to all such, he must be understood as saying, 'Their drink-offerings of blood WILL I NOT OFFER, NOR TAKE UP THEIR NAMES INTO MY LIPS,' (Ps. xvi. 4.)

There are some passages of scripture urged in opposition to the sentiment thus expressed and supported. In the same intercessory prayer to which we have appealed, it is said, 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall

believe on me through their word.' (John xvii. 20.) But only let our affirmation be marked, and no contrariety will be found to it in this verse. We said, not that Christ intercedes for *believers* only, but for the *elect* only. All the elect are at one time unbelievers, many continue long in this condition, and it is only in consequence of Christ's intercession, as we shall afterwards see more particularly, that they are ever brought out of this state. Those who *have* believed, and those who *shall* believe, are both included in 'them which are given' to the Son. After this, the expression in the fifty third chapter of Isaiah's prophecy—'he made intercession for the *transgressors*'—can give no difficulty; whether 'the transgressors' are those whose sins he bore, or those who were active in effecting his crucifixion, the passage admits of easy explanation. It is not said that he made intercession for *all* transgressors, and we know that the character which the term delineates belongs by nature to the whole number of the elect. If the instruments of his crucifixion are meant, then is the expression explained at once by the prayer on the cross, 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.' (Luke xxiii. 34.) We are aware that some excellent divines regard this prayer as not intercessory, but merely as a part of that moral duty required of Christ in fulfilment of the law which enjoins the forgiveness of offences.\* But, without taking upon us to determine this point, it may be observed, that even on the contrary supposition the passage is easily explained. We see no reason why it should

\* 'We may, we must,' says Dr. Owen, 'grant a twofold praying in our Saviour; one, by a virtue of his office as he was mediator; the other in answer of his duty, as he was subject to the law; but yet those things which he did in obedience to the law as a private person, were not acts of mediation; nor works of him as mediator, though of him who was mediator. Now, as he was subject to the law, our Saviour was bound to forgive offences and wrongs done unto him, and to pray for his enemies; as also, he had taught us to do, whereof in this he gave us an example; Matt. v. 44.—"I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you;" which, doubtless, he inferreth from that law, Lev. xix. 18, "Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" quite contrary to the wicked gloss put upon it by the Pharisees: and in this sense our Saviour here, as a private person, to whom revenge was forbidden; pardon enjoined, prayer commanded, prays for his very enemies and crucifiers; which doth not at all concern his interceding for us as mediator, wherein he was always heard, and so is nothing to the purpose in hand.'—*Owen's Works*, v. V. p. 275.

not be admitted, that Christ made official intercession for his murderers. Were not the five thousand, who were converted by the preaching of Peter, openly charged by that apostle, as persons who denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto them,' and who '*killed the Prince of Life!*' And as to the chief priests, who acted so prominent a part in that scene of crime, are we not afterwards informed, that 'the word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a *great company of the* PRIESTS were obedient to the faith?' But this only proves the sovereign grace of God and the infinite merit of Christ's blood, in including in the number of the elect and the saved the basest and the most guilty among men, not that the intercession of Christ is general.

Christ makes intercession for *all* the elect. Whatever their state, believers or unbelievers, they are remembered according as they require. 'Neither pray I for *these* alone, but for them also which *shall believe* on me through their word.' Whatever the age of the world in which they live, from the entrance of sin to the end of time, they are included in his prayers. We are apt to conceive of the work of intercession as conducted only since the Saviour's ascension, or at most since his appearance on earth. But he was always *the Angel of God's presence* who saved his people. 'He bare them, and carried them' on his heart '*all the days of old.*' And before his incarnation, we have one distinct act of intercession on record:—'Then the angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? And the Lord answered the angel that talked with me, with good words and comfortable words.' (Zech. i. 12, 13.) Among the innumerable multitude of the chosen of God, not one shall ever be omitted, in this part of his sacerdotal function. Out of the hand of the Angel of the covenant ascend continually, amid the cloud of incense, 'the prayers of ALL saints.' As on the Aaronic breastplate, worn by the high priest of old when he entered into the most holy place, were engraven all the names of the children of Israel, so on the heart of our Intercessor within the vail, are borne all the chosen of God.

Nor is it for all in the mass, that the Saviour makes intercession. He prays for *each* by himself. Even as respects believers, his intercession is not general, but particular. With a speciality such as might be supposed if there were only one, does he attend to the interests of each individual in the



vast number of those given him by the Father. A general remembrance of them would not suffice. Their cases are various; not two of them are exactly alike. But, with infinite compassion and skill, is every special case of each individual, presented by this Divine Advocate to his Father. ‘Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for THEE that thy faith fail not.’ ‘He that overcometh, I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess HIS NAME before my Father and before his angels.’ (Luke xxii. 31, 32; Rev. iii. 5.)

Now, by these remarks on the persons for whom Christ intercedes, we are prepared to enter on the SUBJECT-MATTER of his intercession.

Christ intercedes that the chosen of God may be *brought into a gracious state*. They mingle originally with the world lying in wickedness, are enemies to God in their mind by wicked works, rebels against the divine authority, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly. There is no visible distinction between them and the world; they are in the same state of condemnation, they possess the same character of ungodliness, and they merit the same punishment. But there *is* a distinction, and *that* one of immense importance; they are chosen of God; they are given to Christ to be redeemed; the eye of the omniscient Saviour is upon them; and, when the period fixed in the arrangements of infinite mercy for their salvation arrives, he pleads his merits for the bestowment of the primary blessings of the new life. The blessings of grace may be viewed, as they affect respectively the commencement, the progress, or the consummation of the new life. It is not for the two latter merely that Jesus makes intercession, but also for the first; for justification, regeneration, and adoption, as well as for sanctification, and eternal glory. ‘Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.’ The heathen, and consequently those, who, in respect of condemnation, are not better than heathen, must be prayed for, in order to their being brought into a fit state to be characterized as the inheritance of Christ. Justification is an act of acquittal from condemnation, the ground of which is the sacrifice of the Redeemer; but as Satan, the law, and the justice of God accuse the sinner of guilt, the Advocate with the Father must plead the merits of his sacrifice in answer to these accusations, before the act of acquittal can be pronounced. The procuring cause of justification is the Saviour’s merits, but the immediate cause of actual justification is

the Saviour's intercession. Hence, says the apostle, 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again. who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' (Rom. viii. 33, 34.) Regeneration is a result of the Spirit's efficient power on the soul; but the intercession of Christ is connected, in the economy of redemption, with the gift of the Spirit for this end. 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.' (John xiv. 16.) In like manner, in order to adoption or admission to the family of God, the Saviour must plead the ground of admission as that on which the act in question proceeds.

Thus does it appear that, but for the intercession of Christ, men would never be brought into a state of grace, but remain for ever in condemnation and sin. The Intercessor within the vail, however, looks down with omniscient inspection on the whole family of mankind: he sets an eye of special recognition on those who were given to him by the Father; these are all well known to him, for 'the Lord knoweth them that are his;' their names are all written in the Lamb's book of life, they are engraven on the palms of his hands, on the tablets of his heart; when, in the lapse of time, the period fixed for the salvation of each occurs, he carries their case to the throne of God; the Father hears; the Spirit is sent; and the sinner is turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. Means may have been long at work to accomplish this end. The scriptures may have been read; the gospel may have been heard; there may have been the entreaty, and expostulation, and prayers of deeply interested friends; the providence of God may have prepared the way; the law may have uttered its thunders, the gospel may have whispered its comforts, and deep serious thoughtfulness may have been produced, But not one, or all of these together, could make the man a new creature, and convert the sinner into a saint. Yet a change *is* effected, a visible alteration for the better is produced: and the true explanation of this change is to be found in the efficacy of Christ's intercession. It is this that has put all the wheels in motion; it is this that has given power and efficacy to the means; the proper and simple account of the whole matter is, that an unknown Friend in heaven has spoken for the elect sinner to the King.

The need for Christ's intercession does not end on being

brought into a gracious state. Saints, as well as sinners, require an interest in this function of the great High Priest. It is thus that *the pardon of the daily sins of the people of God* is procured. Believers sin as well as others. 'In many things we offend all.' 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.' True, it is written, 'whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God.' But, in consistency with the other assertion just quoted of the same writer, this can mean nothing more than that a true child of God cannot sin with complacency, or so as to be brought under final condemnation. The reason of this is, not that the sins of such are less criminal than those of others, for, besides involving rebellion against the same authority and a violation of the same holy, just, and good law, they are peculiarly aggravated by the obligations arising from the benefits that have been received; but the reason is, the interest which such have in the justifying righteousness of Christ, to which constant efficacy is given by his intercession. This is the believer's security from the daily condemnation to which his daily transgressions expose him. The act of justification is pronounced at once; the state of justification continues for ever. The security of this permanent state is the same with that which constitutes the ground of the primary act—the righteousness of Emmanuel: and the intercession is what secures the constant efficacy of this perfect righteousness. The apostle John asserts thus much:—'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.' (1 John ii. 2, 3.) But for his advocacy, the sins which the people of God daily commit would procure for them condemnation, justifying grace would be withdrawn, and the rich promises of saving mercy would be virtually cancelled. Believers, therefore, need, not only to be warned against temptations to sin, but to be furnished with encouragement in case of its being committed: despondency in the latter case may prove as hurtful as security in the former. And their consolation springs from Christ's intercession; but for which, amid the daily short-comings arising from the corruptions of nature, the snares of the world, and the wiles of Sſatan, they must be utterly miserable. But let it not be supposed from this, that the intercession of Christ gives any encouragement to men to sin. To hold out the comforting prospect of pardon when sin has been committed, is a very different thing from holding out an inducement to commit sin. It is for the former, not

the latter, purpose, that the doctrine of Christ's intercession is introduced in the scriptures. 'If any man sin, we have an advocate;' not 'that any man may sin,' &c. The latter is a fearful abuse against which we must be ever on our guard.

By his intercession, Christ, farther, *protects his people against the accusations and temptations of Satan*. He came to destroy the works of the devil. He was predicted of old as he who should bruise the serpent's head; and for this purpose was he manifested in due time. He cast out the unclean spirits with a word; he vanquished Satan in single combat in the wilderness; and by his death, did he destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil. The same work he still carries on in glory, in the character of Intercessor, answering the accusations brought against his people, and protecting them from the assaults of the adversary. Satan is the accuser of the brethren; he prefers heavy charges against the disciples of Christ at the bar of conscience, and, through his human agents, at the bar of public opinion. These, may be understood to be preferred at the bar of God, as being well known to Him. Some of them are true, others false; but Christ, as the advocate with the Father, answers them all. He refutes such as are false by showing their groundlessness; and, for the forgiveness of such as are true, he pleads the merit of his blood. In proof of the latter, we may refer to the oft-quoted passage in the epistle of John: 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins.' In support of the former, we may refer to the case of Joshua:—'And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?' (Zech. iii. 1, 2.) Here are three characters introduced to notice:—the *panel* at the bar, 'Joshua the high priest;' the public *prosecutor*, 'Satan;' and the *advocate*, 'the Angel of Jehovah.' Joshua had just escaped from Babylon, where, it is taken for granted, he had been guilty of many crimes, especially of neglecting the worship of the true God, conforming to the idolatrous customs of the heathen, and forming alliances with the enemies of Israel. These, and similar accusations, are brought against him by Satan; but the Angel of the Lord stands up in his behalf against the accuser; answers satisfactorily every charge; and brings off

his client in triumph. In this we have a specimen of the manner in which he acts towards his people in similar circumstances. He who, having died and risen again, also maketh intercession for us, is entitled, by way of eminence, to say, 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?'

Nor is the intercession of Christ of less avail in procuring strength to resist the temptations of Satan. Many are the assaults made by the adversary on the children of God. They are not ignorant of his devices. These assaults are at once formidable from their number, appalling from their strength, and dangerous from their skill. They are managed with great dexterity, every art of fear and hope, smile and frown, allurements and terror, being employed to secure success; and the nature or form of the suggestion being cunningly adapted to every peculiarity of individual character or situation, so as to lead men to think evil of God, to distrust the Saviour, or to grieve the Holy Spirit; to neglect duty, or to practise iniquity; to despair of salvation, or presumptuously to rest on a false hope. Thus exposed, unless the people of God had on their side one more skilful and more powerful still, one willing as well as able to counteract the working of this mighty adversary, they must necessarily fall a prey to his subtlety, and sink beneath the weight of his infernal artillery. The advocacy of Christ is their safety. 'Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' By the intercessory prayer of their Divine Advocate, their faith is rendered firm and immovable; they are strengthened to fight and to overcome; they resist the devil and he flees from them; instead of shrinking from his attack, they confront him boldly; they say, with undaunted countenance, 'Get thee behind us, Satan;' and the stripling combatant comes off more than conqueror, leaving his vaunting adversary stretched on the field. The faith of a believer, invigorated by the intercession of his Saviour, must ever prove more than a match for the heaviest assault of the prince of darkness. This is a shield which no arrow can pierce; and any impression that even the most formidable temptation can make upon it, is like that of a leaden bullet discharged against a brazen wall.

The *progressive sanctification of the saints, and their general perseverance* stand connected with the intercession of Christ. The whole scheme of salvation has for its end the holiness of its subjects. This end, every thing about it

is adapted as well as designed to promote. The sacrifice of Christ is fitted to advance moral purity in the soul; the blood of God's Son cleanses from all sin; it is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. His intercession has the same effect. If he was manifested on earth to take away sin in its guilt, he interposes in heaven to take away sin in its defilement. 'I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, *but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*—*Sanctify them* through thy truth, thy word is truth. (John xvii. 15, 17.) From this it would seem, that believers are indebted to the intercession of the Redeemer, for all that repugnance to sin which leads them to crucify the flesh, to mortify the deeds of the body, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to abstain from all appearance of evil; and for all that love of holiness which prompts them to indulge pure thoughts, to cherish sacred desires, to form spiritual resolutions, and to practise sanctified obedience. The expulsion of sin, the implantation of the principle of righteousness, and the maintenance of habitual holiness, all proceed directly from this source. Sanctification in life, as well as in nature, is one of the gifts which the ascended Mediator has received for the rebellious, and with the bestowment of which his advocacy on high is inseparably connected. Without this, indeed, never could the believer subdue a single corruption, or think a single hallowed thought, or feel a single pure emotion, or speak a single holy word, or perform a single unpoluted act.

And thus is the perseverance of the saints in general secured. Accusations, after being answered, may be renewed; temptations, once resisted, may be repeated; holiness, once imparted, may have its strength weakened, or its lustre obscured. It is necessary that perseverance to the end, in acquittal, resistance, and sanctification, be secured. And this is effected in the same way as the incipient benefit. 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' If the faith fail not, there can be no accusation without its answer, no temptation but is sure to be repelled, nor any kind or degree of holiness finally unattained. But the stability of the believer arises not from his faith, nor from any thing about himself, not even from the work of grace in his soul; but from that to which he is indebted for the stability of his faith itself, namely, the intercession of Christ. '*I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.*' Here lies the secret of the saints' perseverance. If Christ only persevere to pray for them, they cannot fail to persevere in the enjoyment of what he has procured, and the

practice of what he has commanded. And does he not thus persevere? 'HE EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THEM.'

By the intercession of Christ, *peace is maintained, and intercourse kept up between God and men.* He made peace by the blood of his cross; by presenting this blood in heaven is this peace *maintained.* He hath reconciled us to God by his death; but we need to be upheld in reconciliation by his life of intercession. There are many things at work which have a tendency to disturb this peace, to break in on this state of reconciliation. Sin separates between believers and their God; and the accusations of Satan and of a guilty conscience, tend to deprive them of all inward tranquillity. But, by means of the Saviour's intercession, the propitiation for sin shall be so applied, and the blood of sprinkling be so brought home to the conscience, that any interruption of intercourse or of peace, shall be but partial and temporary. 'For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but, with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.' (Is. liv. 7, 8, 10.) Hence the people of God have ever access to him for the supply of their daily wants. Not a day, not an hour, but they have business to transact in the court of heaven. They have requests to prefer, sins to be pardoned, wants to be supplied, iniquities to confess with shame, blessings to acknowledge with gratitude. And how shall they approach a throne of such awful majesty; how enter a court of such inexorable justice! The mediatorial Angel before the throne, the Advocate at the bar, is their encouragement. 'Through him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father—In him we have boldness and access with confidence—Seeing that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, let us come boldly unto the throne of grace—Having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith. (Eph. ii. 18.—iii. 12; Heb. iv. 14, 16.—x. 21, 22.)

It is through the intercession of Christ that *the services of the people of God are rendered acceptable.* The services required of them are special, manifold, great, and arduous. The whole moral law is the measure of these services. And it is a matter of no small consequence for them to know, not only

in what strength these services may be performed, but by what merit they can be accepted. If they are not to be received and acknowledged by God, the performance of them must be nullified. The law requires perfection, but the services of the people of God are at best imperfect; the law requires unblemished obedience, but their services are at best tainted with pollution. How then shall they be accepted? Through the intercession of Christ. This makes up for all their deficiencies; this removes all their blemishes. The prayers of the saints ascend up before God, out of the Angel's hand, in which is held a golden censer with much incense. And what is true of the prayers of the saints, is true also of all their other services—their songs of praise, their tears of penitence, their works of faith and labours of love, their deeds of mercy, and their acts of holy obedience. *Their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar.* (Is. lvi. 7.) It is in this way that God overlooks all their imperfections; he sees no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel; he smells a sweet savour in the performances of his children; their sacrifices of righteousness are well-pleasing and acceptable in his sight; and, although in themselves like 'pillars of smoke,' dark, confused, and ill-savoured, they come up before him 'perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, and all the powders of the merchant.' Like Aaron of old, our great High Priest has on his forehead the inscription, HOLINESS TO THE LORD, that he 'may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts.' (Exod. xxviii. 38.) So far from the performances of men being the ground of their acceptance with God, it thus appears, that for the acceptance of our performances themselves we are indebted to the merits of another. Our services, as well as our persons, are accepted in the Beloved. By expecting to be accepted for any thing that we do, we set aside the Saviour's atonement; by expecting that any thing we do shall be accepted on account of its intrinsic excellence, we set aside the Saviour's intercession. And it is thus we are enabled to understand how it comes about, that 'a cup of cold water given to a disciple in the name of a disciple shall not lose its reward,' while 'the ploughing of the wicked is sin.'

In fine, the intercession of Christ secures *the complete salvation of the chosen of God, their entrance into heaven, and their everlasting continuance in a state of perfect blessedness.* God is a rock, and his work is perfect. What he begins, he completes; nor rests till he has secured for his re-



deemed perfect acquittal beyond the reach of accusation, deliverance from all temptation, immaculate holiness, and uninterrupted and permanent peace. It is by his intercession that he thus saves to the uttermost. 'Wherefore he is *able also to save them to the uttermost* that come unto God by him, *seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*' (Heb. vii. 25.) The work of salvation being thus completed, the redeemed are admitted into heaven, for which they are prepared. Their reception into glory is the matter of distinct request on the part of the Saviour. 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.' (John xvii. 24.) The title of admission, it is true, is the Saviour's death; but the immediate cause of their admission is his intercession. It is by this that the title, so to speak, is carried into heaven, and presented to God, and pled as the ground on which their admission is to take place. He entered into heaven, not without blood, to appear in the presence of God for us. He goes to the portals of the upper sanctuary, holding in his hand the memorials of his sacrifice: at his approach the celestial gates fly open; he enters in the name and on behalf of his people; he opens and no one can shut, till all his redeemed and chosen have followed him thither; and, then, he shuts and no one can open, either to invade their peace, or to pluck one of the countless multitude from their happy abode.

The permanent continuance of the redeemed in the state of glory stands connected, in the same manner, with the intercession of Jesus. 'He is a priest *for ever.*' Not only is everlasting glory the *effect* of his intercession; but it is the *subject* of everlasting intercession. 'He *ever liveth* to make intercession.' The perpetuity of heavenly blessings, and the acceptance of celestial services, must all be traced to this source. Not a ray of light, not a smile of favour, not a thrill of gladness, not a note of joy, for which the inhabitants of heaven are not indebted to the Angel standing with the golden censer full of incense, before the throne. Remove this illustrious personage from his situation; divest him of his official character; put out of view his sacerdotal function; and all security for the continuance of celestial benefits is gone—the crowns fall from the heads of the redeemed, the palms of victory drop from their hands, the harps of gold are unstrung, and the shouts of hallelujah cease for ever; nay, heaven must discharge itself of its human inhabitants, and the whole be sent away into irremediable perdition! But no such ap-

palling catastrophe need ever be feared; CHRIST EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION!

PROPERTIES OF CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

From the character of the advocate, we may judge what will be the qualities of his advocacy. Possessed of infinite wisdom and knowledge, the intercession of Christ cannot but be eminently *skilful*. A skilful advocate must know well the case of his client, the character of the judge with whom he has to deal, and the law according to which he must plead. Christ's knowledge of all these is perfect. He knows perfectly all his people, and all their cases. 'He needeth not that any should testify of man; for he knows what is in man.' 'He searcheth the reins and hearts.' All the exercises and doings of his children are thoroughly understood by him. Their wants, necessities, sins, and infirmities, are better known to him than to themselves; even their inward breathings and secret groanings are as well understood as 'the well set phrase of the orator.' Nor this only in respect of his intuitive omniscience as God, but of his experimental knowledge as man. Experience must add powerfully to the skill of an intercessor; and this advantage is possessed by Christ in an eminent degree. 'For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.' Had he no other knowledge of his people than what is derived from their own statements and prayers, he could not plead their cause with skill. They are often greatly ignorant of themselves, form the most mistaken ideas, entertain the most inadequate views of their own wants, and are unable properly to express even what they may adequately feel. Their petitions for themselves are often, from these causes, defective, erring, and stammering. But never so those of their Divine Intercessor on their behalf. By him, their thoughts, affections, and desires, are fully appreciated, and their case represented with consummate skill.

He knows too, Him with whom he has to plead. Much of an advocate's skill must depend upon this, so as to be able to adapt his manner of pleading to the temper and disposition of the judge. Our Intercessor is thoroughly acquainted with the character of God. 'No one knoweth the Father but the Son.' He is thus qualified to adapt his appeals to features of the divine character corresponding to their nature. Are his people weak? He goes on their behalf, to God as

*the Lord of Hosts.* Have they fallen into sin, and are in need of pardon? He addresses God as a *God of holiness.* Does he plead the fulfilment of promises? He makes his appeal to the *righteousness* of Jehovah.

Nor is he less skilfully acquainted with the law according to which his intercessions are to be regulated. And it is not, as is too often the case among men, by evading, or concealing, or perverting, or explaining away the law, that this advocate exhibits his skill. No; he admits its authority, vindicates its claims, and maintains inviolably the rectitude of all its sanctions. Nor does he ever attempt to make it appear that those for whom he pleads have not violated its requirements, and rendered themselves obnoxious to its punishments. But his ability is shown in skilfully pleading the fulness of his own merits, by which satisfaction has been given to the law, and every blessing secured in consistency with the claims of infinite equity. Such, in short, is his skill, that he asks whatever his people need, only what they need, what has actually been procured for them, and what it every way comports with the character and law of God to confer; so that no cause can ever fail in his hands from want of knowledge or wisdom to conduct it.

*Moral purity* characterizes the intercession of Christ. The necessity of this was set forth under the law, in the altar of incense being of pure gold. Both the pleader and the plea must be holy. Christ intercedes not for *sin*, but for sinners. The tendency of all that he asks is to purify from all iniquity, and to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. No request of a contrary character could ever be presented to a holy and righteous God, or could ever possibly be granted. Nor could any thing of this kind ever comport with the character of the Advocate himself. He is no corrupt venal pleader. He is the righteous Lord that loveth righteousness. To this is the efficacy of his intercession ascribed by the apostle:—‘He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. *For such an high priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.*’ Corruption in an advocate, if detected, is sufficient to blast his cause even at the bar of man. And the slightest taint of impurity in Christ would have disqualified him for conducting a successful advocacy on behalf of his people, at the bar of God. Corruption may be concealed from an earthly judge, but no degree of it could escape undetected by the omniscient Judge of all. The intercession of Christ is as pure and sinless as his sacri-

fic. Every thing about it is holy—the matter in which it consists, the plea on which it rests, the place in which it is conducted, the person by whom it is managed, and the judge before whom it is transacted. 'Truly may our advocate with the Father be described as 'Jesus Christ THE RIGHTEOUS.'

Jesus Christ is a *compassionate* intercessor. The advocate who is to plead the cause of the wretched must not be hard-hearted and unfeeling; he must be able to enter into their feelings and to make their case his own. Without this he can never expect to succeed; but, thus qualified, it is scarcely possible for him to fail. His language, looks, tones, and whole manner, indeed, will acquire a more melting influence, in proportion to the depth of the compassion with which he is touched. So of Christ it is said, that it behoved him to be a 'merciful,' as well as a 'faithful,' high priest; and, had he not been merciful, he could not have been faithful. But 'in him compassions flow;' the compassions, not of divinity merely, but of humanity; of a humanity, too, the sensibilities of which were exquisitely fine, from its being unaffected by the blunting influence of sin. And even the delicate sensibilities of his holy human nature were heightened by his personal experiences. He who pleads the cause of those in whose miseries himself once shared, must be admirably fitted to do it with effect. 'We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but who was, in all points, tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' He tasted of all the sorrows of human life. Of the severest afflictions, the bitterest temptations, the most pungent sorrows, the most awful privations, he had full and frequent trial. He was, not only cast into the same mould as his people with respect to nature, but into the same furnace with respect to affliction. And, although he had no knowledge of the evil of sin from personal feeling, well he knew its weight and its bitterness from having had its guilt imputed, and its punishment exacted of him. Nor let any one object, that, although this might be the case while Christ was on earth, it cannot be expected to continue now that he is in heaven. His exaltation to glory has wrought no change on his nature or his affections. He is the same in heaven that he was upon earth. He is still possessed of human nature—God-man—Emmanuel, God with us. And it is not more certain that, in his exalted state, human blood flows in his veins, than that human sympathies glow in his breast. He feels more for the objects of his intercession than man or angel can do, nay, than they can even do for themselves. The pity of Christians

for themselves can never equal the pity with which they are regarded by their Saviour; for theirs is the pity of a corrupted nature, his of uncontaminated humanity; theirs the pity of mere human nature, his of human nature indissolubly linked with all the tender mercies of Deity.

Much importance attaches to the *promptitude* of an intercessor. The value of a bestowment often depends on the time of its being conferred. Allow the crisis to pass, and the gift loses its value. A successful advocate must seize the earliest opportunity for taking up and introducing the cause of his client. This is a property of our Lord's intercession. He is ready to receive the applications, and to present the cases of his people. He is never absent from his place; they know always where he is to be found; he is ever at the right hand of God, waiting to undertake what they may commit to his charge. Nor, after it is committed, does it run any risk of being lost through neglect. No; as he is of 'quick understanding' to perceive, so is he of prompt activity to prosecute, whatever he undertakes. The attitude in which he was beheld by the martyr Stephen, in his remarkable vision, indicates at once readiness to undertake and activity to prosecute whatever is committed to him. He was seen *standing*: 'He looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus **STANDING** on the right hand of God.' (Acts vii. 55.) With what promptitude, for example, does he interpose on behalf of the church, when, in the dispensations of providence, a fit time for the restoration of Jerusalem presents itself:—'O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?' This gives the people of God encouragement to go with boldness to the throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy, and find grace to help *in time of need*. Their times of need are well known to the Advocate with the Father, and not one of them will he suffer to pass unnoticed, or unimproved. Christians may themselves overlook the fit time for making application to God, but not so their glorious intercessor. They may rely on him with perfect confidence, that when they sin, he will plead for pardon; when they are accused, he will vindicate their character; when they are afflicted, he will procure them succour; when they are tempted, he will pray for them that their faith fail not; and when they perform with diligence their duties, he will give them acceptance with the Father. We would not have them to expect that he will procure them comforts unless they

make application for them; for, in that case, they could neither be relished nor felt; but when they do make earnest and believing application, they will find that the blessings are already procured, and ready to be put into their hands. If they but open their mouths wide, he will see to it that they are filled abundantly. He can solicit blessings from the Father, and bestow them on his disciples, at the same time. While he presents the golden censer at the altar of burnt-incense on high, he can extend the sceptre of mercy to the humble suppliant below. The work of intercession can occasion no delay in the communication of needed benefits; for to plead their bestowment, and actually to bestow them, are the work of the same moment.

The preceding remarks prepare us to hear of the *earnestness* of Christ's intercession. His skill, compassion, and promptitude, all suppose this. This is an essential property in successful pleading, whether for ourselves or for others. It is more apt, certainly, to occur in the former case than in the latter; many, who exhibit all the warmth of animation in petitioning for themselves, being cold enough in presenting requests for others. But it is not so in the present instance. Nothing can exceed the fervour of our Saviour's intercession. The earnestness he displayed in laying the foundation of our salvation in his sufferings on earth, when he was straitened till his bloody baptism should be accomplished, and used strong crying and tears, may be taken as a pledge that he will not be less earnest in carrying out his benevolent undertaking to its completion in heaven. The specimen of intercession which he gave before he left our world, so full of holy ardour and vehemence, may serve to give us some idea of the warmth with which the same work is conducted in the sanctuary above. The affection, too, which he bears to his people, cannot but give a peculiar eagerness to his supplications on their behalf. He bears them upon his heart, as the names of the children of Israel were engraven on the breastplate worn by the high priest of old when he went into the holy of holies; and the burning coals of fire with which the incense-censer was filled, were an apt, though faint representation, of the holy ardour with which the love of the Redeemer glows when he ministers as our intercessor before the throne of God. He is no cold selfish pleader; his soul is in the work; his prayers are the prayers of the heart; love prompts all his requests, selects the best arguments, and urges the strongest pleas. 'Who is this that *engaged his heart* to approach unto me? saith the Lord.' Yes, Christians, your prayers

for yourselves are nothing like so fervent as those of the Redeemer for you. Oh how shamefully cold, and languid, and lifeless, and formal, in many cases, are your petitions! How often do you use words without feeling, and put forth a frothy vehemence of language when there is no corresponding ardency within! Every saint must have something of this kind with which to accuse himself; but no such charge can be brought against Christ. His intercessions ever exceed in ardency, our warmest addresses, our most vehement appeals. We can never be said to plead with *all* our heart; he never pleads in any other way.

The *authoritative* character of our Lord's intercession should not be overlooked. It is not enough that an advocate be a person of skill, integrity, compassion, and zeal; he must also be authorized; he must bear a commission; he must be regularly licensed to practise at the bar. There must be a legal, as well as an intellectual and moral, qualification. This, in the case of Christ, is undoubted. He does not assume of himself the office of intercessor, nor does he derive his commission from his people, but from God. '*I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: saith the Lord.*' His intercession is a part of his sacerdotal functions; and we know '*Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but He that said unto him, 'Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.'*' His general suretyship implies such a special commission; for it supposes a right to see all the stipulations of the covenant fulfilled, all the debts of the covenant children discharged, and payment made of every purchased benefit. The very manner in which he conducts his intercession carries in it thus much. He sues for the new covenant blessings more as a matter of right than of favour; he demands rather than petitions; he claims rather than begs. There is a tone about his requests—'*Father, I will*'—that bespeaks the authority under which he acts. They savour of the *throne* not less than the *altar*. He is a Priest upon his Throne.

Betwixt the intercession of Christ and advocacy among men, there are, as we have seen, many points of resemblance, but, in other respects, it is altogether *peculiar*. It possesses a character of utter exclusiveness; neither man nor angel must invade it; so absolute is it, indeed, as to exclude even the other persons of the Godhead. This peculiarity was set forth in the type. No man, not even the king himself, might intrude into the functions of the priesthood in general; nor was any one but the high priest permitted to carry incense,

on the day of expiation, into the holy of holies. There is none else in heaven or in earth, either qualified, or authorized, or required, to make intercession. 'NO ONE cometh unto the Father BUT BY HIM.' 'Through HIM we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.' 'There is ONE mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.' The saints may, indeed, lawfully intercede for one another, but in a way very different from Christ. They intercede on earth, he in heaven; he on the footing of his own merit, they altogether denied to every thing like personal worth as the ground on which they trust for being heard. Angels may not intrude on this high and peculiar function of the Lord of angels. They are often said to praise, but never, that we are aware of, to pray. Nor can they have any personal disposable merit to form the foundation of vicarious intercessions. To represent either angels or men as joint intercessors with Christ, as is done by the church of Rome, is to be guilty of a daring invasion of a high and exclusive prerogative of the one Mediator. To the entrance into the holy place not made with hands, in the sense in which we are now speaking of it, the language of the prophet may be fitly accommodated:—'This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the Prince.' (Ezek. xliv. 2, 3.) Yes, Messiah, the Prince, the Prince of peace, claims the work of intercession as his peculiar prerogative. It is a prerogative, indeed, which he claims as his to the exclusion, as we have said, even of the other persons of the Godhead. The Father, as the representative of Deity, sustaining the character of the judicial sovereign with whom the intercession must be transacted, cannot be supposed to act in the capacity of intercessor. We read, indeed, of the Spirit's intercession—'The Spirit maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God,'—but it is essentially different from that of Christ. We cannot, at present, enter minutely into all the distinctions between them. That of Christ is personal; that of the Spirit moral. The Spirit does not stand up, as does Christ, before God in the court of heaven, and literally plead the cause of men. Such a supposition, besides implying a reflection on the perfection of Christ's work, is at variance with the exclusive divinity of the Spirit, he having no human nature as Christ has, in which he can appropriately appear in the capacity of a pleader. The Spirit's intercession consists in the moral influence he exerts on the souls of the people of God, in leading them out to pray for themselves.



by discovering to them the matter of prayer ; by imparting a disposition or inclination to pray ; by fixing the mind on the subject of prayer ; by giving enlargement, freedom, and confidence in the exercise ; and by directing them in the use of proper arguments. From this it will plainly enough appear, in what the intercession of Christ and that of the Holy Spirit differ from one another. They differ in their *nature*, the one being meritorious and the other moral ; in their *objects*, that of the one being to remove the obstacles to man's salvation that exist on the part of God, that of the other to remove those which exist on the part of man ; in their *locality*, the one being in heaven, the other on earth ; in the *relation* which they bear to their subjects, the one being without men, the other within ; and in their *effects*, the one enabling to pray, the other rendering prayer acceptable to God. It thus appears that the intercession of the Spirit interferes in no point whatever with that of Christ, but leaves it in all its naked peculiarity or exclusiveness.

The *prevalence* or efficacy of Christ's intercession is a feature on which we might descant at great length. It is an inviting theme, so full is it of comfort and encouragement. It often happens, among men, that the most urgent petitions, the most touching appeals on behalf of the oppressed, the wretched, and the needy, are permitted to remain disregarded and unheard. But not one request of our divine Advocate can possibly share this fate. Him the Father heareth always. This view admits of ample confirmation and illustration. It was typified, indeed, under the law, by the success which attended the entrance of the high priest into the holy of holies on the day of expiation ; for, had he not been accepted, the fire would have been extinguished on the golden altar, the censer of incense would have dropped from his hand, and he would never have been permitted to return to bless the people. In the twenty-first Psalm, which, from the lofty terms in which it is conceived, must have a higher reference than to the literal David, we read, 'Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips.' (Ps. xxi. 2.) Nor did Christ ever, while on earth, intercede in vain. 'Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me,' is his own testimony on one particular occasion, to which he subjoins the general affirmation, 'And I knew that thou hearest me always.' (John xi. 41, 42.) The apostle assures us, that 'when in the days of his flesh he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, he was heard in that he feared.' (Heb. v. 7.) One request only was he ever denied, 'Father,

if it be possible let this cup pass from me.' But this was no part of his intercession: it was the natural shrinking of his holy human nature from the awful scene that was before him and, instead of militating against our position, it gives it support, inasmuch as his drinking the bitter cup of mingled woe, which could not possibly pass from him, laid a meritorious foundation for the success of his advocacy. If that one prayer had been heard on his own behalf, not another could have been heard on ours. When the character of the intercessor is considered, there can be no reason to dread his ever being unheard. The dignity of his person must give weight and influence to his petitions; the relation in which he stands to God as a Son, cannot but have its effects; nor are his personal and official qualifications here to be forgotten. That one who is infinitely wise, and holy, and compassionate; whose diligence, and zeal, and affection are boundless; who acts moreover under the high authority of a divine commission, should fail in his suit is utterly impossible. Were he man only, or even angel, failure were not impossible; but being the Son of God, Jehovah's fellow, it must be that as a Prince he has power with God and shall prevail. The foundation on which his intercession rests affords farther security. It proceeds on the footing of his atonement. He asks nothing for which he has not paid the full price of his precious blood. What he seeks is what he has merited; and he who has 'accepted his sacrifice' cannot but grant him his heart's desire,' cannot 'withhold from him the request of his lips.' Nor is there in the matter of his intercession, as before delineated, any thing but what is good in itself, agreeable to the will of God, and fitted to advance the glories of the Godhead. 'The objects, too, for whom he pleads, are all the chosen of God, the children, the friends of Him with whom he pleads, dear to *his* heart as to his own, alike the objects of his complacent affection and esteem. 'The Father himself loveth them.' Add to all these considerations, the security arising from the results of Christ's intercession that have been already realized. How many souls have been converted, how many sins pardoned, how many temptations repelled, how many acts of holy obedience performed and accepted, how many sons brought to full and eternal glory, in all of which the efficacy of Christ's intercession has been proved by the best of all evidence—its actual effects! So abundant, thus, is the evidence of its prevalence, that the timid can have no reason for distrust, the unbeliever no excuse for neglect.

It only remains to observe the *constancy* of Christ's inter-

cession. He is continually employed in this work. His oblation was the work of comparatively a short period, but his intercession never ceases. Human benevolence may become languid, may intermit for a time, or may finally die away altogether. But not so the benevolence which prompts the petitions of our Advocate. He can never become languid from ignorance of his people's wants, for he is omniscient; nor from want of affection, for his love is abiding; nor from want of merit, for his sacrifice is of unfailing virtue; nor from fatigue, for he is the almighty and immutable God. Nothing can ever occasion a suspension. A moment's intermission would prove fatal to the eternal interests of all the elect. But, while attending to the case of one, he has no need to suspend attention to that of another. Innumerable as are his applicants, he attends to the wants of each as if there were not another that needed his care. Multiplicity cannot bewilder, variety cannot divide, importance cannot oppress his thoughts. To him the care of millions is no burden. Ten thousand claims meet with the same attention as if there were but one. His understanding, his love, his merit, his power, are all infinite; and we must beware of measuring him by the low standard of our own limited capacities. Nor can his intercession ever come to an end. There will be need for it for ever. So long as his people sin, he will plead for pardon; so long as they are tempted, he will procure them strength to resist; so long as they continue to perform services, he will continue to give them acceptance; so long as they are in the wilderness, he will procure them guidance and safety; nay, so long as the blessings of Heaven are enjoyed, will he plead his merits as the ground on which they are bestowed. Through eternity will he continue to plead on behalf of his people. Never shall they cease to be the objects of his care; never shall their names be erased from his breast; never shall their cause be taken from his lips; never shall the odour-breathing censer drop from his hand; nor shall his blessed merits ever cease to rise up in a cloud of fragrant incense before the Lord. **HE EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THEM.**

#### RESULTS OF CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

The intercession of Christ affords a bright display of the *love of God*. In appointing for men an advocate at all, and especially such an advocate, this feature of the divine character, so conspicuous in every other part of redemption, is

strikingly developed. Without this appointment the purchased salvation could never have been enjoyed; man could never have successfully pled his own cause; and the evils to which he is constantly exposed, must inevitably have wrought his ruin. His services could never have been accepted; temptations must have placed him in daily jeopardy; and his sins should have brought him, without fail, under condemnation. Without it, even the people of God could never reach final salvation; not a prayer which they might offer could be heard; not a service they might perform could be accepted; not an assault of satan could they repel; and the very first sin, however small, that they should commit, would sink them to perdition. How, then, is the love of God displayed in providing for men an advocate to plead their cause, and to secure them against such fatal consequences! And, then, such an advocate; not a man like ourselves, not an angel of light, not a seraph of glory, but his Son, his own Son, his only begotten, well-beloved Son, equal to himself in every divine perfection, the noblest personage in the universe. Herein is love! Let us contemplate it with grateful adoration, and dwell upon the delightful theme till our enraptured hearts reciprocate the emotion, till we can say, 'We love him because he first loved us.'

How does the subject illustrate, also *the love of the Son!* This is equally apparent, in his being pleased to identify himself, by becoming their advocate, with guilty, polluted, rebellious, worthless, wretched creatures of our fallen race. This he was under no obligation to do; it was his own spontaneous act flowing from the good pleasure of his will. And, when his personal dignity is considered, his love is enhanced by the condescension supposed; for, although exalted far above all principalities and powers, and having a name above every name,—though having all things under his feet, and receiving the homage of angels, and regulating the affairs of the universe, he disdains not to espouse the cause of us mortal worms, and to become our suppliant with the Father. As love induced him to undertake the work, so is it evinced in the promptitude, and earnestness, and diligence, and zeal, and ceaseless constancy, with which it is prosecuted, laying us under obligations to regard with admiration, and to acknowledge with gratitude, such disinterested affection.

The intercession supplies an argument of no mean force for the *divinity* of Christ. This doctrine, indeed, runs like a golden thread through the whole system of man's salvation, connecting itself with every part, and giving strength

and consistency to the whole. It is no less necessary to the efficacy of his intercession than to the worth of his sacrifice. To know minutely all the cases of so many millions of people; to listen to, and understand, such a multitude of simultaneous applications; to represent them all with perfect skill, and in due order; to give effect to all the pleas demanded by their endless variety, must require qualifications nothing short of divine. No finite being could ever be fit for such an undertaking. What finite mind could understand the matter! What finite power could sustain the load! What finite worth could secure success! An undertaking this, sufficient to confound and crush to the dust the mightiest of creatures, nay, all created being combined. None but a divine person is qualified to be the intercessor of elect sinners. Such is our advocate with the Father. ‘This is the true God, and eternal life.’

The intercession of Christ confirms *the efficacy of his death*. It all proceeds on the ground of his atonement. But for this a single petition could not have been presented on our behalf. The high priest’s entering into the sanctuary with the censer of incense supposed the expiatory sacrifice to have been previously offered, for he had to carry with him its blood. In like manner, our Lord’s intercession supposes his sacrifice to have been previously offered and accepted, and every act of intercessory interposition establishes the efficacy of his meritorious death. If at any time our faith in the latter truth happen to be staggered, if we want confirmation of this fundamental verity, we have only to look on high, and contemplate the Angel standing at the altar, having a golden censer with much incense, and to behold the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascending up before God out of the Angel’s hand.

It gives *perfect security* to the people of God. Their present state is imperfect. The matter of Christ’s intercession supposes this; there would be no need for him to pray for pardon if there were not guilt, or for sanctification if there were not corruption; so that the sinless perfection, to which some presumptuously lay claim, is not more at variance with christian humility than with the work in which the Saviour is engaged. But against the despondency which this imperfection might otherwise occasion, the people of God have the security of final perfection, arising from the work of intercession. Their security springs not from any thing naturally indestructible in the principle of the new life of which they are possessed, nor from any want of criminality in the

sins they commit, nor from any thing less dangerous in the circumstances in which they are placed, but wholly from the intercession of Christ. The principle of the new life may in itself, be liable to decay, but Christ by his intercession will uphold it; their sins may deserve condemnation, but he intercedes for pardon; they may be openly exposed to danger, but his intercession interposes a shield of infallible protection. Not a sin can they commit, for which his merits cannot secure forgiveness; not an accusation can be charged upon them which he has not skill to answer; not a temptation can assail them which he has not power to repel; not a service can they perform, however imperfect, to which he cannot give acceptance in the sight of God. Their final salvation is thus rendered absolutely secure, and in a spirit, not of haughty self-confidence, but of humble dependence on the Advocate with the Father, may they bid defiance to all opposition, and calmly trust that the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. The church is thus surrounded as with a wall of adamant, which no enemy can either penetrate or overthrow. Infidelity may open wide its mouth, and heresy may pour forth its polluted streams, and persecution may light its fires, and immorality may spread its thousand snares, and war and famine and pestilence may spread devastation all around, but not one, nor all of these together, can prove a match for that angel intercessor who cries with a loud voice, ‘Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.’

How ought the people of God to beware of *dishonouring Christ’s intercession*. It has already been remarked what an abuse of this function takes place when encouragement is taken from it to indulge in sin. But it is also dishonoured by being neglected or overlooked. This we fear is no uncommon occurrence. There is a disposition in many to regard what Christ *has done*, to the neglect of what he *is doing*. Not that we would have men to think less of the former, but more of the latter. Surely the preceding pages have been read to little purpose, if they have not left the impression on the mind that the *present* work of Christ in heaven is of no inferior moment. Much is said of it in the Scriptures, not a little is made of it by the inspired writers. The purpose for which the Saviour lives in mediatorial glory cannot be of small importance; ‘he ever liveth to make intercession;’ ‘if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the *death* of his Son, MUCH MORE, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his *life*.’ Let us then think highly, and think much,

of the intercession as well as the death of Christ. Let us see, too, that we restrain not prayer before God. This would be to do what we can to nullify the Saviour's character as an advocate, as, in this case, he could have no service to offer, no cause to undertake, no matter to perfume with the fragrance of his merits. Such as would put honour on Christ's intercession must 'pray without ceasing.' Nor let any indulge unreasonable despondency. The intercession of Christ ought to prove an antidote to every such feeling. Hear how the apostle reasons on the subject:—'He is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' To those who have right views of this truth, there can be no room for despair. Yet there are professing Christians who give themselves up to a morbid melancholy brooding over their sins and shortcomings, which could be warranted only on the supposition that there were no advocate with the Father, no intercessor within the vail, no days-man to plead their cause and secure their salvation. A view of the fact and properties of the Saviour's intercession should charm away all gloomy forebodings; and Christians, who feel as if cast out from God's sight, would we exhort to look again to that Holy Temple where pleads the Minister of the upper sanctuary, and to be no more sad.

Let all *seek an interest in, and daily improve,* this view of the Saviour's character and work. Those who are duly sensible of their situation will be disposed, like the Israelites when they were bitten with the fiery serpents, to look around for some one to pray for them. To whom can they go with safety but to Christ? He alone can pray for the people. Let them believe in his name, trust in his merits, and obey his commands, and they may lay their account with sharing in the benefits of his intercession. Daily they need, and they may daily have recourse to him, in this character. Oh that men would consider the misery of being without an interest in this part of the Saviour's work! To be without the prayers of our friends is deemed a calamity. To be denied the intercession of such men as Noah, Daniel, and Job, is justly represented in Scripture as no light thing. 'Pray not thou for this people, neither lift a cry or a prayer for them,' is one of the heaviest judgments that can befall a backsliding nation. How dreadful beyond all conception, then, must it be to have no interest in the prayers of Christ! But this is not all, for not to have his prayers *for us* is to have them *against us*. He prays for the destruction of his enemies. That blood

which speaks so powerfully for the salvation of those who believe, cries loudly for vengeance on such as despise and abuse it. Let the unbelieving and ungodly ponder this, and tremble. And who can tell the happiness which an interest in the intercession of Christ is fitted to yield! It is a doctrine as full of comfort to saints, as of terror to sinners. It is calculated to fill the heart with joy, to know that, whatever may be their sinfull weaknesses and infirmities, they shall not bring them into condemnation—that, whatever be their temptations, their faith shall not be permitted to fail,—that, whatever their backsliding, they shall not finally fall away,—that, however weak, and cold, and confused, their devotions, they shall be rendered, nevertheless, a sweet-smelling savour to God. In sin and duty, in health and sickness, in prosperity and adversity, in life and death, the doctrine of Christ's intercession gives joy and comfort to the believer. Be it, then, the concern of all who read these pages, earnestly to seek such an interest in what the Saviour has done and is still doing, that they may be able to assume as their own, the triumphant appeal of the apostle:—‘Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, WHO ALSO MAKETH INTERCESSION FOR US. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ.’

Thus have we brought to a conclusion our inquiries into these deeply interesting subjects. And we cannot part with our readers, without reminding them of the necessity of making a personal application of the glorious truths which have occupied their attention, before turning their thoughts to any thing else. Let them not regard them as matters of curious speculation, or content themselves with a mere doctrinal belief. To their being rightly appreciated, and properly improved, they must become the subjects of a saving faith. No doctrines stand more closely connected with the eternal salvation of the soul. Let not the reader, then, rise from the perusal of these pages, without seriously and conscientiously asking himself these questions:—Am I interested in the atonement and intercession of Jesus Christ? Have I a faith in the sacrifice of the great High Priest? Has my soul been sprinkled with his precious blood? Does he plead in my behalf with the Father? Is my name engraven on his heart? Have I any good reason to conclude, that he is even now praying that my sins may be forgiven, that my faith may not fail in the hour of temptation, and that I may be kept from



the evil which is in the world? Were I called, at this moment, to recline my head on the pillow of death, could I indulge the comforting assurance that the advocate within the vail, whom the Father heareth always, would present on my behalf the request, 'Father, I will that he whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.' and that, in answer to this prayer, my disembodied spirit should be ushered, in perfect holiness, into the immediate and unclouded presence of my covenant God, and into all the glories of the heavenly kingdom? These are solemn questions. Let no one neglect to put them to himself, or hesitate to press them, till, if no favourable answer can be candidly returned, at least such convictions have been awakened, as no occupation can dissipate, no exercise allay, but a believing appropriation of the blood and advocacy of the great High Priest of our profession. May the Spirit of all grace, whose prerogative it is to take the things of Christ and show them unto men, be pleased to grant, that the perusal of these sheets may thus prove the means of salvation to many; and to the only wise God, our Saviour, be all the glory. Amen!

THE END.

CHRIST'S

GRACIOUS INVITATION

TO THE

LABOURING AND HEAVY LADEN.

BY A. ALEXANDER. D. D.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1835, by Dr. A. W. Mitchell,  
in the Office of the Clerk of the District Court of the Eastern District of  
Pennsylvania.

## CHRIST'S INVITATION.

COME UNTO ME ALL YE THAT LABOUR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST.—As a stream of living water to a traveller perishing with thirst, as a skilful physician to one sick with a dangerous disease, as a reprieve to a condemned criminal, such is the voice of mercy to the miserable, self-condemned sinner—such, in ten thousand instances, have been these blessed words to heavy laden, weary souls. These are words which can never lose their interest by age or repetition. As food is equally relished by the hungry appetite after having been eaten a thousand times as at first, so the precious promises of God bring the same refreshment to the soul, however often they may have been received by faith. The Christian does not desire novelties; all he wants is a heart to embrace and relish the same truths which have stood on the sacred page from the beginning. There is no penury in the Divine word. All fulness and riches are included in this treasure, if we are only in possession of the key of faith to unlock the ark in which it is contained. One great excellence of the sacred Scriptures is, that they never lose their power and sweetness. After the lapse of ages, God's promises to believers are as firm and consolatory as when first made; and Christ's invitations to sinners are as full and as free to those who now hear the Gospel, as when first uttered.

If Christ, while upon earth, had spoken no more than these few words, they ought to be esteemed infinitely more precious, than all the golden sayings of all the heathen sages. Let us then be truly thankful for such a gracious invitation, proceeding from the lips of Him who always spake as never men spake; and let us lift up our hearts to the Father of lights, to open our eyes and prepare our hearts to understand and appreciate the grace which is exhibited in these divine words of our Redeemer.

But who are the persons here addressed by the Saviour? What class of persons are designated by the "labouring and heavy laden?" As the Gospel is directed to be preached to "every creature," and as this call contains the essence of the Gospel, there is no reason why we should not consider all who hear the invitation, as included; especially, as our Lord complains of the conduct of the most proud and unbelieving of his hearers for refusing to come to him; "Ye will not come unto

me that ye may have life." All men are miserable; all men are "by nature children of wrath;" all men are labouring in the vain pursuit of earthly happiness; all therefore may consider themselves invited. None need feel themselves excluded from Christ's invitation. And the giving this universal latitude to the call, harmonizes with parallel passages of Scripture, especially with that remarkable invitation, in Isaiah lv. 1—3. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live." And the gracious invitation of the Spirit, in Rev. xxii. 17, is equally free and universal; "And the Spirit and the bride say come. And let him that heareth say come. And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And the same extent ought to be given to Christ's public invitation at Jerusalem, on the last day of the feast of tabernacles; "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." John vii. 37.

But while we think, that this kind invitation ought not to be restricted, we readily admit that it is more applicable to some of our race than others. The poor, the oppressed, the diseased, the persecuted, the halt, the blind, the friendless among men, may have been more particularly in the eye of the blessed Redeemer; for it was given as one characteristic of his being the Messiah, that was to come, that the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." Matt. xi. 5.

But there is another class to whom the Saviour's address may be considered as still more appropriate; I mean convinced sinners, labouring under a sense of guilt and almost sinking under a burden too grievous to be borne. Surely Christ had respect to these, for He came not "to call the righteous but sinners to repentance;" "to seek and save the lost;" to heal those that are sick, namely, such as are sensible of their mortal maladies. And even they who are groaning under the burden of a blind mind and hard heart, and think that they have no conviction; even these, who are so prone to exclude themselves, are of the number invited. Yes, Christ speaks to you—he speaks to you more particularly than unto others. Do not therefore put away

from you the gracious call, as if it were intended only for others; do not any longer ingeniously argue against your own souls; do not by unbelief shut the door of mercy, which the Redeemer has graciously opened.

Neither should penitent believers, who are burdened with a deep sense of their own defilements, and continual imperfections, be omitted, when the several classes of heavy laden sinners are designated. The Great Shepherd of the sheep has always special regard to the tender and weak of his own flock. "He carries the lambs in his bosom and gently leads those that are with young." The kind condescension of the Son of God to the humble penitent, is, in many parts of Scripture, set forth in remarkable words. He was described in prophecy, as one who would "comfort all that mourn;" and who would give unto them "who mourn in Zion, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." "Thus saith the LORD, heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool, but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." "The bruised reed will he not break, nor quench the smoking flax." Let those then who are walking in darkness, and troubled in spirit—let all those who are harassed and cast down with manifold temptations and sore inward conflicts, which cause them to express their feelings in groanings which cannot be uttered in words, attend to the gentle accents of mercy which proceed from the lips of Jesus. Unworthy and wretched as you feel yourselves to be, he passes you not by. He addresses you, not in the language of reproach or condemnation, but in that of tender affection. Yes, he calls you also to come unto him.

II. Having considered the objects of the invitation, let us now contemplate the character of Him from whom it proceeds.

And though we need to know more than the name of this divine person, yet even this is "as ointment poured forth." His name is EMANUEL, GOD WITH US. Said the angel to Joseph, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS, for He shall save his people from their sins." When our Lord put it to his disciples to say who he was, Peter, in the name of his brethren, answered, "Thou art the CHRIST, the Son of the living God." And because he was born of a woman, and made flesh, he often speaks of himself as THE SON OF MAN. The prophet Isaiah, when he speaks of the Child that should be born, and of the SON that should be given, adds, "And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, (or rather, the Father of Eternity) the Prince of Peace."

And in the sublime vision which John had of the white horse, "He that sat upon him was called FAITHFUL and TRUE. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns, and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself. And He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called THE WORD OF GOD." He is also styled "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." And as his names indicate the dignity of his person, so they do the benign offices which he executes. He is the REDEEMER—THE SAVIOUR—THE ONE MEDIATOR—THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST—THE ADVOCATE—THE GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP—THE JUDGE OF QUICK AND DEAD. Immediately before He uttered the gracious invitation which we are considering, He had declared his divine knowledge and power. "All things are delivered to me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." None but He who was God with God, in the beginning, could utter these words without the highest blasphemy. But He who was in the "form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God." And if our Redeemer was not omnipotent his people could not trust in Him; if He was not omniscient it would be vain to call upon Him. In Christ there is the most wonderful union of majesty and condescension; of heavenly glory and human sympathy and tenderness. While He claims to be "God over all," He is not ashamed to call us brethren. He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. And the reason why we may come boldly to the throne of grace is, because "we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." And the reason which he assigns here, to induce us to come to him without hesitation, is, that he is "meek and lowly in heart."

III. How must we come? Not by a bodily approach, for this is impossible. Where Christ now is we cannot come: and a local approach, if it were practicable, would be useless. Many came near to the Saviour, when he sojourned on earth, who never derived any benefit from him. His worst enemies and murderers came in contact with him, when they seized, bound, buffeted, scourged, and crucified the Lord; and the traitor Judas lived in his family, and travelled in his company, for years, and kissed him in Gethsemane; but this will only serve to render his doom the more intolerable. It had been better for that man never to have seen Jesus—yea, never to have been born.

Coming to Christ is undoubtedly an act of the rational soul,

irrespective of the body. It is a spiritual approach, in which the Saviour is apprehended by the enlightened mind in his true character. It is a full persuasion that He is indeed the Son of God, and Saviour of the lost. It is the act of a convinced, distressed soul, flying from the coming wrath, to take shelter under the outstretched wings of his mercy. It is an exercise of humble confidence in the Redeemer of sinners, that He will deliver it from all the evils which are felt or feared. There is nothing difficult in this act to the soul under the influence of the Holy Spirit; nor does it require a long time. It is executed as quick as thought. It is nothing else but the soul's cordial consent to receive Christ as a complete and only Saviour. The weary and heavy laden sinner, when almost overwhelmed with the burden of his guilt, having sought relief from other quarters, at length hears the kind invitation of Jesus, "COME UNTO ME;" and being enabled to give full credit to the truth and sincerity of the call, and to see the excellence and suitability of Christ as a divine Saviour; and being persuaded, that every blessing needed to secure eternal salvation, is treasured up in Him, receives Him, as He is freely offered in the Gospel, and willingly commits all its immortal interests into his hands; and resolves to submit to him and obey him, in all time to come. In all this, the soul, though operated on by an Almighty power, is conscious of no restraint, unless it be the sweet constraint of the love of Christ. There is, indeed, an irresistible drawing towards Christ, but the more powerful it is, the more freely does the soul seem to act. Under the sweet influence of grace, the affections spontaneously go forth to Him, who now appears altogether lovely; and the weary soul experiences a sweet rest, by casting all its burdens on the Lord. The principal act of faith is an act of trust. "Blessed are all they that trust in Him." And having once tasted this blessedness of confiding in Christ, we never think of seeking any other refuge. The believer is not only persuaded, that He is THE WAY, but the ONLY WAY. On this account, He is prized above all price. "To you who believe he is precious." Well may the name of Jesus sound sweet to the believer's ear, because there is "no other name under heaven by which we must be saved." No wonder, that he values above rubies, or kingdoms, that elect and precious corner stone—though rejected by the proud and self-righteous—which God has laid in Zion, because he is sure, that it is a safe foundation on which to build for eternity; and because he is persuaded, "that other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus."



Coming to Christ, is not an act to be performed only once, but to be continually repeated. Every day we need his aid; and every hour we should have recourse to Him by some confiding or grateful act. This access, once obtained, the intercourse should be continually kept open. He allows his disciples the privilege of friends, to come as often as they will; and he invites them to come with freedom and confidence to his throne of grace, "to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." So intimate and endearing is the intercourse between Christ and believers, that there is a mutual indwelling: Christ in them, the hope of glory—and they in Christ as members of his body, or as branches engrafted into him, **THE TRUE VINE.**

But, perhaps, the anxious inquirer still asks, "How must I come?" To which I answer—come poor and naked, and helpless, and unworthy—come renouncing all dependence on your own righteousness. If you attempt to come with a price in your hands, you will be rejected. Christ must be acknowledged and received as our only Saviour. He will have nothing to do with those who place any confidence in their own works, or in their religious privileges. He will not save you on account of your natural amiableness; or on account of your moral honesty, or diligent attention to external duties. You cannot in these respects go beyond the rich young ruler in the Gospel, and yet he "lacked one thing," and that was the main thing. In the punctilious observance of external duties and rites, you cannot exceed the Scribes and Pharisees, and yet your righteousness must exceed theirs, or you can never enter the kingdom of heaven. You must come to Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. As long as sinners think that they are "rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," they will not come to Christ; but when they are convinced that they are "poor, and wretched, and blind and naked," they will be inclined to hear his counsel, and come unto him, "to buy gold tried in the fire that they may be rich, eye salve that they may see, and white raiment that they may be clothed, and that the shame of their nakedness appear not." In short, delay not that you may make yourselves better or prepare your hearts for the reception of Christ, but come at once—come as you are. If you are sick, apply at once to the physician. If you are defiled, come to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. If you are burdened with guilt, come to a crucified Saviour, whose blood cleanses from all sin. If you are miserable, Christ promises you rest if you will come to him. Are you kept back by a

deep sense of unworthiness ; this is the very reason why you should come. Christ came to save *sinner*s. The deeper your guilt, the greater your need of just such a Saviour. He saves none because their sins are small ; he will reject none because their sins are great. He is as willing to receive the penitent who is the chief of sinners, as the amiable youth whose life has been stained with no acts of gross transgression. Where sin has abounded, grace shall much more abound. " This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom," says Paul, " I am chief." Come then with confidence, trusting in that gracious assurance, " Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out."

But as your case is urgent and dangerous, let me intreat you to come speedily. Make no delay. In such a case, delays are dangerous. *Now* is the accepted time. *Now* is the day of salvation. Enter while the door of mercy is open. Work out your salvation while it is day, before the night cometh when no work can be done. And the work which you are required to perform, is to believe on him whom God hath sent. You have no need to leave your seat, to perform this act. " Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved:" Help is near. The Deliverer is present. Application to Him is as easy now as it ever can be. Take words and return unto Him. Fall down before him with confession and humble supplication ; " for he that calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Venture on him, for you are perishing where you are, and you will but perish if He should slay you. But if you are rejected and spurned from his feet, you will be the first ; but such a thing cannot be ; for God cannot lie, and he hath promised to receive the soul that comes.

IV. WHAT WILL BE GAINED BY COMING TO CHRIST? One thing only is promised. " Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you REST." But in this one thing, every thing good is included. They only can be said to be at rest, who are in a state of happiness ; and true happiness can only be found in the favour and love of God. Can that man be said to be at rest, whose sins are unpardoned, whose passions are unsubdued, and on whom the wrath of God abides? " There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." " The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." Wicked men are like the evil spirit which went through dry places, seeking rest and finding none. They are in constant pursuit of a phantom, which forever eludes their grasp. There is in this world no foundation of solid rest. To be preserved from perpetual agi-

tation, our anchor must be cast within the veil. Noah's dove which found no rest even for the sole of its foot, is an emblem of the restless condition of men. But the same dove, returning to the ark, is an emblem of the distressed soul flying to Christ from the deluge of deserved and coming wrath. And, O how kind is that hand which is stretched out of the ark to take in the fluttering weary soul! Then, indeed, rest is enjoyed. I WILL GIVE YOU REST, says the gracious Redeemer. And when he gives this precious blessing, it is found in experience to be, a solid, undisturbed, sweet, and permanent rest. It is no how different from that peace which Christ so often and so emphatically promised. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." It is the declared will of the blessed Jesus, that the joy of his people should be full; therefore he says to his disciples, "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy"—"your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." Delightful, indeed, is that peace which Jesus not only speaks, but breathes into the soul, and sweet is that rest which the weary soul experiences, when it takes refuge under the outstretched wings of his mercy, from the gathering storms of wrath. In that auspicious moment, the troubled spirit not only rests from fear and remorse, but also from its own fruitless struggles of self-exertion. It rests from the unprofitable works of self-righteousness, and finds complete repose in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. A believing view of the cross causes the heavy burden of guilt to fall off; and, although the coming soul bows to the yoke of Christ, and takes up his burden; yet love makes "his yoke easy," and his "burden light." How sweet is the calm which the first lively exercise of faith in Christ produces! The cheerful light of day is not so pleasant to the eyes of one long immured in a dark dungeon, as the light of his Father's reconciled face, to a prodigal just returned from his wanderings. It is indeed, "a marvellous light" which the Gospel beams on the renewed soul. It is justly, a day of feasting and rejoicing, when one that was lost is found, and when he that was dead is alive again. How affectionately and confidentially does the believing soul repose on the bosom of Jesus! and when his love is shed abroad in the heart, how intimate, how precious is the communion which it enjoys! Here, truly, it has found REST. But while in the body, these bright views and pleasing prospects are often obscured. While the Bridegroom is present, the bride rejoices, but when He is absent, she mourns, and often inquires, "saw ye Him, whom my

soul loveth?" If we lose sight of the objects of faith; and, especially, if sin be indulged, and the Spirit grieved, darkness and sorrow will again visit the soul; and rest can only be found by coming again to Jesus, from whom it was first received; and as often as we come to Him, we find his promise verified; rest is obtained.

But whatever is experienced here—whatever seasons of calm repose may be enjoyed—whatever moments of extatic joy—yea, "unspeakable and full of glory," may transport us, these are but drops from the fountain above—a mere foretaste of the river of pleasure which flows from the throne of God. Here our pilgrimage is through a wilderness. But soon all our sorrow shall cease, and we shall enter into that rest which remains for the people of God.

The last conflict of the believing soul is in death; for this is the last enemy. The last darkness which will ever be experienced, is that of "the valley and shadow of death." The last bitterness which will ever be tasted is the "bitterness of death." The last waves of sorrow which shall ever roll over such a soul, are the swellings of Jordan. The last fiery dart which the enemy shall ever be permitted to shoot at the friend of Christ, will here be cast. Yea, better than all, the last consciousness of indwelling sin, is experienced in this hour. Pain will no more be known but in the joyful consciousness that it is gone for ever. Admitting then that this is a dark passage—an appalling scene—an unnatural separation—a painful agony—a direful conflict; yet even here, the SHEPHERD of Israel can give us rest. Even here, the Captain of salvation can make us "conquerors and more than conquerors." In the midst of the darkness of death, a celestial beam often shines to guide and cheer the heavy laden traveller. Even the sting of death may be absent; and all fear and all doubt removed. Rest may be—has been, enjoyed on a dying bed. The pious dead sweetly rest in the bosom of Jesus. How calm—how serene—how confident—how abstracted from earth—how heavenly they sometimes appear, before they forsake their clay tabernacle; knowing that they have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

"Jesus can make a dying-bed  
 Feel soft as downy pillows are,  
 While on his breast I lean my head,  
 And breathe my life out sweetly there."

But we should not make too much of the comforts of a dying hour; some of God's dear children pass through this gloomy

way, with scarce a twinkling ray to animate or guide them yea, some who in life enjoyed pleasing prospects of future bliss, have had their day turned into night; and the death-scene to them has indeed been a tremendous conflict. The powers of darkness have been let loose to assault them; the sweet light of the Divine favour has been withdrawn, and added to this, the confusion of physical derangement has contributed to spread over the pious mind, a dense cloud, even in the departing hour. But still, CHRIST is in the cloud; Christ has not forgotten his promise—"I will never leave thee, never, never, never, forsake thee." He will shield his own from real evil; and will speedily grant a rich recompense for every pang. He especially knows how to sympathize with those dying in agony and under darkness. It was his own sore experience. O how bitter was that cry above all others; "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And in proportion as the agony is severe, will be his promptitude to grant deliverance. It may be, that desertion at such a time is permitted, that the soul may know something of the intensity of the suffering of the dear Redeemer at that moment. But it is soon over. The passage though dark is short, and the transition is glorious. The sweetness of the promised rest, when first enjoyed, will bear some proportion to the bitterness of the death just escaped. At any rate, Heaven will be as truly a REST to such as die under a cloud, as to those who experienced an anticipation of heaven on their death-bed. We need make no distinction, rest is promised to all, and the joy of all shall be full. If some experience a delight superior to that of other believers, it will be because they are capable of taking in more of the bliss and glory of that boundless ocean in which all swim. There indeed is REST—rest from labour—rest from trouble—rest from persecution—rest from sickness—rest from conflict and temptation—rest from doubt and fear—rest from sin—in short, rest from every evil, and the enjoyment of every good, of which a purified, glorified, immortal soul is capable.

This then is the motive to induce you to come to CHRIST, for all this, and much more is included, when he says, COME UNTO ME ALL YE THAT LABOUR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST.

THE END.

CLAIMS

OF THE

G O S P E L M I N I S T R Y

~ ~

ADEQUATE SUPPORT.

PHILADELPHIA:  
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION

Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1836,  
by Dr. A. W. MITCHELL, in the office of the Clerk of the District  
Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

# CLAIMS

OF THE

## G O S P E L M I N I S T R Y .

THE churches can readily see why no part of the counsel of God is so likely to be kept back, by faithful ministers of Christ, as that which relates to their *own support*. So many considerations of feeling and delicacy arise, that they shrink from the task of speaking of themselves, and prefer to toil on in poverty, rather than furnish the least pretext for a suspicion that they preach the Gospel for “filthy lucre’s sake.” But the ministry has claims on the people, and there are times when “necessity is laid upon them” to assert these claims in a manly and decided tone.

There is no wish to deal in indiscriminate censure. Some of the churches are ready to discharge their duty in this respect; and hence the laudable efforts they make to place pastors and their families above all anxiety about what they shall eat and drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed. Such a spirit is encouraging, and it is believed it meets with a rich reward in blessings from heaven above, as well as from the earth beneath. But every one at all acquainted with the history of ministerial support in the church at large, will grant that these are uncommon cases. Truth and duty compel the declaration, that there is frequently an indifference to this matter, which, besides utterly destroying the comfort, very seriously impedes the usefulness, of the pastor. It is necessary then, to inquire

### I. WHAT CLAIMS IN EQUITY MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL HAVE TO A COMFORTABLE SUPPORT FROM THE PEOPLE.

That “the labourer is worthy of his hire,” is a dictate of common sense, and common justice. To suppose for one moment that any man regards what he pays to the pastor, whose services he enjoys, in the light of a mere gratuity, would be to bring into question both his understanding and Christian principle. God never intended that his ministers should be treated as objects of charity, or “fed with the crumbs which fall from the table.” No one can think or speak of them in this light, without fixing upon himself as



foul a reproach, as he attempts to fix upon that Gospel of which they are the appointed messengers.

Let this subject be weighed in an even balance. Men who consecrate themselves to the service of God in the Gospel of his Son, ought in justice to be furnished, by the people among whom they labour, with a competent worldly maintenance. Less than this cannot with propriety be claimed, and less than this the people cannot with propriety grant. The official duties of ministers are so arduous in their nature, and so exhausting in number and variety, that they have not time, and ought not to have the inclination, to leave the word of God for the sake of serving tables. It behoves them to give themselves to the ministry of the Gospel. Whatever be the unavoidable expense of sustaining their families with any tolerable degree of credit in the world, they must meet and bear this expense, as best they can, from their salaries. Other men may watch the market, and seek to make what are called *good bargains*; but ministers cannot. It is a thousand times better for them, in general, to submit to a great deal of present inconvenience, and, what is worse, to the prospect of a penniless old age, than to acquire a reputation for secular management, or money-making. Be it little or much, pastors must, as a common rule, subsist upon what they receive from their flocks.

To judge what this support should be, think of the necessary expenses of their situation in society. Men who live upon the avails of their own secular industry, are not often aware what it necessarily costs a minister to sustain his family as it ought, both for their sakes and for his own sake, to be sustained. Because a few hundred dollars answer for *them*, they conclude that the same sum is sufficient for their *pastors*. But let it be considered whether they can properly magnify their office, without being subjected to expenses of which such men, from their different position, know nothing by experience. They must keep up a respectable appearance. Any great failure here would lose them the esteem of their people at once. Whatever may be their own feelings and inclinations, a proper regard to the flocks they serve, and to the customs of society, will not permit them to occupy a narrow tenement, or sit down to a scanty table. This is a point which should not be overlooked. Merely to purchase food and clothing for their households, to correspond with their friends, to attend upon church judicatories, and now and then to add a little to their libraries, is what very few ministers can do from their salaries. Yet not to do this, subjects them to blame from every quarter.

Now, ought not men, under these circumstances to be well supported? We say without hesitation—if there be a service on earth which deserves, in equity, a cheerful and generous recompense, it is that which every conscientious pastor renders to the people of his charge. Other kinds of toil can be paid for. You know how to count in money a full equivalent for the effort of bone and sinew put forth by the man who gathers in your harvest. But can you as easily tell the worth of your minister's solicitude for your eternal welfare? Paul could be paid for "tent-making;" but neither gold nor silver could be weighed as the price of those tears, with which he warned the Ephesians "night and day." This, then, is not the service that should go unrequited. No temporary embarrassment of the times, and no little pique at the officers or members of the parish, should be regarded by any one as a reason for keeping back his portion of the minister's salary.

Ministers, too, are to be "lovers of hospitality." No one would give them credit for exercising their office well, if their houses were not always open for the entertainment of respectable visitors. A person in private life can invite a stranger home with him or not, and nothing is thought of it. But the family of a settled minister, especially in one of our populous towns, must always be prepared for company. Sick or well, provided with domestic help or without it, all expect that the wayfaring minister, and the travelling agent should be welcome to their boards and firesides.

Nor is this all. Their office brings them into contact with poverty and suffering in every variety of form; and light as may be their own purses, they must do something to lessen the sorrows of those in worse circumstances. It is necessary that every minister should be regarded as the poor man's friend. Benevolent enterprises also make their demands. For the sake of example they must go forward in these works of mercy, and let "the depth of their poverty abound unto the riches of their liberality." To meet all these expenditures, a generous support is indispensable.

But besides having to subsist upon an inadequate salary, many ministers are seriously embarrassed by the tardy and irregular manner in which it is paid. Not a few men, and some of them members of the church, agree to give as little as they can with any show of propriety, and then keep back that little as long as possible. The merchant's bill must be met, and so must be that of the mechanic, and the teacher;

but the minister is treated as if he need not have bread at all, because he ought not to "live by bread alone." Other things are not graduated on this narrow scale. More is given, in many cases, every three months, for some fashionable accomplishment for a single child, than for the yearly religious instruction of the whole household. And this is not the worst. The music teacher and the drawing master are paid punctually, while the minister's services are left, from time to time, to go unrequited. Can this be right? Shall men pay so readily the insurance upon their earthly dwellings, and yet be backward to meet the expenses necessary to prepare for them "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?" There is no equity in such a course.

Explicitness on this subject is necessary. Duty requires that it should be stated, that the cost of maintaining a family is not now what it was in the days of our fathers, nor what it was even a few years ago. A great change has taken place, not only in the habits of society, but in the necessary expenses of a household. So enhanced is the price of almost every sort of provision, that, what was then a competent support, is now altogether inadequate. Take two items as a sample. The keeping of a horse and carriage is necessary for the pastor of every country parish, and yet to do this costs him nearly or quite a hundred dollars every year. For the wages and board of proper domestic help, at least an equal sum is requisite. Here, then, are barely two charges, and both of them indispensable, which amount to nearly half of what many ministers receive in salary.

If the people would remember that the gospel and its appointed ministry are necessary to their highest welfare, they would feel bound in justice to sustain them. They cannot do without pastors and churches. This was the deep and settled conviction of the pilgrim fathers, and hence whenever they had a settlement amounting to sixteen families, they made provision at once for the support of a minister. Those noble minded men never dreamt of securing such a blessing without cost. It was with them a fixed principle, that all their interests for earth and heaven required the presence of a faithful ambassador of Christ, and this led them to sustain him with pleasure. Let such a spirit as this prevail in the churches; let the people feel that the ordinances of the gospel are absolutely indispensable; and there will be no further necessity for appeals to them on the subject of ministerial support. "We speak as to wise men, judge ye what we say."

## II. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH AS TO THE OBLIGATION OF A PEOPLE COMFORTABLY TO SUPPORT THEIR MINISTER?

“To the law and to the testimony” let this question be brought—for God has clearly expressed his will concerning the maintenance of those who serve at his altar. The dictates of reason and equity are enforced and confirmed by repeated and emphatic injunctions from the Head of the Church himself. Under the Mosaic economy it was explicitly provided that “they who ministered at the temple should live of the things of the temple.” This “statute was ordained in Israel” for the purpose of securing for the priests and Levites a just and liberal support. In lieu of any inheritance among their brethren, one tenth of all the produce of the other tribes was allotted to them, and they had no scanty or stinted supply. Besides cities and suburbs appropriated to their use, and a share in the daily offerings of the Lord, this one tribe among the twelve was furnished with a regular tithe of all the avails of the harvest and the vintage.

No one ever learnt to practise an ill-judged parsimony towards his minister, from this portion of the word of God. It will be well, too, to recollect that religion flourished or declined among the Jews, just as its ministry was liberally sustained, or was driven from the temple to follow some secular employment. In all these arrangements for the good of the church, “the foolishness of God is wiser than men.” His blessing cannot reasonably be expected when his precepts are disregarded. All the tithes must be brought into the Lord’s house, before the windows of heaven could be opened, and blessings poured out until there was no more room to receive them.

By this it is not intended that religion should be supported by law, nor is it at all desirable to witness any such arrangement revived as would enrich the ministers of the Gospel, or elevate them as to style and way of living above respectable men in other professions. On this subject need be felt no apprehensions. The ministerial office is too honourable, and is connected with consolations too precious, and hopes too glorious, to be associated with worldly wealth. It is most clearly in accordance with the spirit of the Christian dispensation, as well as most consonant with the wishes of the ministry, for the people to give freely to support the Gospel as each man “purposeth in his own heart.” This support of the ministry, however, should be generous. Contributions for this end should be voluntary, so far as all human

laws are concerned, and the more voluntary the better; but at the same time it should be recollected that "God ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." No sum is named, but the obligation is enforced. Hence when Christ sent forth his disciples on their errand of mercy, he would not have them provide either gold, or silver, or brass for their journey, because he says, "the workman is worthy of his meat." "Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." This is the rule prescribed by Infinite Wisdom, and it is never observed without resulting in mutual blessings.

But it is said, that Paul refused to make the Gospel chargeable to the people. So he did, at least on one occasion; and the answer to the objection derived from his conduct in this instance, is furnished by the very epistle which records the fact. By reading the whole account, it will be found that it was not very creditable to the Corinthian church, to suffer such a man as Paul to minister to his necessities by the toil of his own hands. Why would he not be paid for his services? Simply because by so doing he would give occasion for triumph to those false teachers that had crept in to blast his fair reputation, and undermine his influence. This his noble soul would avoid; but at the same time *presents* from other churches were grateful to his heart. The things which were thus sent him he calls "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God."

If a people really love the Gospel, and are unable to contribute a proper support for it, then let the minister teach a school, or work a farm, or engage in any other honest and honourable employment, rather than abandon his post. Such cases may exist. But in ninety-nine instances out of a hundred, if the ordinances of the Gospel are not cheerfully supported, it is because these ordinances are not duly valued.

On this point conscientious men can scarcely be at a loss. According to the principles of the Bible, every faithful minister of the Gospel ought to be comfortably supported, because, for services rendered, he is fairly entitled to such support. No matter what his private resources are, or the generosity of a few particular friends; this should not be taken into the account at all. The people who enjoy his labours are bound by every consideration of justice, and every principle of the word of God, to place him in circumstances of comfort and competency. They ought not to see him consuming his own patrimony, while toiling for their good. This is never dreamt of in any other department of life. You never think of asking a merchant to abate the price of his

commodities, because he happens to have a private fortune, which raises him above the necessity of securing the profits of trade. Physicians do not give their services gratuitously because they are men of wealth. The claims of a minister to his salary arise from his having well and truly earned it, and for the congregation to keep it back, on any such pretence, is an act of palpable injustice.

Ministers occupy a very responsible situation among their people, and one to which they trust they have been divinely called, as was Aaron. The duties expected from them are many and arduous, while the support given them, scarcely meets their present wants. As for making provision for time to come, it is out of the question. For their wives and children, when death shall remove them, they have little to confide in, besides the promise of Him, who has kindly styled himself "the Father of the fatherless, and the Judge of the widow in his holy habitation."

As husbands and fathers this is to them a tender subject. The prospect for themselves of a destitute old age, encompassed with infirmities, and laid aside by the very people who stood by them through all the dew of their youth, and all the ripeness of their manhood, is trying enough fully to tax their faith and patience. But this is not their worst difficulty. After telling their people that "if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel," they are forced to become examples of the very thing they condemn. A straitened income, and the prejudices of society, compel them to this course. Let the anticipated pressure upon those, who may soon be known as their widows and orphans, be ever so severe, all they can do in most cases is to point them to the unfailing resources of God's everlasting covenant.

This is a topic on which it is extremely painful to dwell. Suffice it to say, God takes the part of his ministers in this matter. His word is full and clear, and none will go astray who are willing to walk in the light of the Lord. In the next place it may be remarked,

### III. THAT THE PEOPLE ARE TAKING THE READY WAY TO BENEFIT THEMSELVES, WHEN THEY LIBERALLY SUPPORT THEIR MINISTER.

Men cannot "sin against the Lord, without wronging their own souls." The evil of withholding more than is meet from the pastor, is sure sooner or later to recoil, with

tremendous effect, upon the heads of the flock. This is a never-failing result. It would be almost a miracle if a scanty salary, slowly and irregularly paid, did not in a little time lead to leanness and poverty of pulpit ministrations. As a general fact this will be so, while human nature continues what it now is. Ministers have flesh as well as spirit, and it is impossible for them to give themselves to their work, that their "profiting may appear to all men," unless they are relieved from worldly care.

This is a point which the people, for their own sakes, should consider well. There are few congregations so small as not to need the full employment of the time, talent, and thought of their pastor. *They* can afford no better than *he* can, to have his mind harassed with anxious cares to make his income hold out, or his hands occupied in supplying their lack of service. Whenever such a state of things exists, the people are as great sufferers as the minister. In no way can they bring a more grievous blight upon their churches, than by placing the man, who serves at their altar, under the necessity of dividing his time between the field and the pulpit. This is not the way to fill a house with serious and attentive hearers. It is not thus that they can expect to secure sermons full of "thoughts that glow, and words that burn."

A little reflection can scarcely fail to set this point in its true light. How is a minister to feed his people with knowledge and understanding, if his mind is occupied to any great extent, in providing for the wants of his household? How can he calmly and quietly sit down to the composition of a sermon, if pursued to his retirement with the thought of debts which he has no ability to liquidate? How is it possible for him to come fresh and vigorous into the pulpit, after having been exhausted through the week with the care of a school, or the toil of a farm? In a word, how can he prove himself a "workman that needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," if all the while pressed with pecuniary embarrassments? No man of ordinary character can help being crushed by a load like this. Now and then he may rouse himself to something like an effort, but after all it is the effort of a jaded and prostrate mind.

The responsibilities, it is granted, are mutual. It is not desired that the people should let their ministers off with the discharge of half duty. Support them generously, and then be not afraid to make them feel that they are expected to visit the sick, attend the evening meetings, and be ready to come before the people on the Sabbath with well digested

and instructive discourses. Nothing is asked for an indolent or secular ministry. If the people be punctual and honourable themselves, so that their pastor shall have no excuse for "buying and selling and getting gain," they may then boldly advance their claim to the very best services he has it in his power to render. But they should not be surprised if a deficiency on their part, should beget a deficiency on his part also. However good a man he is, he cannot have much heart to labour for a people who seem to set so small a value on the Gospel that they consider every dollar as good as lost that goes for its support.

Look at a single case. Here is a minister, whose preparatory course of eight or ten years' study exhausted, and more than exhausted all his own resources. He entered upon his work with a fixed determination to give such attendance to reading and study as should make him a "scribe well instructed in the things of the kingdom," and an apt teacher of its great mysteries. But he found no parish library provided to his hand. Instead of numerous and well-selected volumes to store his mind with rich and varied thought, and to stimulate him to strike out new trains of thought himself, by exhibiting before him the efforts of the mighty dead, all the books he has are scarcely enough to fill a man's arms. Under these circumstances what can he do. After a few ineffectual efforts he sinks into despondency, and so far from aspiring to any thing like extensive influence and usefulness in the church of God, he becomes content barely to meet the engagements of the week as they arrive. This is all he is able to accomplish. To expect more from him is to demand the full tale of brick, while no straw is provided.

But how cheering is the influence of a generous provision upon the feelings of a young minister. Even the Apostle Paul himself was animated by tokens of kindness from his Christian friends. His language is, "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again. Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." Such things are of less value in themselves, than as a means of binding pastor and flock together, and keeping up a circulation of good feeling between them. The giver here is benefitted as much as the receiver.

Kindness to ministers was one of the bright traits in the character of the well beloved Gaius. No one can doubt that his own soul was refreshed as often as he lodged these strangers, or washed their feet, or relieved their afflictions; and the fact is mentioned to his lasting honour. Wherever the good men went, who had been warmed at his fire-side,



or fed at his table, they gladly bore witness of his charity before the church.

But mark some of the evils of an opposite course. Many a faithful minister of Christ has been compelled, by dire necessity, to tear himself away from a people among whom he had otherwise fair prospects of being useful, because he could not endure the pecuniary embarrassments which he saw beginning to thicken around him. Much of the sin and the calamity of short sermons is to be traced to this cause. Twenty-six ministers were compelled to remove in eight years from a single Presbytery, within the bounds of one Synod for want of adequate support. Nor is this the worst of the evils. In another Presbytery but few pastors can be found, who have not been driven to some worldly avocation as an auxiliary in providing for the wants of their families.

All can see how such a system of penuriousness must work. The minister is weighed down to the dust with the thought that his people cannot have any proper sense of the value of religious ordinances, or they would not be so backward to sustain them. This cuts the sinews of all exertion, and forces him to "hang his harp upon the willows." Nor can the congregation feel any better. Besides putting in jeopardy any little church property they may be possessed of, they subject themselves to constant alarm whenever a pulpit in the neighbourhood becomes vacant. As their minister might so justly leave them, they naturally enough suppose that he will soon do so. This keeps up a never failing feeling of disquietude between him and his flock, which renders him as unfit for his work, as it does them to be benefitted by his work.

Or if such a result does not follow, the pastor soon becomes as worldly as his flock. Contracted feelings on their part, force him into a sort of saving system, which enables him to make money without much salary, and the congregation is pleased to compound, by consenting to take up with meager services, on condition that they come cheap. It is grievous to say that many a minister, in this way, becomes a kind of miser. Instead of an open, generous heart, always finding it "more blessed to give than to receive," he is driven to form the same close, calculating habits as prevail among his people. Soon he is more known as a farmer, a silk grower, or a cotton planter, than as a pastor. Worldliness in the people begets worldliness in the priest, and all settle down together into a state of spiritual apathy not less ruinous and desolating than the plagues of Egypt.

To every congregation it may be said: for your own sakes

building and enlargement in the gospel, see to it that the mind of your pastor is free, entirely free from every species of worldly embarrassment. Never have him distracted, as he goes into his study, with the recollection of bills unpaid, or domestic necessities unprovided for. Keep him unincumbered with any thing of this sort; for this, by awakening his gratitude, and exciting his ardour, will prove to be good and profitable to yourselves. Deal out in your supplies to him, "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over," and then expect him to enter the pulpit with sermons that shall enlarge your minds, and warm your hearts.

This is emphatically one of those cases in which "as a man sows, so shall he also reap." No kind of outlay yields such a return as that employed in sustaining the Gospel. There are very few congregations *too poor* to support a minister, but there are hundreds *too poor* to be without one. The process of remuneration here is very plain. Besides those habits of industry, sobriety, and economy, which a church-going people so generally acquire, there is an immense saving by "keeping the Sabbath and reverencing the sanctuary." What if a family, in moderate circumstances, should be under the necessity of paying thirty, or even forty dollars a year, to support the Gospel? Had they no church, and no minister, this amount twice told would be likely to be squandered in idle visits on the Lord's day, or rides for pleasure. The gain here is all on the side of godliness. Tavern bills, and not the charges of the Gospel, impoverish men. But as a last remark,

#### IV. CONGREGATIONS ARE UNDER THE OBLIGATION OF A FAIR CONTRACT TO SUPPORT THEIR MINISTER WELL.

This places the subject in a form, which as honest and honourable men, Christian congregations must surely feel. Common justice demands that, if there be a stipulation between the people and their minister, they should perform *their* part, as well as he *his*. To the full benefit of all his time and talents they have a right, and he has a right to expect a comfortable maintenance. This is as much the plain dictate of equity between man and man, as it is the injunction of the word of God.

But what is thus proper in itself, is rendered imperative by having been made the subject of a solemn contract. Under circumstances too deeply interesting ever to be forgotten the ministry promise on their part, to discharge to their people all the duties of faithful pastors, so far as God shall give them strength. But this, like every other contract, is so

constructed as to bind both parties. At the time that the ministry pledge themselves before God and his Church to labour for the spiritual good of their congregations, the people on their part pledge themselves with equal distinctness and solemnity, to "afford them all necessary aid and encouragement in the Lord." Nor is this the whole. Besides engaging to raise for their pastor a specified sum, they come under a distinct obligation to "supply him with whatever else they may see needful for the honour of religion and his comfort among them."

This may be looking at the matter, in some sense, in a secular light. But while the pastoral relation involves the high interests of the soul, and of the eternal world, these interests themselves never can be properly secured unless the people are punctual to their engagements. The minister cannot be expected to discharge his duty faithfully, if theirs is neglected.

It is clear then, that the vows of God are upon the people, just as distinctly and just as sacredly as they are upon the pastor. "He has sworn unto the Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, and must perform his oath; and they have lifted up their hands unto the Lord, and cannot go back." The obligation is equal, and the guilt of wilful failure is equal also.

Let the contract made with a pastor at his settlement be examined; let the instrument be examined as recorded in the "Confession of Faith," and the "Call" made to him, and what is the import of the pledge to supply him with whatever the honour of religion, and his comfort shall require? These were not intended to be idle words. The framers of our excellent book of discipline never threw them in as phrases to finish a sentence, or to round off a period. They were put there to represent a duty, over and above the mere payment of the stipulated salary, provided the minister's comfort and usefulness should require more. If these words mean any thing, they mean that the people should act nobly and generously in this matter. To this they are pledged not simply by the formalities of ordinary commercial transactions, but by the hallowed services of religion, and the solemn sanctions of the coming world.

But what is often the fact in relation to this business? Instead of those thousand little tokens of Christian affection, so cheap to the giver and so encouraging to the receiver, the bare salary of the pastor is not punctually paid, perhaps, one year out of ten. It is not the hire of the man who reaps the harvest field that is kept back, but the hire of him who

labours to save souls. This is the person whose mind is harassed, and whose hands hang down through neglect. In addition to all his struggles with sin in his own bosom, and all his discouragement arising from the prevalence of depravity around him, he is compelled to submit to the anxiety of an insufficient, and a precarious income. Can this be right? Is it as men in other instances fulfil their contracts with each other?

Cases of this sort are constantly occurring. Instead of a punctual payment of the salary quarterly or half-yearly, as pledged in the "Call," at the end of twelve months a deficiency of one-fourth, perhaps, is found to exist. This is carried forward to increase the burden, and augment the difficulty of the coming year. Thus things are suffered to go on until the church property is seriously encumbered, the people become uneasy, the minister is disheartened, and the pastoral relation is dissolved. This is a true account of what is taking place often, in every part of the land.

To prevent this, all should feel bound. The deficiency of half a dozen, is the deficiency of the church itself. Nothing is perfectly done, while any thing remains undone. The congregation, as such, ought to see to it that the pastor is comfortably and honourably supported. It is a responsibility upon all, and from which none are free till all are free.

The "call" to a minister does not contemplate that he shall be treated hardly. It was not intended that he should subsist on a bare pittance, and what is still more annoying, have this pittance doled out to him in such small and tardy parcels as to lessen its nominal value by one quarter or one eighth. Justice, the Bible, and fair contract, forbid it. If it be a cheap minister that is wanted, such can doubtless be found. But let it be remembered that a stinted salary will not be likely to bring a man in whose labours there can be joy, and under whose influence the church will "wax stronger and stronger." There is a withholding that tends to poverty. The way to prosper is to deal with a generous hand.

Above all, let the meanness of keeping back what is due to a minister, under the common, though false idea, that to surround him with poverty, is the way to make him preach better, be scorned. There is something almost despicable in trying to render a man heavenly minded by shortening his allowance of food. Had it any such tendency, it is no part of the duty of the people thus to usurp the prerogatives of heaven, for the sake of clothing their pastor with humility,

or filling him with meekness. But such is not the effect of measures of this sort. Ministers do not preach better when they rise up before a people to whose wilful neglect they must trace it that their "barrel of meal has wasted and their cruise of oil failed." They may break their hearts in this way; but if they would have them enter the pulpit with freedom, and life, and confidence, there should be no room in their minds for recollections of an unfulfilled contract.

There is a noble experiment now trying in this country, in church as well as in state. We are yet only in the process of proving, whether religion can be sustained by the power of its influences upon the public mind, unaided alike by political patronage and civil benefactions. The old world is looking upon us with an envious eye, and amidst all their cumbersome arrangements for sustaining the Gospel, they predict the failure of the plan. Let us falsify their prophecies. It becomes every American citizen, and especially every member of a denomination so entirely republican in its character as is ours, to see to it that nothing is left undone, in this free country, to secure the full operation of the great principles of religious liberty. We have no state tax to support the church, and let us resolve that there shall never be any need of such a tax.

Now let the reader review the positions which have been established. 1. It is equitable and right, that ministers who labour for the welfare of the community, should receive from that community a full and liberal maintenance. 2. God, in both the Old and New Testaments, has laid it down as a great principle in his arrangements for the church, that "they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." 3. No people can more effectually promote their own interests, than by making generous efforts so to provide for their pastor, as to relieve his mind of all worldly care. And, 4. To this, and nothing short of this, is every congregation bound by the contract which they have made with their minister, and which was ratified on the day of his installation. This is the ground assumed in urging the churches to the faithful performance of their duty.

"Finally—whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report—if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

THE  
IMPORTANCE  
OF  
DOCTRINAL AND INSTRUCTIVE  
PREACHING

BY THE  
REV. S. G. WINCHESTER.

PHILADELPHIA:  
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION

---

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1840, by  
ALEXANDER W. MITCHELL, M. D.,  
in the office of the Clerk of the District Court for the  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

---

## DOCTRINAL PREACHING.

“TRUTH is in order to godliness,” and public preaching is an appointed mode of presenting truth to the human mind.

The chief end of the Gospel Ministry, is, to glorify God in the conversion and salvation of men. It is an instrumentality eminently fitted to produce this result, being wisely adapted to the nature of man, as a moral and intelligent creature.

Although it possesses no inherent efficacy, but derives all from the blessing and agency of the Holy Ghost, nevertheless, much depends upon the manner in which it is employed. Agreeably to God’s plan of dealing, unless this instrumentality be wisely and rightly used, we may not hope for great success.

Whatever, therefore, tends to secure for it efficiency, in making it the power of God unto salvation, claims the prayerful consideration of all, both preachers and hearers. For this subject is one of great interest, both to clergymen and laymen. On both rests a weighty responsibility, in regard to the character of the ministrations of the sanctuary. It is the office of the minister to dispense the word, but it is the duty of laymen to select and call such as will dispense it in an edifying manner. It is to be feared that churches generally, do not fully appreciate their responsibility in this particular. In a matter so important as the salvation of sinners, and the up-building of the faith of the saints, dependent, as it is to a great degree, upon the character of the ministrations employed for this purpose, a congregation cannot be too careful and discreet. Their own comfort in religion, their own growth in grace and knowledge, as well as the future welfare of their children, are deeply concerned in the choice they may make. The weal or woe of many souls may be made to turn upon it.

The sources of danger in this respect are not always obvious to a congregation, and consequently, they are not, at all times, sufficiently guarded against. The requisite forms of Presbyterial action, cannot, in all cases, be relied on as an adequate security. The best and wisest men may be deceived and imposed on, or counteracted in their efforts to prevent evil. The sources of danger are commonly two: unsoundness in the faith and the want of ability and ade-



quate mental endowments. One effect of these evils is, to perpetuate themselves; for where a people have never been properly instructed, they are, to a great extent, unable to detect these disqualifications in a candidate for the pastoral office; and hence are more easily imposed on by weak or designing men. An errorist, particularly when he has an end to answer by it, will carefully conceal his real sentiments, where he knows they would be unacceptable and unpopular. By the use of equivocal language, and of words and phrases, to which he attaches a meaning different from that which, he has reason to believe, is attached to them by his hearers, he may succeed in deceiving them. No positive defection is discoverable; and if any thing at all is amiss, it is either of so negative a character, as to excite no suspicion, or such only as may be easily allayed by adroit explanations.

If the stratagem succeed, and the candidate become the pastor, one of two things will most likely ensue. Either he will cautiously inculcate his real sentiments, and gradually avow them as plainly as he safely may, and thus ultimately become the disseminator and advocate of unscriptural and pernicious dogmas; or, should he discover that this would be inexpedient and unsafe, he will, in order to retain his situation, either avoid altogether those topics on which he differs from the received creed, or handle them deceitfully, in so vague and general a way, as to convey no definite ideas of the subject he professes to treat, and thus become a tame, empty, and unedifying preacher.

Indeed this may serve to account for the seemingly impossible fact, that the ministrations of some preachers are of this very character, notwithstanding their admitted talents and learning.

In regard to those who lack ability and mental capacity, their success in obtaining the suffrages and ultimate call of a people, may be accounted for thus. With great pains and labour, they exhaust their minds on a few discourses. On these they rely as passports to the favourable opinion and confidence of the people. But after they have served this purpose, and have inducted their author (or copyist, as the case may be,) into office, they are laid aside, and the like is never heard again. It has, indeed, happened, that in order to maintain their standing and reputation, such preachers have availed themselves of the labours of others, in a way not very creditable to their moral honesty, nor altogether secure against detection by the more intelligent of their hearers.

Such are the dangers of deception and imposition, to which congregations are exposed, in the selection of pastors and teachers. Sound instruction, and a thorough indoctrination, constitute their surest safeguard. Thus shielded, a congregation may as readily detect an errorist by what he *omits to say*, as by what he inculcates. If, for example, in the exposition of the proof texts of a doctrine, he should fail to discover the doctrine itself, though he may not formally reject it, yet a well instructed hearer could discover the character of the expositor.

With the conviction, therefore, that this is a subject of no small moment to the members, as well as ministers of our Church, we shall proceed in our endeavours to show the importance of doctrinal and instructive preaching.

Paul's solemn charge to Timothy, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, was, "Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine." 2 Tim. iv. 2. The same apostle exhorts Titus to "hold fast the faithful word as he had been taught, that he might be able by SOUND DOCTRINE, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." Titus i. 9.

While we lay great stress upon the necessity of imparting to our congregations, solid instruction out of God's word, we by no means detract from the importance of pungent exhortation and reproof. On the contrary, we believe that the efficiency of the latter depends, under God, upon a due regard to the former. Instruction is the basis of persuasive exhortation.

Wilks, in his prize essay on the signs of conversion and unconversion, states the relation of doctrine to practice thus: "After the experience of nearly two thousand years, it might, without danger of mistake, be admitted as a demonstrated fact, that morality has always advanced or declined, in proportion as the Gospel has been preached in its genuine simplicity, or in a garbled form; and, consequently, that nothing but the undisguised doctrines of Christianity can accomplish even that object, which the worldling considers as the only end of the clerical establishment. But this object, great as it is, is far from being the utmost that a pious minister proposes to himself. His preaching is founded on the supposition, that a man, though outwardly moral, may fail of being a true Christian, and in consequence, fail of the rewards of Christianity. Internal religion, a religion of motives and intentions, a religion corresponding to that which our Saviour taught in his sermon on the Mount, he esteems

necessary to make the most brilliant or useful action acceptable to that Being, whom ‘without faith it is impossible to please.’ He conceives, therefore, that the doctrinal parts of Christianity are essentially necessary in his preaching. Whether he argues from the practice of the inspired writers, or from the nature of the thing itself, he arrives at the same conclusion, that an exhibition of the moral precepts of the Gospel, without the doctrines on which they depend, is as contrary to the intention of its Author, as the opposite error of inculcating its doctrines, and forgetting its commands.”

Our object, in this tract, is to inculcate the duty and importance of sound doctrinal and instructive preaching, as opposed to an empty, vapid declamation, which may excite the gaze of the vulgar, and the admiration of the weak and uninformed; and also as opposed to unintelligible speculations about the useless refinements of metaphysics, and philosophy, falsely so called, which the apostle denominates “vain babblings,” a “doting about questions and strifes of words.” Thus they “turn aside unto vain jangling—understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.”

The office of a Gospel minister is to instruct the people out of God’s word. “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations,” is the Saviour’s last command. Another form of this commission is, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” To preach the Gospel, is to teach the people. The word translated *to teach*, in the first quoted form of the commission, literally signifies *to make disciples*. And because disciples can only be made by instruction, the word is properly translated *to teach*.

The object of preaching is the restoration of the Divine image to the souls of men, which image consists in knowledge, as well as holiness. This has been lost, and consequently ignorance and blindness of mind, now characterize the race. Herein lies the necessity for teaching the people; that the eyes of their understanding may be opened through the word, and the light of the glorious Gospel of the Son of God shine in upon their hearts. All men, at some time of life, need to be taught the first principles of religion, and while babes in Christian knowledge, they must be fed with the pure milk of the word, and with strong meat, as they are able to bear it. By “strong meat,” we understand those doctrines of grace which are so repulsive to the carnal heart. The doctrines of the Bible must be explained and recommended to the people, by him who would assume the office of a public teacher in the Church. For this reason, minis-

ters are denominated *teachers*. This was the business of the great Teacher and Prophet of the Church, Jesus Christ; and all who believed on Him, were called disciples or learners.

This method of securing the reformation of mankind, is in strict accordance with, and wisely adapted to, the nature of man. We are so constituted, that the mind is the avenue to the heart. We seek to affect the one by enlightening the other. The heart can never be properly influenced by truth, while the judgment remains unconvinced. On the contrary, if the mind be fully persuaded of a truth, the heart and conscience seldom remain totally unaffected by it.

The Westminster Divines evidently regarded doctrinal instructions as an essential part of public preaching. In setting forth the Directory for public worship, they take for granted that the Doctrines of the Gospel will be faithfully inculcated, and strongly enforced by arguments and Scripture texts. This will appear from the following extracts from that part of the Directory which relates to public preaching. "In raising doctrines from the text, his (the preacher's) care ought to be, first, that the matter be the truth of God. Secondly, that it be a truth contained in, or grounded on that text, that the hearers may discern how God teacheth it from thence. Thirdly, that he chiefly insist upon those doctrines which are principally intended, and make most for the edification of the hearers. The doctrine is to be expressed in plain terms; or, if in any thing it need explication, it is to be opened, and the consequence also from the text cleared. The parallel places of Scripture confirming the doctrine, are rather to be plain, and pertinent, than many, and (if need be) somewhat insisted upon, and applied to the purpose in hand.

"The arguments or reasons are to be solid, and, as much as may be, convincing. The illustrations, of what kind soever, ought to be full of light, and such as may convey the truth into the hearer's heart with spiritual delight.

"In the use of instruction or information in the knowledge of some truth, which is a consequence from his doctrine, he may, (when convenient,) confirm it by a few firm arguments from the text in hand, and other places of Scripture, or from the nature of that common place in divinity, whereof that truth is a branch."

The published sermons and other writings of the Westminster Divines, show that they acted agreeably to the directions which they gave to others.

The writings of the Puritans, doubtless, constitute a fair criterion by which to judge of the character of their preaching. Hence we may infer that the veneration in which they

were held by the pious, and the influence which they possessed with the intelligent and well disposed, are attributable not merely to their private worth, as godly and consistent Christians, but, perhaps, chiefly to that pure stream of sound doctrinal instruction which issued from their pulpits. And when, by a misguided and cruel policy, the pulpits of England were closed against them, that stream continued to flow from their consecrated pens, spreading itself over countless minds, and carrying down through successive generations, the blessings of wholesome instruction; affording light to those in darkness, knowledge to the ignorant, comfort to the distressed, stability to the wavering, and edification to all. Thus hath the overruling providence of God brought good out of evil, and made the wrath of man to praise him. The wickedness of their rulers withheld their instruction from a few of their cotemporaries, but the providence of God has extended it to unnumbered multitudes, through all subsequent time. God has thus put the seal of his approbation upon that kind of preaching and writing; and the Holy Ghost has put honour upon it, by making it the power of God to the salvation of sinners, and to the sanctification of believers.

Dr. John Edwards, in his work called "The Preacher," says, "Knowledge is a necessary ingredient or part of Christianity, and consequently, unless divine principles and truths be taught us, which are the true matter of our knowledge, our Christianity is imperfect. There wants a main and essential part of it, such a part as is absolutely requisite to make the other parts useful. For this is certain, that the practical parts of Christianity will be wholly insignificant, if they be separated from this. The reason is plain; because fearing and loving God, and keeping his commandments are duties that cannot be practised aright without a due knowledge. Therefore, a preacher must make his people knowing in religion. This is not his trade, as some reproachfully term it, but it is that which the nature of his high calling and office requires of him. For truth is a talent committed to us, and we are the trustees of this precious deposite. All our hearers have a right to share in this sacred treasure, and we must with faithfulness impart it to them. We must beware of imaginary draughts of Christianity, of false schemes of the Gospel, of which there are sundry extant at this day. These we must carefully avoid, and be very frequent in insisting on the fundamental articles of our faith, because our religion consists in true principles, as well as right practice.

“ We ought to be very solicitous and careful in this matter, because if our knowledge and our principles be corrupted, our practice will be so too. It cannot be otherwise, because the former have so great and so immediate an influence on the latter. Knowledge and belief are the foundations of Christianity; a Christian life is the superstructure that is erected on them: whence it follows that he who supplants the Christian truth, undermines the life of religion, and effectually subverts its morals. By overturning the faith, he destroys the practical part of Christianity.

“ In brief, we must instruct the people in the sacred truths of the Gospel, and the whole body of its principles, or else we cannot lay claim to that character of being good ministers of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine; that is, well acquainted with, and imparting unto others the knowledge of the principles of Christianity.” Vol. i. p. 51.

The mind, even under the most favourable circumstances, is slow to comprehend the great truths of the Gospel, and the unrenewed heart is universally disposed to reject them. “ The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Hence the necessity of line upon line and precept upon precept. What minister has not observed, and been both surprised and mortified at the ignorance of men in regard to religious doctrines, who were otherwise intelligent and well informed, and who for years have sat under the preaching of an enlightened ministry?

Indifference to religion, that withering and blighting curse, which rests, with oppressive weight, upon the hearts of the great mass of every community, is traceable to an ignorance of Divine things. The god of this world has blinded their eyes, and they know not God, and therefore obey not the Gospel of his Son. It is an impenetrable shield which wards off the arrows of Gospel truth. Wrapt in ignorance, they slumber on in the region and shadow of death. Had they been properly and habitually instructed from the pulpit, although they might have remained at enmity with God, yet they could not be indifferent under the pungent appeals of the Gospel to their consciences. For indifference is not to be confounded with a seared conscience. The one is the consequence of ignorance, the other is the judicial result of having abused and rejected both light and mercy.

Instructive preaching must sometimes be argumentative, as well as merely didactic, according to the nature of the

subject discussed. This is highly important and profitable in its place. And it is necessary, not only for the purpose of convincing the understanding, but because it operates upon the heart, by deepening the impression already made by the assent of the mind. This is effected by so engaging and engrossing the mind in an argumentative investigation, as to cause the hearer to look steadily and for a considerable time at the subject; and thus a longer and less interrupted communication is kept up between the heart and the mind, in regard to the subject in hand, than can possibly be effected by the mere statement of a truth, even where the mind yields a ready assent to it.

For example: if it be announced from the pulpit as an undeniable truth, that a sinner, remaining such, must inevitably perish, the mind of a hearer may assent to it as a doctrine of the Bible, and yet his heart and life remain unaffected by it. But if the minister undertake to prove this point in an argument, based upon the great principles of the divine character and government, and thus lead that mind through the entire argumentation, enabling it distinctly to see each link of the chain of reasoning which brings him irresistibly to the awful conclusion, that remaining as he is, he must perish, and that there is no hope, nor remedy for his case, but repentance and faith in Christ, is it not likely that his heart will be more influenced, than it was by the simple statement of the truth in question? Is it not probable that that state of mental contact with truth, is the one which the Holy Ghost ordinarily blesses to the renovation of the heart?

The apostles, particularly the great Apostle to the Gentiles, often resorted to the argumentative style of imparting instruction. His epistle to the Hebrews is a close, connected, and logical argument, proving the superiority of the Christian, over the Aaronic priesthood. He reasoned before Felix on righteousness, temperance and the judgment, and even that proud and hard heart trembled, beneath the power of his argument.

“When we would effectually exhort and stir up our auditors to a faithful discharge of the great duties of our religion,” says Dr. John Edwards, in his Preacher, “we must endeavour it by true and substantial reasons and motives, such as the commands and injunctions of Him who is our Sovereign Lord; the free grace and bounty of God discovered in the Gospel; the evils that attend a vicious life; the inward deformity of sin, and its contrariety to the divine nature; the innate excellency and beauty of religion; the pleasures and advantages of holiness; the easiness of Christ’s yoke; the re-

wards that attend it both here and hereafter. And there are some arguments proper to the Gospel, which we must be continually urging upon our flock, to confirm them in the belief of the Christian religion, and the practice of it; as the authority of the Holy Scriptures; the accomplishment of the prophecies contained in them; the miracles wrought to convince us of the divinity of Christ's mission, and of the truth of his doctrines; the various ways of revelation whereby Christianity is confirmed;" &c.

"Thus the public instructors of the Church are to work upon men's judgments, and to argue them into religion and piety. And there is good reason for this, for it is not sufficient that the things we deliver be true, but we must prove them to be such by strong and convincing arguments. We are not to presume that men will admit what we say, whether it be proved or not; for as they are men, they are rational beings, and, therefore, must be dealt with accordingly. And this is certain, that we can come at their minds only by reason and discourse. We read indeed, in the Roman legends, that St. Francis preached to beasts and birds, and we are told he made a great reformation among them; but we do not pretend to deal with such creatures, but with those only that are reasonable, and we know no other way of dealing with these but that which I am speaking of. Our auditors are not insensible machines, and clock-work, and therefore must be handled accordingly: they must be wound up only by reason. If we put them off without this, we undervalue them, and sink them below their species. Wherefore, there is a necessity of a preacher's making use of his logic, and his acquired literature, that he may know how to fetch the best convictions, and clearest evidences from the best topics, whether with respect to principles or actions; whether he refutes a growing error, or establishes a known truth, or maintains the lawfulness and necessity of any religious practice, still, reason and argument must be made use of, and the more of these the better. The closer this powder is rammed, the greater execution it will do.

"The sum of this head is this, that a preacher is to take care that he always speaks good sense, and argues closely. Nothing that comes from him is to be raw and undigested, but all must be well ripened by judgment; which cannot be done without studying, reading, meditating, and industrious searching into divine matters. For we do not preach now by inspiration, and, therefore, there is a necessity of these." Vol. I. p. 215.

We are aware that some hearers strongly object to doc-



trinal and argumentative preaching. But if doctrines are not to be preached, the office of a public Christian teacher is at an end. What is left for pulpit exhibition and instruction? Surely those who make the objection, are living witnesses to the necessity of such preaching. They furnish in their own persons, the strongest proof that such instructive preaching is greatly needed. For it may, with great confidence, be laid down as a general rule, that such objectors are either ignorant of Gospel truths, and of the design of the Christian ministry, or that they are opposed to the doctrines inculcated. The carnal heart rebels against the humbling doctrines of grace, and is of course uneasy and restless under the faithful exhibition of them. But this objection is not made by men of the world only; it is sometimes heard from the lips of professed learners at the feet of Jesus. How unseemly is *such* an objection from *such* a source!

It ought, however, to be observed, that perhaps an injudicious mode of doctrinal preaching may have given rise to this objection in some instances. A controversial and criminating style, is by no means the happiest or most profitable. This may be offensive even to the most intelligent and pious hearers. Even the didactic style becomes uninteresting, and but slightly edifying, if it be cold and dry, to the neglect of animated exhortation, earnest reproof, and faithful warning. A wise discretion must here be exercised. But it is idle to assert that the doctrines of the Gospel ought not to be preached. If truth be in order to godliness, there is a connexion between faith and practice, too intimate to be unobserved, and too important to be overlooked.

T. Erskine, Esq., in his Remarks on the internal evidence of the truth of revealed religion, thus states this connexion between doctrines and practice, or the influence of doctrines on the hearts of men. "In the Bible we uniformly find the doctrines, even those that are generally considered most abstruse, pressed upon us as demonstrations or evidences of some important feature of the Divine mind, and as motives tending to produce in us some corresponding disposition, in relation to God or man. This is perfectly reasonable. Our characters cannot but be, in some degree, affected by what we believe to be the conduct and the will of the Almighty towards ourselves, and the rest of our species. The history of this conduct and this will, constitutes what are called Christian doctrines: if then the disposition or character which we are urged to acquire, recommend itself to our reason and consciences, as right and agreeable to the will of God, we cannot but approve that precept as morally

true: and if the doctrine by which it is enforced, carries in it a distinct and natural tendency to produce this disposition in character, then we feel ourselves compelled to admit that there is at least *a moral truth* in this doctrine. And if we find that the doctrine has not only this purely moral tendency, but that it is also most singularly adapted to assert and acquire a powerful influence over those principles in our nature to which it directs its appeal, then we must also pronounce that there is a natural truth in the doctrine—or, in other words, that however contradictory it may be to human practice, it has however a natural consistency with the regulating principles of the human mind. And further, if the doctrine be not only true in morals, and in its natural adaptation to the mind of man, but if the fact which it records coincides also, and harmonizes with that general idea of the Divine character, which reason forms from the suggestions of conscience, and from an observation of the works and ways of God in the external world, then we are bound to acknowledge that this doctrine appears to be true in its relation to God.

“In the Bible, the Christian doctrines are always stated in this connexion: they stand as indications of the character of God, and as the exciting motives to a corresponding character in man. Forming thus the connecting link between the character of the Creator and the creature, they possess a majesty which it is impossible to despise, and exhibit a form of consistency and truth which it is difficult not to believe. Such is Christianity in the Bible.”

Mr. Erskine illustrates his position by a reference to the doctrine of the atonement, thus:

“The common sense system of a religion consists in two connexions:—First, the connexion between the doctrines and character of God which they exhibit; and, secondly, the connexion between these same doctrines and the character which they are intended to impress on the mind of man. When, therefore, we are considering a religious doctrine, our questions ought to be, what view does this doctrine give of the character of God? And what influence will it have on the mind of man? Now, the Bible tells us, that God so loved the world as to give his Son for it. He tells us also that he did this, that he might show himself just, even when justifying the ungodly: and that he might magnify the law and make it honourable. The mercy and holiness of the Divine character, therefore, are the qualities which are exhibited by this doctrine. The effect upon the character of man, produced by the belief of it, will be to love Him who

first loved us, and to put the fullest confidence in his goodness and willingness to forgive—to associate sin with the ideas both of the deepest misery and the basest ingratitude—to admire the unsearchable wisdom, and the high principle which have combined the fullest mercy with the most uncompromising justice—and to love all our fellow-creatures, from the consideration that our common Father has taken such an interest in their welfare, and from the thought, that as we have been all shipwrecked in the same sea, by the same wide-wasting tempest, so we are all invited by the same gracious voice to take refuge in the same haven of eternal rest.”

The doctrines of the gospel must be faithfully preached, if we desire the duties of religion to be effectually inculcated. Without this, a minister need not be surprised that his ministrations are attended with but little or no success.

Those who object to doctrinal preaching, do in fact object to instructive preaching, for doctrine is instruction: it is something taught. And the objection is, in effect, saying, that we know enough, we are sufficiently well informed, and we only need to be excited to the practice of what we know. Vain and deluded mortals! We have read of those, who professing themselves to be wise, became fools.

Some of these objectors plead the feigned ground of benevolence towards their fellow hearers. They profess great anxiety that all should be benefitted by the preaching of the gospel, and, therefore, object to doctrinal discourses, on the ground that the mass of hearers cannot give that attention which is necessary, in order to understand them. Perhaps this want of attention is confined to the objectors themselves. But are ministers to hold back the truth of God, because men will not give to it that attention which it claims and deserves? They *must* preach the word, whether men will hear or forbear. They *must not* shun to declare the *whole counsel of God*. They must do their duty, and throw upon their hearers the responsibility of doing or neglecting theirs.

Some object to doctrinal preaching on the ground, that although they can give sufficient attention to understand it, yet they do not find themselves profited by it. This may be true, and verily, the fault may be their own, and not the preacher's. For this, two reasons may be assigned: 1. The first is, they may have adopted erroneous doctrines, and consequently reject those views of divine truth to which they listen from Sabbath to Sabbath. They may not believe, but cordially dislike them. “For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did

not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Here unprofitableness is attributed to the want of faith, and not to the manner in which the word was preached. A repugnance to particular doctrines is easily, and sometimes almost insensibly, transferred to those who hold and teach them. When this becomes the case, the objector need be at no loss to account for his not being profited. 2. But another reason why the class of persons here spoken of, are not profited by doctrinal preaching may be, that their religion consists in frames of mind, and in animal excitement, and where these are not kept up by artificial means, there is a great dearth in the soul; and all preaching which does not minister to this end, is regarded as unprofitable. Solid instruction in divine things affords no aid to their piety, but rather chills the ardour of their volatile and blind affections, dissipates the hallucination in which they joyfully revel, and chastens into sobriety the wild emotions which feed their delusive hopes. Their piety is periodical, and as transitory as the hour during which it is enjoyed; for they depend, for this excited state of animal feeling, upon an empty and boisterous declamation. We do not wonder that such persons object to doctrinal preaching as unprofitable. But it is one thing to fan a flame, and quite another to feed it with appropriate fuel. To fan, without feeding it, is soon to extinguish it. It is well by exhortation, by encouragement, and by pungent appeal, to fan the flame of piety in the Christian's heart; but unless it be supplied with appropriate and solid instruction, it cannot grow in vigorous health. The Christian pastor must feed the flock of God, over which he is made an overseer. "Feed my lambs," was the repeated injunction of our Lord to the confident but penitent Peter.

The duty and manner of preaching Christ crucified, are thus stated by the Rev. David Bostwick, in a sermon preached before the Synod of New York, in May, 1758:

"This includes," says he, "the whole of the doctrines of the gospel, relating to man's salvation by Jesus Christ. through his blood and Spirit: the fall of man, and his consequent guilt and misery; the original purposes of God's love and grace issuing in the gift of his dear Son; the glory of Christ's person; his mysterious incarnation; his holy life; his cruel death; his resurrection, ascension, and perpetual intercession; the complete atonement he has made; the everlasting righteousness he has brought in; the various offices he has sustained, both in his state of humiliation and exaltation; the methods of divine operation; the nature and use of faith; the blessings consequent upon it, as justi-

fication, adoption, sanctification, perfection of holiness at death, and the complete happiness of soul and body in the enjoyment of God to all eternity. Christ is to be exhibited as the Messiah, the Anointed of God, the Mediator; the Saviour of men, who saves his people from their sins—from the guilt, the power, and the punishment of them; the Lord, the Head and King of his church, to whom all power is given, and to whom all obedience is due, and to whom is committed the grand and final judgment. Christ is to be preached, not only as the *giver* of a law, who is to be obeyed; but as having fulfilled the law, and who, therefore, is to be believed in, and relied on, for pardon, righteousness, and eternal life. He is to be held forth to sinners as a surety, who has undertaken to pay their debt, to atone for their guilt, and to work out for them a perfect righteousness. However honourably we may speak of him as a ruler to be obeyed, and a pattern to be imitated, yet if we exhibit him not in this view, we do not properly preach Christ. The ground of all our hopes is, that Christ has suffered for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; that he not only died for our good, but that he died in our room and stead, and “was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

To preach Christ is to display the fulness and freeness of his grace, his power to save, and his willingness to save; to show that in him is to be found every thing that a poor, guilty, helpless, condemned sinner can want, and that all the blessings of his purchase are freely offered without money and without price. He must also be made the centre of every subject. The nature and perfections of the Deity must be considered as they appear “in the face of Jesus Christ.”

The strictness and spirituality of the divine law must lead to Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness. The threatenings of the law must be employed to bring men to Christ, that they may be justified by faith. The promises and blessings of the gospel must be held forth as the purchase of Christ's blood, and the gift of his grace. Of faith, Christ must be viewed as the author and the object. Repentance must be treated of as his gift. Obedience must be considered as the fruit of faith in him, and union to him, springing from love to Christ, and performed in his strength and grace. In a word, Christ must be regarded as the fountain from which all is derived, the centre in which all must terminate, as the beginning and the end, as the “all in all.”

To a neglect of doctrinal instruction, we apprehend, may

be traced some of the evils, over which, as a church, we have been called to mourn.

1. The first we mention is the prevalence and boldness of doctrinal error. Man is naturally ignorant of the truth as it is in Jesus, and inclined to error, and when left without instruction, will follow that inclination. His heart is opposed to the humbling doctrines of grace, and strongly leans to those which foster pride, cherish self-esteem, and minister to self-confidence and exaltation.

Even with the most faithful indoctrination, it is difficult to stem the current of these popular and self-flattering errors. It is a mournful reflection that so many of our people have been ignorant of the distinctive doctrines of our venerable and truly apostolical church. This is a chief reason why errors have abounded in our midst. The hedges of our vineyard were neglected, and the enemy came in like a flood, and for a time, threatened to lay waste our heritage. But the Lord, we trust, has lifted up a standard against him. Had we been faithful to "fill the bushel with wheat, we might, in God's name, have defied the devil to fill it with tares." Had the minds of the past and present generations been thoroughly pre-occupied with sound doctrine, we might now have been rejoicing in the unclouded prospects of the church.

Errors have ever abounded in the church of Christ, just in proportion as doctrinal and instructive preaching has been neglected. Public teaching is the ordained means of building up and extending the church; and as God is pleased to work by means, it is idle to expect that the end may be reached, while the appointed means are neglected. The church will decline, unless her cause be advanced in God's approved way. This has ever been the case; and the pages of her history abound with proof on this point, and afford humbling but instructive lessons to all who are set for her defence. The thick moral darkness which had for ages, prior to the Reformation, covered, as with a funeral pall, the bosom of the church, was the result of gross neglect on the part of those who bore the office of Christian pastors. A false philosophy, with its useless refinements, seldom appealing to the Bible, because deriving no real countenance from it, gradually displaced the more simple and scriptural ministrations of the pulpit. This prepared the way for the influence of neighbouring heathenism to operate in blending mythological sentiments and rites with the Christian religion. This, together with metropolitan influence, an occasional alliance with the civil authority, and the growing

worldliness and corruption of the clergy, soon excluded from most of the Christian pulpits, that style of doctrinal and instructive preaching, which so eminently characterized the preachers of the primitive church.

In most places where the Romish faith exclusively prevails, no preaching at all is heard at the present day. The mere ceremonies of the church occupy exclusively the religious attention of both priests and people.

During the dark ages, those pastors who professed to preach, taught for doctrines, the commandments of men, until ignorance became the mother of devotion.

The voice of wisdom was no longer heard in the streets. The harps of holy praise were hung upon the willows, and the remnant of Israel sat down and wept, or fled before the sword of relentless persecution. And it was not until the reformed pulpits of Germany and the neighbouring states, in defiance of priestly domination, thundered forth the doctrines of the cross into the ears of the people, that the light of the Gospel shone into their hearts, delivering them from the power of Satan. It then seemed as if the spark of Christianity, which still lingered and languished in the breasts of a few, had been rekindled at the altar of God, and shed forth its light and heat, until other kingdoms caught the flame, which has since spread over nearly every civilized nation, carrying with it peace, and joy, and eternal life.

Under the doctrinal preaching of her reformers, the church arose from the long, dark night of spiritual death, like the giant from his slumbers, and shook from her a cumbrous mass of excrescent dogmas and rites, and stood forth redeemed, disenthralled, and renovated; and in the name and strength of her Lord and Head, marched onward conquering and to conquer.

The history of the reformed church in England, teaches the same lesson. The reformed doctrines were held and preached by her clergy, with but few exceptions, till the time of James I. He was a vain-glorious and arbitrary prince; and although he advocated, in the character of an author, the doctrines of the Reformation, yet he sacrificed his religion at the shrine of ambition. His interests were in conflict with his principles, and from political motives, he favoured the false teachers of his day. The politico-ecclesiastical game was well played. He favoured the religious views of those who favoured his pretensions to undue authority and power in the kingdom.

“ Soon after the accession of King James, the canons of

the church were confirmed by the king and convocation. Things were in this state, when a great turn happened in the doctrines of the church. The Arminian, or remonstrant tenets, which had been condemned by the Synod at Dort, began to spread in England. The Calvinistical sense of the XXXIX articles was discouraged; and injunctions were published against preaching upon predestination, election, efficacy of grace, &c., while the Arminians were suffered to inculcate their doctrines” without control.\*

These injunctions were drawn up through the instrumentality of Bishop Laud, and were entitled, Directions concerning preachers. The third article of these directions enjoined, “that no preacher of what title soever, under the degree of a bishop, or dean at the least, do, from henceforth, presume to preach, in any popular auditory, the deep points of predestination, election, reprobation, or the universality, efficacy, resistibility, or irresistibility of God’s grace; but leave those themes rather to be handled by the learned men (in the two universities :) and that moderately and modestly, by way of use and application, rather than by way of positive doctrines; being fitter for the schools, than for simple auditories.” “This,” says Toplady, “was the first blow, given by royal authority, to the doctrinal Calvinism of the established church, since the death of Mary the bloody. For, though it *primâ facie*, seemed to muzzle the Arminians, no less than the Calvinistic clergy, yet its design was to bridle the latter, and leave the former at liberty to spread their new principles without restraint. The above paper of directions was dated from Windsor, 4th August, 1622.”

Charles I., son of James I., followed in the footsteps, and laboured to carry out the principles, of his father.

“All the emotions of his zeal,” says Mosheim, “and the whole tenor of his administration, were directed towards the three following objects:

1. The extending the royal prerogative, and raising the power of the crown above the authority of law.
2. The reduction of all the churches in Great Britain and Ireland, under the jurisdiction of bishops.
3. The suppression of the opinions and institutions peculiar to Calvinism.

“The person whom the king chiefly intrusted with the execution of this arduous plan, was William Laud, Bishop of London. This haughty prelate executed the plans of his royal master, and fulfilled the views of his own ambition,

\* Tindal’s Cont. of Rapin, Vol. III. p. 279, 280, 8vo.



without using those mild and moderate methods, which prudence employs, to make unpopular schemes go down. He carried matters with a high hand. When he found the laws opposing his views, he treated them with contempt, and violated them without hesitation. He loaded the Puritans with injuries and vexations, and aimed at nothing less than their total extinction. He rejected the Calvinistical doctrine of predestination publicly, in the year 1625, (viz. in the first year of Charles' reign :) and notwithstanding the opposition and remonstrances of (Archbishop) Abbot, substituted the Arminian system in its place."\*

Thus it appears that one of the three objects which Charles I. proposed to himself, on his accession to the throne, was the extermination of Calvinism from the English church. This determination was formed from political and selfish motives, rather than from any conviction that Calvinism was unscriptural. The Calvinists, both in England and on the continent, were, and ever have been, the most formidable and uncompromising foes to political tyranny and despotism. They composed the liberal party in the politics of England, and had opposed the reachings of James I. after unlimited and arbitrary power, and were no less obnoxious to his son, on account of their firm stand against his high pretensions.

William Laud, as we have already seen, was the man whom Charles selected as a fit agent to carry into effect his selfish and wicked purposes. And by his elevation to the See of Canterbury, the king attempted virtually to close the pulpits of England against the advocates of sound doctrine, and threw them wide open to those errorists who had played the part of sycophants at his and his father's feet.

"The directions concerning preachers," says Toplady, "issued by James I. (as already noted,) in the year 1622, forbad every clergyman, under the degree of a bishop, or of a dean, to preach, in public, either for or against such of the doctrines of grace as were specified in those directions. But as this prohibition was very displeasing to the public in general, so was it far from producing universal obedience. The king, perceiving how much offence his directions had given to the nation, thought proper to publish a subsequent apology for his conduct in that matter: which discreet step, conduced both to calm the minds of the people, and to blunt the force of the directions themselves. This was not the first time that James had been drawn into a scrape by Laud;

nor the first time of his majesty's receding from the imprudent measures into which he had been hurried by that warm and forward ecclesiastic.

But Charles had very little of his father's 'King-craft.' In June, 1626, (i. e. hardly more than four months after his coronation,) Laud got him to revive the unpopular directions concerning preachers; of which a new edition appeared, in the form of a proclamation, extending the prohibition to bishops and deans themselves; who were by this ill-judged stretch of royal supremacy, commanded to forbear from treating of predestination in their sermons and writings.\*

\* Some considerable time, says Toplady, after the said proclamation, or 'royal edict,' had been issued, Dr. Davenant, bishop of Salisbury, preached before the king at Whitehall. His text, as he himself acquaints us, was Rom. vi. 23.—"The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—"Here," says his lordship, "I expounded the three-fold happiness of the godly:

"1. Happy in the Lord, whom they serve; God, or Jesus Christ.

"2. Happy in the reward of their service: eternal life.

"3. Happy in the manner of their reward: *χαρισμα* or *gratuitum donum in Christo*, (i. e. the reward is God's free, unmerited gift in Christ.)

"The two former points were not excepted against.

"In the third and last, I considered eternal life in three divers instances.

"(1.) In the eternal destination thereunto, which we call election.

"(2.) In our conversion, regeneration, or manifestive justification: which I term the embryo of eternal life.

"(3.) And, last of all, in our coronation, when full possession of eternal life is given us.

"In all these I showed it to be *χαρισμα*, or the free gift of God, through Christ; and not procured, or pre-merited by any special acts depending upon the free will of men.

"The last point, wherein I opposed the popish doctrines of merit, was not disliked. The second, wherein I showed that effectual vocation, or regeneration, whereby we have eternal life inchoated and begun in us, is a free gift; was not expressly taxed. Only the first was it which bred the offence: not in regard of the doctrine itself, but because, as my lord's grace, (i. e. Harsenet, archbishop of York said,) the king had prohibited the debating thereof." (*Bishop Davenant's Letter to Dr. Ward, extant in Fuller's Ch. Hist. Book xi. p. 140.*)

What was the consequence of the excellent bishop's presuming to assert predestination to the face of the Arminian king, and his whole court? "Presently," continues the bishop, "after my sermon was ended, it was signified unto me, by my lord of York, my lord of Winchester, and my lord Chamberlain, that his majesty was much displeased that I had stirred this question, which he had forbidden to be meddled withal, one way or the other. My answer was, that I had delivered nothing but the received doctrine of our church, established in the seventeenth article: and that I was ready to justify

The professed object of this proclamation was the promotion of peace in the church. Peace with errorists often

the truth of what I had then taught. Their answer was, that the doctrine was not gainsayed; but his highness had given command that these questions should not be debated: and therefore he took it more offensively, that any should be so bold, as, in his own hearing, to break his royal commands. My reply was only this: that I never understood his majesty had forbid the handling of any doctrine comprised in the articles of our church; but only the raising of new questions, or adding of new sense thereunto: which I had not done, nor ever should do. This was all that passed betwixt us on Sunday night, after my sermon.

“The matter thus rested, and I heard no more of it, until coming to the Tuesday sermon, one of the clerks of the council told me, that I was to attend at the council table, the next day, at two of the clock. I told him, I would wait upon their lordships at the hour appointed.

“When I came thither, my lord of York made a speech of well nigh half an hour long, aggravating the boldness of my offence, and showing the many inconveniences which it was likely to draw after it. When his grace had finished, I desired the lords, that since I was called thither as an offender, I might not be put to answer a long speech on the sudden; but that my lord’s grace would be pleased to charge me, point by point, and so to receive my answer; for I did not yet understand wherein I had broken any commandment of his majesty’s, which my lord, in his whole discourse, took for granted. Having made this motion, I made no further answer: and all the lords were silent for a while.

“At length, my lord’s grace said, I knew, well enough, the point which was urged against me: namely, the breach of the king’s declaration. Then I stood upon this defence. that the doctrine of predestination, which I taught, was not forbidden by the declaration. (1.) Because in the declaration, all the (thirty-nine) articles are established: amongst which, the article of predestination is one. (2.) Because all ministers are urged to subscribe unto the truth of the article, (viz. of the seventeenth article, which concerns predestination,) and all subjects to continue in the profession of that, as well as of the rest.

“Upon these and such like grounds, I gathered, it (i. e. predestination,) could not be esteemed among forbidden, curious, or needless doctrines.

“And here, I desired that out of any clause in the declaration, it might be showed me, that keeping myself within the bounds of the article, I had transgressed his majesty’s command. But the declaration was not produced, nor any particular words in it. Only this was urged, that the king’s will was, that for the peace of the church, these high questions should be forborne.” (*Fuller’s Ch. Hist. Book xi. pp. 139, 140.*) His lordship, after discreetly promising a general conformity to his majesty’s pleasure, saluted the council and withdrew.

Fuller observes, that the bishop, at his first coming into the council chamber, presented himself before the board, on his knees. A circumstance of mortifying indignity, which the spiteful Laud was, in

means an unmolested toleration of their sentiments. It was designed to compose the apprehensions of the Calvinists, by seeming to sanction their views. "The literal tenor of this proclamation," says Dr. Maclaine in a note on Mosheim, "was in truth more favourable to the Calvinists than to the Arminians, though by the manner in which it was interpreted and executed by Laud, it was turned to the advantage of the latter. In this proclamation it was said expressly, "that his majesty would admit no innovations in the doctrine, discipline, or government of the church, and therefore charges all his subjects, and especially the clergy, not to publish or maintain, in preaching or writing, any new inventions or opinions, contrary to the said doctrine and discipline established by law," &c. It was certainly a very singular instance of Laud's indecent partiality, that this proclamation was employed to suppress the books that were expressly written in defence of the thirty-nine articles, while the writings of the Arminians, who certainly opposed these articles, were publicly licensed." Laud further advised the king to have these articles reprinted, with an ambiguous declaration prefixed to them, which might be construed in favour of either party, and which should teach nothing with clearness or precision. "In the tenor of this declaration, precision was sacrificed to prudence and ambiguity; and even contradictions were preferred to consistent, clear, and positive decisions."

This expedient was resorted to, instead of an attempt to alter the articles themselves; which would have met with great opposition from the house of commons, and from a considerable portion of the clergy and laity, who were still warmly attached to Calvinism.

all probability, the procurer of. A very strange sight, to behold a bishop of Salisbury, one of the most respectable peers of the realm, constrained to that humiliating posture, only for preaching a doctrine to which he had solemnly subscribed; and which was confessed to be a true doctrine, by the very persons themselves who were the inflictors of the disgrace, and at the very time when the disgrace was inflicted! This we learn from the bishop's own narrative: "Though it grieved me," says Davenant, "that the established doctrine of our church should be distasted, yet, it grieved me less, because the truth of what I delivered was acknowledged even by those who thought fit to have me questioned for the delivery of it."

With what face could Charles's Arminian bishops reprimand so great a prelate as Davenant, for inculcating a scriptural tenet, to which the reprimanders themselves had set their own hands, and even then admitted to be a truth of the Bible and of the church?

*Toplady's History of Calvinism under Charles I.*

The consequence of all this was, that doctrinal and instructive preaching was almost wholly neglected, except by the sound clergy, whom Laud could not safely displace. And as the doctrines of this new school in England, were such as please the carnal heart, and therefore did not require for their prevalence, a laboured and industrious inculcation, the result has been that the English establishment is characteristically unsound, though blessed with an orthodox creed, and a remnant of sound and evangelical ministers.

The defection in the kirk of Scotland, (although of late years she has been growing wiser and better,) is attributable to the same cause. In consequence of her connexion with the state, she has admitted to her altars, others besides those who are called of God, and as they know not, neither do they teach the doctrines of the cross. Moral essays, with sentimental episodes, have in many instances superseded sound doctrinal and instructive discourses. In the absence of these, Antinomianism, Arianism, and Arminianism have gained ground, and greatly defaced that venerable establishment. The orthodoxy of the seceding churches is owing to an opposite mode of preaching. And the contrast is too striking not to start inquiry as to the cause.

The rage for speculation and philosophical refinements, which pervaded the pulpits of New England, especially of Boston, excluded from them that solid and wholesome instruction which flowed from the lips of the pilgrim fathers. Does any one ask what are the consequences? Inquire at the schools of Cambridge and New Haven. Ask our own suffering church, and her sighs will give no equivocal response.

This evil, of which we now speak, has been recognized by the wisest and best of men, as attributable to the neglect of sound doctrinal preaching. Archbishop Secker, in one of his charges to the clergy, says, in language which admits of a ready adaptation to our own church: "to improve the people effectually, you must be assiduous in teaching the principles not only of virtue and natural religion, but of *the gospel*; and of the gospel, not as *almost explained away* by modern refiners, but as the truth is in Jesus; as it is taught by the church of which you are members; as you have engaged, by your subscriptions and declarations, that you will teach it yourselves. You must preach to them faith in the everlasting Trinity; you must set forth the original corruption of our nature; our redemption according to God's eternal purpose in Christ, by the sacrifice of the cross; our sanctification by the influences of the Divine Spirit; the in-

sufficiency of good works; and the efficacy of faith to salvation. . . . .

“The *truth*, I fear, is that *many, if not most of us*, have dwelt too little on these doctrines in our sermons, . . . partly from not having studied theology deep enough to treat of them ably and beneficially. God grant it may never have been for want of inwardly experiencing their importance. But, whatever be the cause, *the effect has been lamentable*. Our people have grown less and less mindful, first of the distinguishing articles of their creed, then, as will always be the case, of that one which they hold in common with the heathen; . . . flattering themselves, that what they are pleased to call a moral and a harmless life, though far from being either, is the one thing needful. . . . . Reflections have been made upon us, on account of these things, by deists, papists, brethren of our own church, &c.”

2. Another evil, in a great degree attributable to a neglect of instructive preaching, is the existence of weak, sickly, ignorant, and unstable Christians in our midst. The piety of the present day is more noisy and public in its works, than that of former times, but it is not on that account more elevated and enlightened. The circumstances in which we are placed, and the state of the church in these latter days, perhaps call for a more active and public developement of piety, but this very circumstance exposes us to injury. We may be deceived, by substituting outward zeal and great activity in the public operations of the church, for genuine godliness. The heart being deceitful above all things, there is danger of mistaking the one for the other. The performance of these public duties may be too much relied on as an evidence of grace in the heart, instead of a genuine scriptural evidence.

But, in addition to this, even where vital piety really exists, the multitude and pressing nature of these public calls to duty and benevolence, leave but little room for secret prayer, reading, and meditation. Not that we would retard, or in the least degree obstruct, the onward movement of the church in the discharge of her solemn and long neglected duty to the heathen, and to the world around her; on the contrary, let the proper means for the conversion of the world be multiplied tenfold; but let Christians be on their guard against the dangers to which they are exposed, while discharging this great duty. The more actively and efficiently the church is engaged for Christ, the more busy and subtle will be the efforts of Satan to weaken and destroy the

piety of Christians. We say, then, there is reason to fear that in consequence of the religion of the present day being (necessarily, if you please,) so much from home, the private concerns of the heart may be neglected.

Eminent personal holiness is the glory of a church, but this cannot be attained ordinarily, without a prayerful study of the Bible. Religion is not a matter of mere feeling. Piety, in order to be efficient, must be enlightened. To be enjoyed by its possessor, and useful to others, it must be guided into the ways of knowledge, and become a principle of the soul, based upon a familiar and right understanding of God's word. Christians must be built up in the most holy faith. They must be rooted and grounded in the truth, by careful and faithful teaching; otherwise they will be as unstable as the waves of the sea, and be driven about by every wind of doctrine. They should be able to give intelligently a reason of the hope that is in them, and to hold fast the words of eternal life.

3. The last evil we shall mention as flowing from the neglect of doctrinal preaching, is the danger of mistaking mere animal excitement for true religion; and the consequent admission of hypocrites and deceived persons into the communion of the church. Duties arise out of doctrines; and ignorance of the latter, will hinder a right discharge of the former.

The practice of calling on men to repent, without ever explaining to them the source, nature, and evidences of repentance; of calling on men to believe in Christ, without teaching them the doctrine of faith, or instructing them in the nature of Christ's finished work, as the object of faith; of exhorting men to submit, without informing them what is meant by submission, and also to whom and to what they must submit, is manifestly fraught with the dangers of hypocrisy and deception. It is no secret, but known to all who will read or hear, that numbers have been introduced into our churches, under the auspices of such empty exhorters; some of whom remained in the church no longer than the time which discipline required to turn them out; and others continue in it only because discipline has become ineffectual, or fallen entirely into disuse. Excitement, produced by such means, and by a superadded, corresponding, artificial machinery, is termed conversion, and so gazetted to the world, in praise of him who has effected it.

Under such preaching, if preaching it may be called, how many have doubtless mistaken a legal for an evangelical repentance, and fondly hoped that a few tears had wiped away

their sins! How many have mistaken submission to an arbitrary requirement of the preacher, for submission to the righteousness of Christ! How many, in coming forward to a designated seat, because it was done at some sacrifice of feeling, have supposed they were coming to Christ for salvation! What astounding disclosures will the judgment of the great day make, in regard to this subject!

Another form of this evil, to which we shall barely allude, is the difficulty of directing the inquiries, and obviating the difficulties of those awakened and anxious sinners, who have never been properly instructed, nor faithfully indoctrinated. It requires more time and labour to correct their erroneous views in regard to the nature of the evil which they dread, of the obstacles which beset them, of the exercises they should experience, and of the blessing which they seek, and to impart scriptural views on all these subjects, than if they had been carefully taught, as well as earnestly exhorted and alarmed. Such anxious inquirers are commonly longer in obtaining well-grounded comfort, and grasp with a feebler and more distrustful hand, the hope set before them in the gospel, than those who, from children, have known the Scriptures, and been well instructed in its doctrines.

Such are some of the evils consequent on the neglect of doctrinal and instructive preaching: and the same results will follow in due proportion, if preaching be confined to a limited number of doctrines, while others are omitted. Ministers are commissioned to "declare the whole counsel of God." And what God has seen fit to reveal, they should feel it to be their duty to expound and enforce.

There is too much reason to fear that some doctrines are omitted, or slightly passed over, in the public ministrations of the sanctuary, through the fear of man. A self-seeking and time-serving minister will shun to declare those doctrines which are known to be unpopular, and offensive to the carnal heart; especially where there is danger, by preaching them, of forfeiting the favour of the wealthy and influential in society. But He that has said, "Thou shalt not steal," hath also said, "Thou shalt not kill." The same blessed Spirit hath indited one and all of the truths in the Bible. The same authority which binds a minister to preach one, binds him to preach all these truths. The commission is, "Go ye, and preach the Gospel;" and not a part of it, not so much of it only as human wisdom might suggest as suitable or profitable. What a short-sighted and erring mortal might deem expediency, can never justify the palpable violation of a plain rule of duty. It is always expedient and



safe to do the will of God, and faithfully adhere to his written word. Christ did not avoid offences, by avoiding the truth.

This is a connivance at error, and a tacit sanction to the rejection of unwelcome truths. It mars the symmetry of the Gospel scheme, and leaves on the minds of the people imperfect, if not incorrect impressions, relative to the plan of salvation.

A sensible writer in the London Christian Observer, after enumerating the distinctive doctrines of the Gospel, asks, "Can any clergyman preach these doctrines to one class of people, and not to another, without violating his duty, and wounding his conscience? Is he to be deterred on the one hand, by the erudition or fastidiousness of his hearers, or on the other, by their ignorance? Is he to be silent upon these topics before a vulgar congregation, lest they should turn the grace of God into lasciviousness; lest they should continue in sin, that grace may abound? Or ought he to forbear dwelling upon them before persons more elevated in point of station and ability, because, forsooth, it might be more gratifying to learned pride, merely to see the rays of evidence concentrated into a focus, or to have some elaborate criticism presented to them; or more fascinating to 'ears polite,' to listen to a smooth and flowery eloquence, which has no tendency to make men tremble? Have not the learned, as well as the unlearned, an interest in our Saviour's atonement? Ought they not both to be equally reminded, that without Him they can do nothing? The mathematician of old informed the king, that there was no royal way to geometry. And we may boldly aver, that the former description of persons can enter heaven only by the appointed way; even by Him, who is the way, the truth, and the life. Did Paul, who sat at the feet of Gamaliel, rest his hopes of eternal life on any other creed than that professed by Peter, a poor fisherman, who exclaimed, 'Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life?'"—*Lon. Ch. Ob. An. 1805, p. 405.*

The evil effects we have stated will follow, moreover, if the doctrines of the Gospel be vaguely taught, and exhibited in a very general or summary manner. Hearers will receive very indefinite and crude views of the Gospel, by no means satisfactory or profitable. Thus, if it be merely stated that we are saved through the death of Christ, no definite idea of the plan of salvation is conveyed to the mind; and unless the connexion between our salvation and the death of Christ be explained, and the intermediate links exhibited to view, the Gospel cannot be said to be fully preached.

So, also, if it be merely stated that man's estate of sin and misery is in some way connected with the fall of our first parents, no definite idea of our depravity or guilt is conveyed to the mind. The mere use of terms and phrases, however appropriate or suitable they may be, in themselves considered, if their meaning and force be not explained, will not afford distinct nor accurate views to a mind not taught nor trained to the apprehension of divine truth. Indeed, terms and phrases, when not explained, may convey to the minds of hearers a meaning opposite to that entertained by the preacher himself, and thus mislead them. For example: the term *substitution*, when used in reference to Christ's dying for sinners, may be understood by hearers, especially such as have been properly indoctrinated, to mean that Christ suffered the penalty of the law, in the room of sinners, as their substitute; while the preacher may mean nothing more than that the sufferings of Christ were a substitute for the penalty itself. Here the two meanings are diametrically opposite to each other.

This is true, also, of the term *vicarious*. Hearers may attach one meaning to it, and the preacher quite another. Hence it is unsafe to infer a preacher's real sentiments merely from his use of unexplained terms.

When the preacher, therefore, from any of these causes, fails to convey his own impressions to the minds of his hearers, his ministrations must be, in a due proportion, unprofitable. The fear of divulging his own sentiments, or of crossing those of his hearers, may lead a preacher to deal in vague generalities, from which no distinct impressions of truth can be derived.

A desire to avoid or suppress controversy, may induce a preacher to withhold the peculiar doctrines of grace, and content himself with mere exhortation, warning, and reproof, irrespective of those great truths from which alone practical preaching can derive pungency and power, through the agency of the Holy Ghost. Such preaching must be unedifying, and unproductive of much permanent utility.

In conclusion, it may be well to draw three brief, practical inferences from this subject.

1. We infer that a minister of Christ should be apt to teach. Not only should he possess good natural talents, but he should be thoroughly furnished for his calling—a workman that needeth not to be ashamed—rightly dividing the word of truth. Paul exhorts Timothy thus: “The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

A great responsibility, in this respect, rests upon our Presbyteries, who constitute the door of admission into our ministry. We have excellent rules on this subject, worthy to be written in letters of gold, as a quaint author observes on another subject, but far more worthy to be faithfully observed.

An unqualified ministry presents the mournful spectacle of the blind leading the blind; and if they are saved, even as by fire, their works are likely to be burned up.

The great obscurity in the preaching of some men, is owing to the imperfect and erroneous views of truth which they themselves entertain: and what they do not understand, they cannot make their people see. A speculative and metaphysical style of discussion, shooting over the heads of the people, and perhaps not fully intelligible to the preacher himself, is equally unavailing to the accomplishment of the great ends of the Gospel ministry. "He that winneth souls is WISE."

2. Another inference is, that if ministers would be faithful in the discharge of their appropriate duties, they must give themselves wholly to the work. If they would bring things new and old, out of the treasury of knowledge, they must be diligent in keeping it well supplied. If they would give solid instruction to the people, they must be thoroughly taught themselves, and give faithful attention to reading and meditation. Let them not offer unto the Lord a vain oblation, which costs them nothing, and which is probably worth nothing. It is true that God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the mighty. But who is not weak before God, and in the view of the high calling of the ministry? And shall the servants of God diminish, by indolence and neglect, the strength which they have? Did Paul rely upon his talents or acquirements, when he exclaimed, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

Ye who minister in holy things, suffer a word of exhortation. Gird up the loins of your strength. Bend your whole mind to the work of teaching transgressors the ways of God. Bury not your talents in the earth, but employ those you have, in multiplying their number. If you would be counted worthy of double honour, labour in the word and doctrine, and rest not in past attainments, either in piety or knowledge: and the lamentation will no longer be heard, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Hosea iv. 6.

Above all, seek a revival of religion in your own souls. This will prepare you for duty, and cause you to delight in

the discharge of it. David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. Take not thy Holy Spirit from me; restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." Ps. li. 10—13.

3. The remaining inference is, that in order to be edified, Christians should take heed both how they hear and what they hear. The word preached will not profit, unless it be mixed with faith in them that hear it. A message from God demands and deserves a close and prayerful attention from those to whom it is delivered. It is to be received not as the word of man, but as the truth of God. Hearers should search the Scriptures, to see if the things preached be so or not. So did the Bereans, in the days of the apostles, and therefore many of them believed.

The unprofitableness of preaching is not always the fault of the preacher. It is far more frequently the fault of the people. The parable of the sower was designed to exhibit this fact in a striking light. Besides those causes of unprofitableness mentioned in the parable, as chargeable upon hearers, we may add, that a criticising or captious spirit, will hinder the word from entering the heart. The medium through which the word is dispensed, is both imperfect and to a great extent impure, and doubtless its power and beauty are often diminished on this account. But if the Gospel be faithfully and clearly preached, we should, in a measure, forget the messenger, and have our minds and hearts occupied with the message itself, and with Him who sends it.

Again: A want of preparation on the part of hearers, will prevent them from being edified by preaching. Before waiting on God in the services of the sanctuary, we should seek communion with Him by prayer and devout meditation. The world should be turned out of our hearts and minds, that we may go to the house of worship with hungerings and thirstings after God. We should feel the need of instruction, and desire to know more of Christ and his salvation. While engaged in the house of God, our whole attention must be given to the service, and our hearts be lifted up in prayerful devotion. We must receive the truth in the love of it, that it may be as manna to the hungry soul, and as a cordial to the languishing spirit. When we retire from the sanctuary, it should be to our closets, that the words we have heard may sink deep into our hearts, and that the instruction we have received may be sealed upon our minds.

Again: Irregularity in our attendance upon the means of grace, will go far to render them unprofitable. Unless hindered by Providence, be always found in your proper places on the Sabbath day. God may punish a neglect of his ordinances, by withholding the influences of his Spirit from you, even when attending outwardly upon them. Besides this, you will lose much instruction, and thereby be less profited by what you do receive. The word of God may prove a savour of death unto death, to those who hear it, in consequence of the manner in which they receive it.

But you should take heed what you hear. Tamper not with error. If you play with a serpent, you may expect to be bitten. Do not gratify an idle curiosity by listening to the preacher of heresy. It is making sport of God's holy ordinances. Seek the pure streams of Gospel truth, that your souls may be refreshed and strengthened.

Much depends upon the people, in elevating the standard of good preaching. They have great influence in creating a proper taste for pulpit services. Let them require doctrinal and instructive preaching, and discountenance an opposite style. Be not blinded to the real character of a discourse, by beauty of language, melody of voice, fervour and grace of manner, nor by any of the mere circumstances of preaching. Seek for the kernel, and if this cannot be found, cast away the shell, even though it be gilded and highly ornamented. The soul cannot thrive nor live upon chaff.

When a preacher presumes that all his hearers are babes, and feeds them only with milk, and even that sometimes diluted, he is guilty of a sad mistake. But when he labours to keep them babes, by never strengthening the food he gives them, he is chargeable with what is more criminal than a mere mistake.

Be no longer babes, but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ. Go on from one degree of attainment to another. Make advances in the divine life. Press onward in the path of wisdom; and desire the strong meat of the Gospel, that you may be strengthened and nourished, till you arrive at the full stature of men in Christ Jesus. Be diligent. Be sober, and watch unto the end. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

THE  
MISSIONARY'S WIFE:

OR,

A BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF

MRS. LOVELESS,

OF MADRAS

THE FIRST AMERICAN MISSIONARY TO FOREIGN LANDS.

BY RICHARD KNILL.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION

Entered according to the Act of Congress in the year 1839, by  
A. W. MITCHELL, in the Office of the Clerk of the District  
Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

## MISSIONARY'S WIFE.

As Mrs. LOVELESS was about to join the spirits of the just made perfect, her husband was standing by her dying bed, endeavouring to catch the last words which fell from her lips; and he heard her say, "*Precious Jesus!*" When I first heard of this, it greatly affected me; and I prayed that when I came to die, my mind might be occupied about the same glorious Redeemer, and my last words be, "*Precious Jesus!*" Several persons to whom I have mentioned it, have expressed a wish that their last words might also be, "*Precious Jesus!*" And what a mercy it will be, if half the persons who may read this book, should rise from its perusal, exclaiming, "*Precious Jesus!*" This would be precious indeed.

In this brief memoir of an excellent female Missionary, I shall endeavour to interest the feelings, inform the judgment, and cheer the hearts of my readers, by presenting her under the various characters of a Pupil, a Wife, a Mistress, a Mother, a Promoter of Female Education, the Friend of Missionaries, and a Pattern to us all. We will begin with

## THE PUPIL.

Mrs. Loveless was an American; she was born on Long Island, State of New York, 23rd of September, 1774. Her maiden name was Sarah Farquhar, and she was the first American who engaged in Foreign Missions.

At an early age she was placed at school with that eminently pious and gifted lady, *Isabella Graham*, of New York, and afterwards became an assistant in her school. Like her esteemed instructress she was a Presbyterian, and a member of the church under the pastoral care of the celebrated Dr. Mason.

In 1798, when Mrs. Graham retired from the arduous duties of her school, Miss Farquhar was solicited to become her successor; but this she declined, choosing rather to enjoy the society of her patroness and friend. The attachment between them was so great, that Mrs. Graham always addressed her as her child.

But instead of enjoying the society of her friend, she was removed far from her. The Lord by whom the bounds of our habitation are fixed, had designed her for a nother sphere, and to live and die in foreign lands.



An epidemic, which, in 1804, carried many persons to the grave, brought Miss Farquhar also to the gates of death; and, as she was recovering, her medical attendant said, the only means of saving her life would be a long voyage to a hot climate.

About this time, a son-in-law of Mrs. Graham, Andrew Smith, Esq. was trading to the East Indies, and was then preparing to sail with his family to London, and thence to Madras and Calcutta. With them she embarked in the ship *Alleghany*, and arrived safely in England. She sojourned several weeks in Birmingham, and here the circumstances commenced which eventually led Miss Farquhar to become a Missionary's wife. The London Missionary Society were preparing to establish a mission in the idolatrous city of Surat, but the East India Company would not allow Christian Missionaries to sail in their ships; therefore Dr. Carey and Mr. Loveless, and many others, were glad to sail to *British India in the ships of foreigners!* The London Missionary Society thankfully availed themselves of the privilege of sending Dr. Taylor and Mr. Loveless in the American ship *Alleghany*. They embarked on the 4th of December, 1804, and arrived in Madras, June, 1805.

During the voyage, that attachment was formed which death only could sever, and which, for more than thirty-two years, was a source of the purest earthly delight. It was a saying of Mrs. Graham's, that "Religion and conjugal love will sweeten almost any lot;" and, amidst all the trials of a Missionary life, this happy couple found it so.

On their arrival at Madras, the peculiar circumstances of the mission rendered it desirable for Miss Farquhar to proceed with Mrs. Smith to Calcutta, whence she returned the next year to Madras; and, on the 9th of May, 1806, she was married to Mr. Loveless, in the Fort Church, by the Rev. Dr. Kerr. Now let us mark her conduct in the sacred relation of

### THE WIFE.

Four-and-thirty years have produced an amazing change in India, and the situation of Missionaries *now*, can scarcely be compared with the state of Missionaries *then*; but it may be truly said, that Mrs. Loveless took as active a part as a female could take in the work of the Mission; going hand and heart with her husband, in every object, to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls; particularly in the education of the young, for which her former habits had eminently qualified her.

Mrs. Graham was half a century before most other people,

in her views of Missionary work. This was her opinion: "To publish the glad tidings of salvation, is the highest post of honour that men can have on earth; and among these the missionary is the nearest to the apostolic." Therefore, as soon as she heard how her young friend was going to be employed she wrote to her as follows:—

“MY DEAR SALLY;

“Many tears have I shed over your letter. What a changing lot has been that of my family! The Lord's providences to me and mine have not been of the ordinary kind, and you, as one in it, seem to be a partaker with us. Surely, of all others, we have most reason to say, 'We are strangers and pilgrims on the earth.' Oh that we may drink into the true spirit of that phrase, and enjoy the genuine, firm faith of an everlasting habitation of living at home with God!

“My dear Sally, take the comfort of this, that it is the Lord who hath led you all the way by which you have gone. Of all persons whom I know, you were, from your temper and disposition, the least likely to travel, still less to continue a traveller. No ordinary means would have led you to leave your friends and religious privileges. And many a pang it has cost me, on reflection, to think how positive I was that you should take the voyage. But it was of the Lord. The physicians urged it, as the only chance you had for life, and they had reason; for of all those who were attacked in the same manner, there is not one alive, within my knowledge, at this day.

“The Lord, by wonderful means, called you from your native land, and led you to the very spot where you met Mr. Loveless. The same God, being also his God, led him, by means perhaps equally unforeseen and uncommon, to the same spot; united your hearts to each other, and made you one in his hand, and I trust to his glory. You ask my blessing. I have carried both of you to my God and Saviour, and have prayed, and continue to pray, that the Lord will bless you individually and unitedly, give you much sweet communion with himself, and much social enjoyment with him and with one another. May he bless Mr. Loveless as a Missionary, and give him the spirit of his office, and much fruit among the heathen, as seals to his ministry; and may you be a helper with him, and both be blessed and made a blessing.

“I feel my loss. You were a comfort and a help to us all, especially to me: but I do not mourn; I heartily acquiesce. This is not only agreeable to me, as it is one of God's wise

arrangements to you and us all, but I think it will be more to your comfort. Religion and conjugal love will sweeten almost any lot. It is the Lord's appointment, and his richest earthly blessing.

"My dear Sally, I have ever considered you as my child. You are very dear to my heart. Tell Mr. Loveless he must ever consider me as his mother. Your affectionate mother,  
"ISABELLA GRAHAM."

The city of Madras is the residence of the governor, and the chief city of the presidency. It stands near the sea, on the coast of Coromandel, long.  $80^{\circ} 17'$  east, lat.  $13^{\circ} 4'$  north. Its appearance from the sea is exceedingly beautiful. I never shall forget the emotions that I felt, when, after a voyage of 14,000 miles, I stood on the ship's deck, and gazed on Fort St. George, with the city and country near it. The surf is so dangerous, that ships never venture near the shore, and both passengers and cargo are landed in native boats. When a ship is seen about to anchor in the roads, two or three natives are sent off on a small raft, which they call a catamaran, in order to take letters ashore. These were the first natives we saw, and their appearance was any thing but prepossessing. I left the ship by the first boat, and right glad I was at the thought of setting my foot on land; but as we approached the beach, our joy was greatly marred by the sight of numerous heathen, who were just before us. These men had literally the mark of the beast in their foreheads. Some of them had one streak across the forehead, others had two, and others had three, with a star in the centre. This was to point out what idol they worshipped. They were not ashamed of their religion. No; they carried the mark of it in their very foreheads, and proclaimed to every one that saw them, "We are the worshippers of idols." Other people might look on such a scene as a matter of curiosity, but to a Missionary the sight was overwhelming, especially as this one city contains three hundred thousand inhabitants.

Mr. Loveless was the first English Missionary to Madras, and his situation had peculiar difficulties. As the policy of the East India Company's government prevented Missionaries from going to India in their ships, so the same policy made it very difficult for a Missionary to labour there, who had come in a foreign ship. The Baptist Missionaries in Bengal had sheltered themselves at Serampore, a Danish settlement; and John Thompson had been hunted as a partridge on the mountains,

until he was put into the grave. The company seemed determined that nothing should be attempted to remove the thick moral darkness from India. *Now*, under a more enlightened government, our Missionaries have access to every part of British India; and, if we had suitable men, we might in six months communicate the knowledge of God our Saviour to one hundred millions of the followers of Bramah, and Vishnu, and Sheva. What a glorious change! Oh that the church of Christ would now exert herself, and improve the opportunity!

The Rev. Dr. Kerr, senior chaplain, and a few other friends who took an interest in Missions, advised Mr. Loveless, as the only way to get a footing at Madras, to become the superintendent of the Military Orphan Male Asylum, and there to impart religious instruction to 350 boys. He yielded to their advice, and in this asylum he remained about six years, under Dr. Kerr and his successors. Mrs. Loveless united in various ways in promoting the best interests of the rising generation; many of whom lived to fill useful stations in the presidency, and became members of the church under the pastoral care of her husband.

One of these boys, who had become a pious and intelligent man, once said to me: "When Mr. and Mrs. Loveless first took me by the hand, and gave me good advice, I did not know that I had a soul; and I always consider a hymn, which they gave me to learn, as the instrument of leading me to seek salvation, through the Lord Jesus Christ." Another youth, who had enjoyed the privilege of living with Mrs. Loveless from his ninth year, made a similar confession to me. This youth knew more of the Bible than any person I ever met with; and he has, up to this day, maintained an honourable character as a disciple of Christ. Persons who may read or hear of this, if they are able to appreciate the good done to souls, will perceive what a happy influence the labors of these holy and unpretending Missionaries must have produced on the rising generation.

During the time that Mr. Loveless was engaged in the asylum, he commenced preaching in various places in the city and suburbs, and God smiled upon these labours in the conversion of souls. His preaching was not generally to Englishmen, but to a most important and interesting part of the community, usually called "The country-born," that is, the descendants of Europeans by the father's side. They had been in a great measure neglected, but are now fast rising in the scale of intelligence and excellence, and are likely to form a grand integral part of the British empire in India.

During this time, also, two free day schools were established for the same people, in which Mrs. Loveless took a lively interest, and towards the prosperity of which she largely contributed.

In 1810, Mr. Loveless commenced his great work of building the missionary chapel, known by the name of "Loveless' Chapel." It is one of the most complete missionary chapels in the world; and the laying of the foundation stone of that edifice was a grand day for India, though it knew it not. It stands in the midst of a garden containing more than an acre of ground. A fine missionary free school for boys adorns it on the right, and a similar school for girls on the left, and a school for heathen children in the rear. The congregation is of vast importance to the missionary cause in India, not only from the funds which it supplies, but as being *the nursery* of a few of our most devoted Missionaries. It has been something like the far-famed Bania-tree, a self-producer. New trees have sprung out of its branches.

In the erection of this house for God, Mrs. Loveless took a very active part, and the business habits which she had learned in America, now shone forth to great advantage, by her wise management of its internal arrangements. Mr. Loveless never received any salary from his congregation; neither at this time were they receiving any from the Missionary Society; but, by her prudential domestic economy, she enabled her husband to give largely to the building fund. A wise woman, who looks well to the state of her household, may do a great deal for the Missionary cause, though she never preaches a sermon.

The expense of this building was about £3000\*, not a shilling of which came from Europe. Some generous and noble-minded Episcopalians, who I rejoice to know are still alive, and resident in England, were Mr. Loveless' best friends in this matter; but, notwithstanding all their efforts, a debt of 800 pagodas, or £200† still remained.

This pressed heavily on Mrs. Loveless' mind but the load was soon suddenly removed, in the following manner:—A stranger called, and requested a private interview. He spoke to this effect: "I knew that you had a debt of 800 pagodas on your chapel, and I made a vow, that if a certain plan of mine succeeded, I would liquidate your debt. That plan has succeeded; and I am come to pay my vow. Here is the money, and you must not refuse it. No mortal knows of this

\* About 13,000 dollars

† About 900 dollars.

but you and me; and my name must remain a secret." The debt was paid, the chapel was free, and my friends were joyful.

It is built in "The Black Town," and is surrounded on all sides by Pagan temples. We never went there to worship the living God, but we could hear the music of idolaters sounding in honour of gods that could not hear: yet this often quickened us in our devotion, and made us adore the grace which had made us to differ.

One Sunday morning, I was going to preach to this congregation the chapel was full, and I said to my brother Missionary, "What a beautiful sight this is!" "Yes," he replied, "it is beautiful indeed; but if it appears so to you, how much more so to me, for I knew this place when there was no congregation, no chapel, no prayer; when nearly all those before you never thought of preparing to meet their God!" I said to him, "What was the state of things when you arrived?" "I found in this city and suburbs," he replied, "about 300,000 souls; the greater part were Pagans, a large number were Mohammedans, many were Roman Catholics, and the remainder were Protestants; but out of the whole of this vast multitude, I could only find one man who prayed to God with his family."

Reader, think of this! Only imagine what must be the state of morals, when, in a population of nearly a third part of a million, there was only one man who had family prayer! A man who does not pray to God with his family, may be compared to a man who opens the roof of his house to let down the curses of God upon his household. Fearful state! Surely such persons can never have read that part of the Bible, where it is said, "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen, and upon the families that call not on thy name." In this verse the heathen idolaters and prayerless Christian families are linked together. How dreadful must it be to continue in that connexion! A happy change has been effected in various parts of India since that day. Now, there are Europeans, and country-born and converted heathen families too, who offer up their night and morning sacrifice on the family altar. To God be the glory for ever. Amen.

It was the dictate of infinite wisdom, as well as of infinite goodness, which said, "It is not good for man to be alone;" and we have seen a part of its blessedness when looking at Mrs. Loveless as a wife. Now let us behold her as

#### THE MISTRESS.

This happy couple left the Military Asylum in 1812, and opened a boarding-school for their support. Mr. Loveless, speak-

ing of this, says, "It is, in strict justice, due to the memory of my dear departed wife, to acknowledge that, through the blessing of God on her agency, in advice and management I owe chiefly my temporal prosperity in India, and the enjoyment of it in England." It appeared to me, that her three cardinal virtues, were industry, economy, and punctuality. She learned these of Mrs. Graham, and found them of the greatest importance when she was placed at the head of a large establishment. By the practice of these three virtues she had always a little time to spare for good purposes, and some money to give to good objects. Young people who are expecting to fill important stations may learn a good hint from this. Fancy-work is pretty, and music is sweet, and drawing may be a pleasant recreation; but something more than these is needful for the wife of a tradesman, or the "help meet" of a missionary.

Mrs. Loveless had one of the largest families in India; but every thing was in order, and every one in his place. Sometimes they had thirty boarders, besides day scholars, several of whom were girls; and Mrs. L. took the whole weight of the domestic concerns, that her husband might be more at leisure for the work of the Mission; while, for some hours every day, she taught the girls, and some of the younger boys also.

In 1814, the missionary free school for boys was opened in the chapel garden. It was built by voluntary contributions, and is still supported by the bounty of friends in Madras. Into this school some thousands of the poor, but intelligent country-born children of the presidency have been received and educated. This school she often visited, but she never thought the chapel would be complete until it was beautified with a girl's free school. This she lived to see: but before we refer to it, we must behold her as

### THE MOTHER.

Thus far we have viewed Mrs. Loveless as a "teacher of babes;" the guide of youth; the friend of other people's children; but now we must contemplate her in the endearing character of a mother. She had four children of her own; three of whom she followed to the grave. The first that she buried was a daughter. It is a solemn day in a family's history, when, for the first time, the cold hand of death enters, and tears away a beloved child. Ah! who can tell, but bereaved parents, what a pang is felt when the first-born is wrapped in a shroud, and put into a coffin, and carried to the grave, and covered over, and left there.

I know what a father feels on the mournful occasion, but I cannot describe what mothers feel. But Mrs. Loveless knew, and she sought resignation and consolation from the right source. Yes, she took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus. And he comforted the mourner, and enabled her to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord."

Soon after this, a second daughter died; and before the tears were well dry, her son John Thompson died also. This last was a fine little boy, who was born at the time when a young Missionary, named John Thompson, lived at their house, and afterwards died in their arms. The sincere attachment which they felt to their brother, led them to call their son after him, hoping that he would follow his steps: and he soon followed him indeed; not as a Missionary to the heathen, but as a glorified spirit to heaven.

To all these trials God was pleased to add another, and this made the cup run over. Their only surviving child was named William Kerr, after Dr. Kerr, the senior chaplain, who had always been Mr. Loveless' warm friend. At the time when their son John Thompson died, the health of William Kerr was so delicate, that their medical friend assured them, the only means of saving his life was to send him to England; and before that day month William was on the mighty waters. Thus all her children were removed from her sight, and she was left childless.

In such trying seasons, how important is occupation! Now she again found the advantage of the training she had received in America, for she entered more fully into "works of faith and labours of love," determined, if possible, to enjoy all the comfort contained in that saying of our Lord's, "Every branch in me that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Surely, when we see the tried and afflicted Christian acting thus, it confirms us in the belief, that God makes "all things work together for good to them that love Him, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

In times of trouble she would seek comfort also from another source. She would read again and again the spirit-stirring epistles of Mrs. Graham. I have several of that lady's letters now before me, and *what* letters! She was seventy years old, but *how* she writes! "It is all well, my Sally! Oh that when the springs of earthly comfort are dried up, the Lord may drive the sufferers to the true riches, the only source of all that is good. The Lord has been making breaches in your com-



forts too. You devoted your dear children to him. You gave them to him without articling with him how he was to dispose of them. He has put you to your word. It is well, my Sally, and you shall be a gainer at his hand. I hope your young Missionary may be spared, blessed, and made a blessing to many. To publish the glad tidings of salvation is the highest post of honour that men can have on earth; and among these the missionary is the nearest to the apostolic!

“What is this world any farther than it is taken in connexion with the next? A dream; a shadow; a tale that is told; grass and the flower of grass! And what its greatest blessings, but vanity and vexation of spirit? But, taken in connexion with another world, how important every moment of time, every action, every circumstance of life, every shilling of property! A Christ and eternal life, freely offered: to be embraced, and our soul is saved; to be rejected, and our soul is lost!

“I am in my seventieth year, and am looking daily for my Saviour's promise; ‘If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.’ The Lord has for the present delivered me from all fear, and I hope for his presence all through the valley. I cannot say, ‘I have fought the good fight.’ Oh no! I have not only been a coward and unfaithful, but often, oh often, deserted his banner, and by my conduct have scarcely been discovered from his enemies. Shame and confusion of face belong to me, and I shall carry it I think to the gates of heaven; for yet *that is my home*; but not by any thing of mine, my hopes are founded on the finished work of my Redeemer, exclusive of every thing in myself. Yet he has given me some tokens that he owns me. Contrition itself is the fruit of grace. Faith in promised forgiveness, through the death and merits of my great High Priest, is his gift; and I do feel his love in my heart, and earnest desires of conformity to his image. His name, his word, his ministers, his people, are precious, and are my delight. My pains often keep me awake in the night; but I have kept on my memory some sweet hymns, and I sing one after another, and find my pains diverted; and I often drop asleep with the words in my mouth, and the sentiments as it were sleeping with me.”

How I should have liked to hear this aged pilgrim singing the praises of God at midnight!

“I have no care,” she continues. “Every external convenience furnished. I know not that in any period of my life I

have had more enjoyment. Well has Jehovah made out his wilderness name to me; 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.' But he himself has provided the sacrifice, and transferred the guilt. 'He has made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' I believe the record that God giveth to me eternal life, and this life is in his Son. I set to my seal that God is true, and take the comfort."

In another letter she writes in the same animated strain, about our Chinese Missionary, Morrison. "Oh it is wonderful! Such another providence has happened to dear Mr. Morrison. He went out alone to heathen China. His partner Missionary lost courage when the parting time came; but the Lord supported him. He went not to labour in the sweet word and doctrine among other dear Christian labourers, but in the dry study of a hard language; obliged also to conceal his designs, and live without friend or confidant. God, in his adorable providence, brought an officer to that island, with his lovely daughter, knit their hearts together, and united them in marriage. 'They that trust the Lord shall not want any good thing.' The Lord also converted the officer's son, whom I saw here on his way to England. I think I never saw a sweeter youth than Mr. Morton. His sister, he said, parted with them all from free choice, and remained the sole friend and befriended of Mr. Morrison. I think I have never been so delighted with any news since I heard of your union with Mr. Loveless, though my loss could never be repaired."

Let us next consider Mrs. Loveless in connexion with the Missionary free schools for girls, and here we see her as

#### THE PROMOTER OF FEMALE EDUCATION.

The education of females is so important to the well-being of society, that it is astonishing that the prince of darkness should have prevailed to keep so many of them in darkness until now. Good Mr. Boston, the author of the "Fourfold State," says, "The woman's body was made of nobler matter than the man's. It was made of the man's body, to teach men to love their wives as their own flesh. It was not made out of man's *head*, to show her that she is not to usurp authority over her husband; nor out of his *feet*, to show him that she is not to be his slave to be trampled on by him: but *out of his side, near his heart*, to

show him that she must be treated as his companion, loved, nourished, and cherished by him." There is much sound philosophy in this saying of Mr. Boston's, but neither the heathen nor the Mohammedans appear to have heard any thing at all about it. I have lived among them both, and invariably found the females in the utmost degradation; and they in their turn act as a scourge upon the men; and so they are all degraded together. Other people read of this, but Missionaries see it, and weep over it and try to remedy it. Yet every one who has thought on the subject, must know how great is the influence of the female character, especially in the sacred relations of wife and mother.

I have a vivid recollection of the effect of maternal influence. My honoured mother was a religious woman, and she watched over and instructed me as pious mothers are accustomed to do. Alas! I often forgot her admonitions; but, in my most thoughtless days, I never lost the impressions which her holy example had made on my mind. After spending a large portion of my life in foreign lands, I returned again to visit my native village. Both my parents died while I was in Russia, and their house is now occupied by my brother. The furniture remains just the same as it was when I was a boy; and at night I was accommodated with the same bed in which I had often slept before; but my busy thoughts would not let me sleep; I was thinking how God had led me through the journey of life. At last the light of the morning darted through the little window, and then my eye caught sight of the spot where my sainted mother, forty years before, took me by the hand, and said, "Come, my dear, kneel down with me, and I will go to prayer." This completely overcame me; I seemed to hear the very tones of her voice; I recollected some of her expressions; and I burst into tears and arose from my bed, and fell upon my knees just on the spot where my mother kneeled, and thanked God that I had once a praying mother. And, oh! if every parent could feel what I felt then, I am sure they would pray *with* their children as well as pray *for* them.

Christian mothers! think of this, and then think of the millions of your own sex who are the mere slaves of men who never pray. Remember, it is only where the Lord Jesus Christ is known and loved, that women are exalted to their proper scale in society; and remember also, it is only Christian Missionaries and their wives, and a few teachers of schools, who have attempted to raise them. They have attempted it.

and God has smiled upon their undertaking. But they need help. Let them have it.

Mrs. Loveless' heart was long set on this object, but there were many hindrances. Popular feeling was against it; the natives said, "It is not the Malabar custom to teach women to read:" and this was echoed from many voices respecting the country-born children, whom Mrs. Loveless wished *first* to elevate, for they were almost as degraded as the heathen sisters. At last the school began.

Mr. Loveless had laboured alone for nearly thirteen years, except now and then he was visited for a short time by a brother Missionary, who was passing through Madras to some other station; but, in 1815, the directors of the London Missionary Society appointed me to be Mr. Loveless' coadjutor in the work of the mission. In August, 1816, I arrived in company with five other Missionaries and their wives, appointed to other stations, and two young ladies, who were afterwards the wives of Missionaries. This was a great day with the friends at Madras, and none enjoyed it more than the affectionate and generous-hearted friend about whom I am now writing.

The arrival of a fellow-labourer enabled Mr. and Mrs. Loveless to devote some part of their time to objects which they could not attempt when alone. The first was, this long-cherished wish of her heart, the Missionary free school for girls. She had the complete arrangement of it in all its branches, and a beautiful picture it was. Pious and benevolent ladies of the presidency often visited it, and took great delight in promoting its success. The schoolmistress was well suited to her station, and great good was done. The school was built, and supported by friends on the spot.

There were two things in connexion with the erection of this school which greatly delighted us, and I think there are few persons who can hear them without being delighted also. The first was respecting an officer high in rank in the army. When it was known in England that I had been appointed to Madras, a lady wrote to this officer announcing the fact, and requesting him to show me some tokens of his favour. This was placing the gallant officer in an awkward position. Religion and Missionaries were little thought of, at that time, by officers in general, and perhaps by none less than by him; but what could be done! A lady had requested it, and he was too gallant to refuse a lady any thing. But what could be done! "A Missionary," said he, "what shall I do with a Missionary? What! I will make him tipsy." He meant this no doubt all in good part, but he had forgotten that no drunkard can enter the king-

dom of heaven. Oh! it would have been fatal to the Missionary if his intention had been realized. At last "a Europe ship" arrived in the Madras Roads, and the names of the passengers were quickly gazetted and sent through the country, and among them was the captain's missionary friend.

Kindness on the part of the officer soon followed, and I was invited to his house to meet a party of *his* brethren. I went; but, before I set off, Mr. Loveless warned me of the snare prepared for me. Most of the English residents in India fare sumptuously every day. Their hospitality is proverbial. A profusion of every thing that can gratify the appetite is found on their tables. The wine went round merrily, and I perceived my danger, and exclaimed, "Gentlemen, I am a stranger to the mode of living in India, and especially to the habits of military life, and you must not press me." "Oh yes," they replied, "you must drink." I said "Captain, I am your guest, and you must not press me; I claim your protection." "Very well," said he, "do as you please," and they pressed me no more.

In the course of conversation, I placed an intended female school before them, and said, "Gentlemen, we want help; now, as this is the first visit I have paid in India, I should like to make it memorable. I wish the military would give me something to purchase a foundation stone." To this appeal they answered by giving £15,\* and then they sent me home,—not tipsy, but thankful to God for the opportunity I had enjoyed for placing the claims of India before so influential a party.

But it did not stop here. From this time the captain seemed to feel a new spirit within him. He purchased great numbers of pious books, elegantly bound, which he sent to all parts of the presidency. He also became a regular attendant at the Mission Chapel, and always brought brother officers with him. I recollect one Sunday evening we had no less than twenty-four officers present at the service. Some of these officers became truly religious, and all of them helped us in our missionary plans. How wonderfully does God overrule events for his own glory, and the good of his creatures; and how much more might we behold of his wondrous works, if we were diligent in improving our opportunities!

The other pleasing circumstance connected with Mrs. Loveless' girls' school, was through an opulent merchant, named John De Monte. He was a Portuguese by birth, and of the Roman Catholic faith, and one of Mr. and Mrs. Loveless'

\* Nearly 70 dollars.

warmest friends. As soon as the school case was made out, it was shown to Mr. De Monte, who said, "Mr. Loveless, get what you can from your own countrymen, and I will make up the deficiency;" and he gave us no less than eighty pounds sterling.\* It is well to mark these interpositions of Divine Providence in the early stages of a Mission. It may strengthen the faith, and animate the hopes, of those who shall enter into our labours. This school being now completed, we shall consider Mrs. Loveless as

### THE FRIEND OF MISSIONARIES.

Madras is the seat of government, and the chief sea-port; therefore it often happens that Missionaries from various societies touch there, and remain for a short season. Many of these beloved brethren have shared in the sisterly kindness of Mrs. Loveless. Her house was their home, and her well-spread table supplied them during their stay with plain, wholesome food. Newly arrived Missionaries, if not more in number than three or four, never needed to seek any accommodations while Mr. and Mrs. Loveless were at Madras. In this way they contributed largely to the missionary cause. By this means also many experienced their kindness; but none so greatly as myself. I lived two years in their family, and, through their generous treatment, I was able to support several native schools with my salary. A few of the last months that I was with them, my health failed; most of my friends thought I should die, and I attribute the preservation of my life, in a great degree, to her unremitting care. Yes; if any among the millions of Russia have been benefited by my labours, or if any good has been done by my tongue or my pen in Britain or America, I must ever connect it with the tender care of my good sister Loveless.

The last day that I saw her in India, she was superintending a missionary breakfast:—a repast quite common now, but a rare sight under a tropical sun in the year 1819. On this occasion there were Church Missionaries, Baptists, Wesleyans, and those of the London Society. We had assembled to commence the erection of a missionary chapel at Persewankum, exactly of the same dimensions as that in the Black Town; and as it was the day on which I was to sail for England, and thus take leave of my beloved fellow-labourers, they requested me to lay the foundation-stone. A parchment-roll, containing the names of the Missionaries present, was sealed up in a bottle, and deposited in the stone, that future ages might read what we attempted to do for the evangelization of India.

The last four years that Mrs. Loveless remained at Madras were years of suffering; and her doctor urged a speedy return to England or America. To this she at last consented; and as soon as it was known in Madras that Mr. and Mrs. Loveless had determined to go, a handsome purse was presented to them by the congregation, containing about two thousand rupees!\* This was a delightful token of the people's love; and the way in which it was done was of more value than the money. Some of their oldest friends accompanied them to the ship, and, on the 14th of January, 1824, they left the scene of their numerous and useful labours; and, in the month of June following, they arrived in the house of kind friends in London. Now we must look to her as

#### A PATTERN TO US ALL.

After Mrs. Loveless and her husband returned to England, they lived for some years at Herne Bay, and then removed to Canterbury. In both these places she pursued the same diligent course of active benevolence. At Canterbury, she attended the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Creswell, and became much attached to him and his people. There are four things connected with her residence in this city, which are well worthy the imitation of Christians in every city and in every country.

1. Her love to the rising generation led her, in advancing years, and amidst many infirmities, to become one of the superintendents of the Sunday School.

2. She never grieved her minister's heart by deserting her pew on the Lord's day. She loved her minister, and his Master, and the sanctuary; therefore she was never absent unless forced by necessity.

3. No cooking or unnecessary work was suffered to be done in her house on the sabbath. As her son was a surgeon, it was needful for some person to remain at home, but it was always *a day of rest*.

4. Though she had not the pecuniary means for doing what she had been accustomed to do at Madras, yet she frequently visited the sick, the aged and infirm, and administered to their temporal comfort, nor did she overlook their spiritual state.

As she drew nearer eternity, she found the advantage of the good old orthodox truths which she had learned from Dr. Mason. She gloried in the doctrines of grace, and their genuine effects in a holy life. She said but little to strangers, but she used to speak with delighted feeling to her husband on the consolation she enjoyed as a sinner, from the completeness of the work of Christ. She viewed the efficacy of the atonement, as arising out of the glory of his character, as God equal with the Father.

\* One thousand dollars.

In this she trusted for eternal life. Hence she delighted to read those parts of the sacred Scriptures which speak so fully of the Divinity of Christ, and of the work of the Spirit in applying these truths to the heart. All her hopes of salvation centered here.

She was of a most retiring disposition, and could speak but little, from natural diffidence; yet, when she felt herself in the presence of friends in whom she possessed confidence, she would enter into such a strain of edifying experimental conversation, as evinced the deep feeling of piety she possessed, and the soundness of the principles on which they were founded. This was especially the case when among the poor of her own sex, and among children; then her embarrassment was removed, and she would reprove their sin, and direct them to Christ as the only Saviour, with peculiar tenderness and becoming faithfulness.

“One of the last books we ever read together,” says her bereaved, but divinely supported husband, “was ‘The Great Teacher.’ She was peculiarly charmed with that book, because it exhibits, in almost every page, the glory of Christ shining forth in all its meridian splendour; not only on the mount of transfiguration, and at the grave of Lazarus, but in the most minute circumstances of his life; proving him to be indeed, ‘God manifest in the flesh.’”

This accounts for the holy calm she enjoyed when heart and flesh were failing. Her soul was fixed on Christ. She overcame by the blood of the Lamb. To live was Christ, and to die was gain. She had been declining in health for some time previous to her last illness, but, about ten days before her decease, she had an attack which greatly weakened her; and which, though removed for a short period, returned again with increasing violence, and ended in death. She appeared to be quite sensible that she was laid upon her dying bed; but all was tranquil as a summer's evening. She enjoyed heaven before she was in it: all that she said was cheering. To the inquiry, “Do you want any thing?” she would answer “No.” And again, “Are you happy?” “Yes. Peace, peace.” How true is the saying of the poet,

“Jesus can make a dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are!”

At one time she spoke with great energy of the goodness of God to herself and her family, and then repeated part of a Psalm, from the Scotch version, on the Divine goodness.

At another time, after referring to 1 Pet. ii. 7, “Unto you which believe he is precious;” she added, “Precious Jesus!” and departed on the 20th day of September, 1837, having just



completed her 63d year. This was a fine finish to a missionary life! Oh, may my last end be like hers! Amen.

She was born in America, spent the vigour of her days in India, and died in the city of Canterbury, in England, where her body rests until the morning of the resurrection; but her spirit is, we believe, with her "Precious Jesus," casting her blood-bought crown at his feet; while she is again united with her venerated friend, Isabella Graham, who once wrote to her, "Be comforted, my dear Sally: we have an eternity of social happiness before us; we shall together sing of all that Christ has done for us, and rejoice in his glory, which shall issue out of all that happens in this world. If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him; wherefore comfort one another with these words. Amen.

And now, my reader, let me ask you, 'Is it any wonder that Mrs. Loveless, with her dying breath, called Jesus "precious?" He had been the Guide of her youth, her Comforter in the time of trouble, her Support all through life; and now he made her happy as she entered into eternity. No wonder that he was precious. And how does Christ appear to you? Have you sought "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace?" Have you a good hope that he will "present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy?" Mrs. Graham said "Contrition itself is the fruit of grace." Have you felt it? Paul says, "Faith is the gift of God." Do you possess it? Consider these things, I beseech you, and if you are a partaker of them, improve them as Mrs. Loveless did, to advance the Divine glory. But if you are a stranger to them, then seek them with all your heart, and seek them without delay; and let the striking words of Mrs. Graham be ever sounding in your ears, "Christ and salvation are freely offered:—to be embraced, and your soul is saved; to be rejected, and your soul is lost."

# MEMOIR OF BARDO,

THE FIRST MONGOL-BURIAT CONVERT.

THE Rev. John Crombie Brown, of St. Petersburg, gives the following particulars of the first convert among the Mongol-Buriat Tartars in connection with the London Missionary Society's Stations in Siberia.

“More than sixteen years had elapsed, from the time that the first Missionaries to the Buriats left the Imperial City, on their way to the barren wilds of Siberia, when the friends of our Saviour in St. Petersburg were cheered by the prospect of the heathen being converted in that distant province—a prospect which opened upon them with the following communication from the Rev. Edward Stallybrass, dated March 23, 1834 :—

‘I have this morning thought I could discover something like the fulfilment of the promise—“*So shall my word be : it shall not return unto me void*”—in a youth of about 17, with whom I spent an hour in conversation and prayer. He has heard much of the truth ; and, during the last half year, I hope, felt much ; and has now given in a request for baptism. He has been under instruction nearly two years, and has discovered great diligence and made great progress. If this work be of the Lord, his attainments may be turned to good purpose. If this be the work of God, it shall not be overthrown ; and if it be not, it will not shake our confidence in the Divine promise.

‘He was from a distant district, and was brought providentially hither, to be received as a scholar, about two years since. From his manner and dialect, he was as a Galilean among the other boys, and soon became an object of ridicule with them. His application to learning, however, was uncommonly great. He was entirely ignorant of the letters of the alphabet ; but he soon became able to read and write well, and also to commit to memory catechisms and passages of Scripture. His knowledge is necessarily limited, but I hope his heart is sincere.

‘He has made application for baptism ; and, in a conversation which I had with him on the subject, his views appear consistent ; he did not expect to cleanse himself by it, but in it to avow himself a disciple of Christ. He has been informed of what he must expect of his unbelieving countrymen if he become a follower of Jesus, and he has already begun to experience it ; having left off the worship of idols, he has been reproached and reviled, and turned out of their tents ; but he seems unmoved by these things ; and I trust that he has no

only relinquished the worship of idols, but begun to serve the living and true God in sincerity.

‘I was much struck at the way in which he received the news of the death of his mother: his great concern was about her soul: she had never heard of the name of Christ—had died a heathen—and was lost for ever! These thoughts caused him much distress. As she was at the distance of 500 versts, he had never seen her since he first came hither.

‘I do hope that he has been brought to see his sinful state, and the value of the great atonement for sin; and to rest on that Rock which shall never make ashamed. His conduct is in consistence with his profession.’ ”

The friends of the Mission received this intelligence at St. Petersburg with joy. Mr. Brown continues—

“It would be impossible to convey by words a correct idea of the new and mixed emotions awakened in our souls by this welcome communication. Our peculiar relation to the Mission led us to view with no common interest the labours of the Missionaries in Siberia. It was immediately proposed, that, as many of us as conveniently could should assemble to return praise to Him, who had, in the multitude of His tender mercies, permitted our esteemed friends to see that their labour had not been in vain. Nor was it long, ere further information arrived to confirm our joy. Bardo was not the only Buriat youth who had given evidence of a change of heart; but of him alone I write at present. A letter from one of the female members of the Mission, to one of her friends in this city, brought us a few more particulars of the work of God; and from this letter I make the following extract, respecting the youth alluded to above.

‘*May 10, 1834*—Mr. Stallybrass has for some time thought there was a promising spirit among some of his boys. One, in particular excited his hopes: he gave up the worship of the gods of his people: he talked much with Mr. Stallybrass’s children, and told them he believed there was but one God and one Saviour, His Son Jesus Christ. It was known that he prayed daily in secret; and that when mixing with his own people, he told them what he himself felt, and besought them to come and hear the truth for themselves; and that if they died in their present state, trusting in gods which could not save them, and thus denying the only true God, they would certainly perish.

‘This youth, whose name is Bardo, is very poor; and has not much influence with those around him. He has been

turned out of their tents because he would not worship the gods.\* He has, notwithstanding remained firm; and although all sort of abusive language is used to him, he has never been known to give way.'

"We continued, from time to time, to hear favourable accounts of these our Buriat brethren, and of the progress of Christianity in their hearts; but I do not recollect of any thing particular being heard of Bardo until a letter, bearing date August 29, 1834, brought us the following notice:—

'One of our youths made the remark, some time ago, that he thought it would be no bad thing for the cause of Christ, if their enemies should beat and trouble them: "for this," said he, "will make the more noise; and many may hear of it in this way, and be led to inquire what these things mean." Happy youth! little did he know for what God was then preparing his soul.'

This will appear from the following extract of a letter from the Rev. W. Swan, dated June 30, 1835:—

"You will be concerned to hear that the youth, who has finished his early course, is Bardo—the hopeful scholar, mentioned in Mr. Stallybrass's letter published in the October Chronicle of last year. He was the first who gave indications of serious attention to the Gospel. By his open avowal of being a disciple of Christ, and his refusal to worship the gods of his fathers, he had rendered himself very obnoxious to the Lamas and other zealous devotees.

"Towards the end of last winter, a Lama one day beat him severely on the head; and immediately after he began to complain of being unwell: violent headache, and a considerable degree of fever ensued. Various means were resorted to, but without success, for his recovery. The fever continued, with unabated force, for a number of weeks, with some slight intermissions; and his strength gradually sunk. Other symptoms of disease soon manifested themselves; pains in the chest, cough, and sleeplessness, supervened; and he appeared gradually wasting away.

"About eight weeks ago, he requested to be moved to the tent of an uncle who lives in the neighbourhood: hoping that the change might be beneficial, we had him conveyed thither. A native doctor of some skill had been applied to, and put him under a course of medicine; but he continued to get worse; till his friends, fearing that he would die, began to talk of resorting to some of their heathenish rites, as the best means of saving his life. He would not suffer any such arts to be used; and afraid lest, against his will, any superstitious cere-

\* The gods are placed on a table opposite the door of the tent; and every one, as he enters, is expected to bow before them.

monies should be performed, he begged to be brought back to us. To this his friends readily consented—saying, that he was now *ours*, both body and soul; and that they gave him up to live and die as a disciple of the Saviour whom we preached. He was carefully brought back; and, although extremely weak, did not appear to suffer much from the removal.

“On the morning of the day on which he died, perceiving that his end was approaching, I told him, as I had done before, that he must give up all hopes of getting better; and then I had some very satisfactory conversation with him on the subject of his faith and hope. ‘Should you die now, whither would your soul go?’ ‘To heaven.’—‘Who will receive it there?’ ‘God.’—‘On what Saviour do you trust for salvation?’ With emphasis, ‘on Jesus Christ.’—‘If God had not, in His providence, brought you hither, to learn about that Saviour, what would have become of you?’ ‘I should have lived in sin, and gone to hell when I died.’”

“Violent pain, and almost incessant cough, made it very difficult for him to speak for the last week or two of his life; but his mind continued perfectly clear and calm within a few moments of his death. His pulse was already fluttering, and his extremities beginning to grow cold, when I heard his dying confession, as just related. About one o’clock, his breathing became gradually softer, like that of one falling into a gentle slumber; till nearly two, when almost imperceptibly it ceased.

“Thus fell asleep in Jesus, one, whom I hope that we may regard as one of the first fruits of the Buriat nation gathered into the Saviour’s kingdom; and one who may be said to have fallen a martyr to the cause of Christ: for I have little doubt, in my own mind, that the blows on the head, which he received from the enraged Lama, were the remote cause of his death.

“We endeavoured to improve the solemn event, for the benefit of his fellow scholars and others; and many tears were shed, when he was laid in a grave near the spot where the remains of our beloved sister, Mrs. Stallybrass, await the resurrection. Tikshie, another of our dear young men, read over the grave, with a faltering voice, part of the fifteenth of the first Epistle to the Corinthians; and I spoke a few words to the people assembled, founded on the passage read. It was very touching; and, at the same time, highly encouraging to our minds, to hear our converted Buriat, who firmly trusts in the Saviour, joining thus in the funeral service, while we committed to the dust the body of another young Buriat who had died in the faith.”

A

BRIEF VIEW  
OF THE  
PROPER SUBJECTS AND TRUE MODE  
OF  
CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

BY THE

REV. JAMES WHAREY.

PHILADELPHIA :

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

THE HISTORY OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

AND

THE HISTORY OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

## CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

HARDLY any subject has created more discussion in the Christian church since the Reformation than that of Baptism. It divides itself into two parts; the first relates to the proper subjects of Baptism, the second to the proper mode of its administration. I wish here to offer a plain and concise view of the subject, that may assist young persons in forming a correct opinion in regard to both these subjects of inquiry.

I. I shall first speak in regard to the proper subjects of Baptism.—And here all are agreed that adult believers, making a profession of Christianity, if they have not been baptized in infancy, are entitled to this ordinance. We hold to *believers' Baptism* as much as any other. The question in dispute is, with regard to infants. We hold that the infants of believing parents are entitled to Baptism on the faith of their parents. This the Baptists deny. It is true that we have no direct scripture declaration, saying in so many words, that children should be baptized; (neither have we any such for female communion;) yet we have what I conceive to be a full equivalent.

1. The covenant with Abraham was the same gospel covenant, under which we now live. This is evident from the whole nature and tenor of that covenant, embracing not merely the posterity of Abraham, but all nations. “In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. xii. 3.) “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. xxii. 18.) The terms of that covenant were faith and obedience; the same as those of the gospel covenant. “And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” (Gen. xv. 6.) “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; *because thou hast obeyed my voice.*” (Gen. xxii. 18.) Hence the apostle says, “Abraham, was justified by faith.” It is true that the promised blessing was made more immediately to the posterity of Abraham, because it should be chiefly confined to them for many generations, and until the coming of the Messiah; but finally it should embrace all nations. It is therefore frequently called *an everlasting covenant*. But who are the children of Abraham? Not



merely his descendants by natural generation: but all believers, as the apostle tells us, are the children of Abraham, who is the Father of us all. (Rom. iv. 16. Gal. iii. 7.) The same apostle says, "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham." (Gal. iii. 8, 9.) Hence the apostle says again, "And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." (Gal. iii. 17.) Temporal blessings were promised under that covenant; but they were typical of spiritual blessings, which were also included. To sum up the particulars then:—The Abrahamic covenant was to *include all nations*—it was an *everlasting covenant*—the terms of it were *faith and obedience*—the promulgation of it was *preaching the gospel to Abraham*—it promised *spiritual blessings*, under the type and figure of temporal blessings—and this covenant with Abraham was *confirmed of God in Christ*, and was not *disannulled* by the giving of the law to the Israelites, four hundred and thirty years after, at Mount Sinai. Can any one doubt therefore that this is the same gospel covenant, under which we all live, *i. e.* all believers; and who are therefore the *children of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise*? It seems to me to be as plain as any thing can be, that the covenant with Abraham, was the covenant of grace—the same Gospel covenant confirmed of God in Christ, under which all believers are at this day. If this be not so, the apostle, to my mind, has reasoned very obscurely in the 3d of Galatians and 4th of Romans.

2. Of that covenant, circumcision was made the external sign and seal, and was to be administered to children at eight days old. Children, under that dispensation, were thereby recognized as comprehended under that covenant; *i. e.* as being members of the visible Church of God in the world. That Abraham and his descendants in the line of Isaac and Jacob, and their posterity, the Israelites, to whom the promises were made, did constitute the visible Church of God in the world, cannot be denied; unless it be denied that the Church existed in a visible form at all, until after the coming of Christ. But surely no one will deny

this. God did not leave himself without witness. The Jewish nation was the visible Church of God in the world, from Abraham down to the coming of Christ. The martyr Stephen speaks of the *Church in the wilderness*. (Acts. vii. 38.) the Jews are very often spoken of as *God's chosen people—his heritage—his vineyard, &c.* But circumcision was the peculiar badge of that people, by which they were distinguished from the rest of the world; by which were signified and sealed to them the blessings promised in the covenant with Abraham; and by which proselytes were initiated into their communion. The idea that some have maintained, that circumcision was *a merely national badge*, contradicts the whole tenor of Scripture on the subject, which every where represents it as a solemn and significant *religious rite*. It was instituted in the family of Abraham long before the Israelites existed as a nation. It is evident therefore, that in the visible Church, as it was established in the family of Abraham, down to the coming of Christ, children were recognized as members, and received the external sign of membership, by divine appointment at eight days old.

3. The gospel church is the same Church, only rendered more spiritual, and with some change of external rites. This is evident from many passages of scripture; nay, I might say from the whole tenor of scripture on the subject. Christ came "not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil." The corner stone of the Church is laid in Sion; *i. e.* in the Jewish church. The privileges that had been confined to the Jews are represented under the gospel, as being extended to the Gentiles. Hence the apostle says, "Ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." (Eph. ii. 13, 19, 20.) The whole Epistle to the Hebrews is designed to show that the rites of the Jewish church are abrogated, and that those of the Christian church had taken their place. But the apostle Paul puts the matter beyond all question in the 11th chapter of Romans, in which he calls the Jewish church the *good olive tree* from which some of them had been broken off, as unfruitful branches, through unbelief, and the Gentiles *grafted in, to partake*

*with them the root and fatness of the olive tree.* (Rom. xi. 17, &c.)

4. In the Christian church, Baptism has come in the room of circumcision; as the Lord's Supper has come in the room of the passover. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two sacraments of the Christian church, just as circumcision and the passover, were the two sacraments of the Jewish church. This is evident from the fact, that they have virtually the same meaning, and refer to the same things. The passover was typical of the very same thing, of which the Lord's Supper is commemorative: and circumcision signified the same native depravity, and need of moral purification, that are represented by Baptism. These rites of the Jewish church were attended with the shedding of blood, as most of the institutions of that comparatively dark, legal, and typical dispensation were, in anticipation of the bloody sacrifice of the cross: but Christ having come and offered himself a sacrifice *once for all*, and set up his gospel kingdom, and established his Church upon *better promises*—under a brighter, milder, and more spiritual dispensation, there is no longer occasion for bloody rites. We are told that, as an appendage to the paschal supper, as observed by the Jews in our Lord's time, they partook of a piece of bread and a cup of wine: and that also, to the rite of circumcision, administered to proselytes, they added that of Baptism, or washing with water, in token of their putting off the filthiness of heathenism, and assuming a new character. It would seem therefore that our Lord, in both cases, simply rejected the bloody parts of those rites, as inappropriate to the gospel dispensation; and substituted in their stead the unbloody parts, as they were then in common use. This seems to me to be a very easy and natural view of this subject; and hence we may understand why so little was said by way of explaining the nature of Baptism, it being a rite already in practice, and well understood, as an appendage to proselyte circumcision. Wherefore the apostle calls Baptism "the circumcision of Christ" or Christian circumcision. (Col. ii. 2.) All the early Fathers regarded Baptism as coming in the room of circumcision.

5. It follows as a necessary consequence, if our reasoning be correct, that the children of believing parents under the gospel, are to be regarded as having the same right to

Baptism, that the children of Jewish parents had to circumcision; unless their rights have been abridged, and there can be found some positive declaration to the contrary. But where is any thing like such a declaration to be found? It is certainly not to be found in the conduct of Christ towards little children. He took them up in his arms and blessed them, and said “of such is the kingdom of heaven.” (Mat. xix. 13—15.) But some have said that the meaning of this is, that of such persons as are *like infants* in temper, disposition, &c. is the kingdom of heaven. But this interpretation cannot be maintained for two reasons. 1st. The original does not admit of this construction. It does not mean of such as are *like infants*, but of *such infants* is the kingdom of heaven: it might properly be rendered, as a similar phrase is elsewhere “*For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*” 2d. It is inconsistent with the scope of the passage. Christ gives it as a reason why children should be brought unto him. But his saying that the kingdom of heaven consisted of persons meek, docile, &c. like children, was no reason why infants should be brought unto him. There would be the same reason, says Mr. Henry, why *lambs and doves should be brought unto him*. Here then is a positive assertion, by the Saviour himself, that infants belong to the kingdom of heaven; that is, to the gospel Church. There is nothing like such a prohibition in the declaration of Peter on the day of Pentecost, who said, “For the promise is unto you, and *to your children.*” (Acts ii. 39.) There is no such prohibition to be found in the New Testament. If then the Abrahamic covenant was the same covenant of grace, or gospel covenant, under which we all live; and if children were included in that covenant, and commanded to be circumcised as the sign and seal of it: if the Christian church is the same with the Jewish church, only rendered more spiritual, with some change of its external forms, and if Baptism and the Lord’s Supper come in the room of circumcision and the passover; (all which, I think, has been fully proved on scripture authority;) then there was no occasion for a command to the apostles to baptize children,—they would of course, and of necessity, so understand their commission, “go teach all nations, baptizing them,” &c. When proselytes were made to the Jewish church, they received them, and both circumcised and baptized them and their children. And when the apostles

were sent out to make proselytes or converts to the Christian church, which was, and was understood to be, the same Church, with only some modification of its external rites; how could they without special instruction, refuse to receive children with their parents, as they always had done?

6. But we have what I conceive to be very satisfactory evidence, that the apostles did so understand their commission, and that when they received parents into the Church, they received and baptized their children with them. Thus we find them repeatedly baptizing whole households. Lydia was baptized and *her household*—the jailor, and *all his* straightway. Paul baptized *the household of Stephanus*. It is not indeed said that there were infants in any of these families; but the strong presumption is that there were. Where will you find three families, taking them at random, in which there are no children? Do we ever hear, in all the reports of the Baptist missionaries among the heathen, that they have baptized one household? But in the history of the apostles, in which there are but few cases of Baptism recorded, there are as many as three household Baptisms. In every case, as far as we are now capable of knowing, in which the parent or head of a family was baptized, the children or household, were also baptized. If a similar history were recorded of any missionary in a heathen land, with whose creed and practice on this subject, we were wholly unacquainted—that in performing the act of Baptism the same number of times that it is recorded of the apostles in the New Testament, (which, I think, is not more than ten,) he had baptized as many as three households, would any one doubt that he was a Pedobaptist? Would our Baptist brethren be disposed to lay claim to such a missionary?

But the passage of scripture, (1 Cor. vii. 14,) must be regarded as very decisive upon this subject. “The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife; and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.” How were the children holy? Not *positively* or *personally*—the faith of one or both parents will not effect that—but *federally*, *i. e.* within the pale of God’s covenant—members of the invisible Church; and therefore entitled to Baptism. I know of no other interpretation of this text, consistent with the scope of the passage, and with the meaning of the

original words. Things and persons consecrated to God, are called holy. The people of Israel in covenant with God are called holy. The term holy is often used to express such a relation to God. (Exod. xix. 6, Deut. vii. 6, Ezra ix. 2.) Things not thus consecrated—Gentiles not thus in covenant with God, are called *common* and *unclean*. (compare Isa. xxxv. 8, and lii. 1. with Acts x. 28.) The evident meaning of the apostle then is, that the faith of either parent brought the child within the covenant—within the pale of the visible Church; and therefore federally holy—consecrated to God—and entitled to Baptism: otherwise, it was regarded as without the covenant—*unclean*—in other words a *Gentile*. And this was assigning a good and valid reason why the believing parent should not leave his or her unbelieving companion, which is the scope of the passage.

7. A very strong proof of infant Baptism we also derive from the history of the Church. If infant Baptism be not scriptural, and was not practised by the apostles; then it is an *egregious error*; and was introduced at a very early period; obtained a universal prevalence; and continued down uninterruptedly, without the least opposition, as far as authentic history gives us information on the subject, until near the time of the Reformation: nay, it continues to be practised even at the present day, by perhaps nineteen-twentieths of the Christian world. And yet we have no account of the introduction of this error, and no dispute about it by the early Fathers. The introduction of other errors is recorded, and the opposition that was made to them; but on this subject, there is a profound silence; except in regard to the fact that infant Baptism was universally practised, and held to be of apostolical origin. There was a dispute whether infants might not be baptized sooner than eight days old; the time when, under the law, circumcision was to be administered; (a plain proof that they regarded Baptism as coming in the room of circumcision;) and this question was decided by a Council held at Carthage, A. D. 253, that *they might be baptized as soon as they were born*. “From the year 400 to 1150,” says Buck, “no society of men in all that period of 750 years, ever pretended to say it was unlawful to baptize infants; and still nearer to the time of our Saviour there appears to have been scarcely any one that so much as advised the delay of infant Baptism. Irenæus, who lived

in the second century, and was well acquainted with Polycarp, who was John's disciple, expressly declares that the Church learned from the apostles to baptize children. Origen, in the third century, affirmed that the custom of baptizing infants was received from Christ and his apostles. Cyprian, and a council of ministers (held about the year 254) no less than sixty-six in number, unanimously agreed that children might be baptized as soon as they were born. Ambrose, who wrote about 274 years from the apostles, declares that the Baptism of infants had been the practice of the apostles themselves, and of the Church, till that time. "The Catholic church every where declared," says Chrysostom, in the fifth century, "that infants should be baptized; and Augustine, (in the same age,) affirmed that he never heard nor read of any Christian, catholic, or sectarian, but who always held that infants were to be baptized. They farther believed, that there needed no mention in the New Testament of receiving infants into the Church, as it had been once appointed and never repealed."

Pelagius, who flourished in the latter part of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century, was among the most learned men of his day, and had travelled very extensively over a greater part of the Christian world, so that if there had been any sect however obscure, or even an individual of any note, who had denied the doctrine of infant Baptism, he could scarcely have failed to know it. And from the doctrine which he held in regard to original sin—that infants are born pure and innocent; or, in modern language upon the subject, *without moral character*—he was under strong inducements to deny the doctrine himself; insomuch that he was charged with doing so. But he indignantly repelled the charge as an injurious slander. "Men slander me," says he, "as if I denied the sacrament of Baptism to infants. *I never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied Baptism to infants.*"

8. It seems to be reasonable and natural, that while children are young, and incapable of choosing and acting for themselves, their parents should choose and act for them. This is done in all the ordinary interests and concerns of life; and why not so in religion? The institution of such a rite as Baptism, by which parents may publicly and solemnly offer up their children to God, have the seal

of his covenant put upon them, acknowledge his right to them, and their obligations to bring them up for him, seems to be in perfect conformity with the best feelings of every pious parent's heart. It may be asked, what good Baptism can do the child? It would be a sufficient answer to say, "It is God's own institution, and He will bless it." It might with the same propriety be asked, what good it could do the child to be circumcised at eight days old? It was asked in the apostle's day, "what profit is there of circumcision?" And he answers, "much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." So Baptism is designed to secure to children religious discipline, christian instruction, the watch, and care, and prayers of the Church, &c. And where do we find children most carefully taught and instructed in the doctrines and duties of religion; and trained up in the way in which they should go? Not, I think, among Antipedobaptists; who are generally, if I mistake not, notoriously lax in family discipline, and the religious instruction of children. Nay, some of this denomination do actually condemn the religious discipline and education of children, as calculated to put knowledge into the head, with which they are likely to be satisfied, without obtaining grace in the heart. "Let them alone," say they, "and then when God puts his grace into their hearts, *they will know it.*" On the proper use and improvement of the ordinance, see *Bradbury on Baptism*. It seems to me therefore, that the practice of Pedobaptism is abundantly sustained by Scripture, the history of the Church, as well as by the reason and nature of the case.

II. 1. I now proceed to consider the mode of Baptism; and shall attempt to prove that "dipping the person into the water is not necessary: but that Baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person." It is not denied that Baptism by immersion is valid Baptism; but it is denied that immersion is the only valid mode. We hold that the application of water to a fit subject, by a properly authorised minister of the gospel, in the name of the sacred Trinity, is Christian Baptism, without regard to the manner in which the water is applied, whether by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. We believe that the mode of Baptism has been purposely left indefinite; as the modes and forms of external worship, in the New Testament, generally have been. It is not consistent with



the spirit of the New Testament dispensation, to lay great stress upon external forms and ceremonies. It was otherwise under the Old Testament dispensation; because that was typical. Then, external forms and ceremonies were significant as the types and figures, or shadows, as the apostle calls them, of good things to come. To change their form would have been to destroy their typical significance, and to render them nugatory, as to the end designed by them. Hence Moses was admonished of God “when he was about to make the tabernacle; for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.” (Heb. viii. 5.) Forms and ceremonies, therefore, under that dispensation, were particularly and precisely prescribed and defined. But under the gospel it is not so. The whole stress is laid upon the spirit, the principle, the motive: and forms and ceremonies are very little accounted of, and in no case particularly and definitely prescribed. So it is with regard to the other Christian ordinance—the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. We are not told how often it was to be administered; whether once a week, as seems to have been the practice of the apostles; or once a month, as some churches have judged most expedient; or once or twice a year, as others. We are not told whether the wine was to be sweet, as some of late have concluded, or fermented; whether pure, or diluted with water, as others think. With regard to the bread to be used; it is not decided whether it should be unleavened, as was doubtless that first used at its institution, and which some think should still be used; or leavened, as is perhaps more common at the present day. The time of day is not prescribed as was that of the passover; and it was first instituted in the night. The posture in which it is to be received is not pointed out: whether sitting, as is common with us; or kneeling, as some think most proper; or reclining, as Christ and his apostles probably first received it. And we are nowhere informed whether women were entitled to this ordinance; but are left to infer their right from the nature of the case. The same might be said of the external forms of religious worship. The apostle Paul corrects some abuses and irregularities that had sprung up in the Church at Corinth; such as, several persons speaking at the same time—women speaking in the Church—irregularities in partaking of the Lord’s Supper, &c.; but there is no prescribed form of public worship any where laid down in the New Testa-

ment. Can it then be reasonably supposed that in the single case of Baptism, so great stress should be laid on the external mode and form of it?—that in this one instance, the spirit of the gospel dispensation should be so far departed from, as to make the validity of the ordinance depend on the particular mode of its administration? I cannot think so. The mode of administering Baptism, as well as the other external forms of Christian worship, as I conceive, come under the general rules of the apostle—“Let all things be done decently and in order”—“Let all things be done unto edification”—and may therefore be modified according to the particular circumstances in which men are placed.

2. Christianity was designed to be an universal religion, extending to every nation and tribe of men on the earth; and therefore adapted to every condition of our globe, and to all the varieties and habits of human society. Baptism by immersion, in many parts of the world, would be very inconvenient. In very high latitudes, it would be impracticable to obtain water of a proper temperature, through the greater part of the year at least, without applying to it artificial warmth. In many regions of the world it would be very difficult, if not impracticable, to obtain a sufficient quantity of water. In the sandy deserts of Africa, the faithful Mussulman, in the absence of water, performs his prescribed ablutions with sand. But in Baptism, if the element might be changed, it would be rather difficult, as well as dangerous, to immerse in sand. And in many feeble states of bodily health, immersion in water would be attended with no little danger to the individual, and in some cases perhaps, produce instant death. With *our* habits of society, Baptism by immersion is attended at times, with no little inconvenience—requiring a change of raiment, a dressing room, sufficient quantity and depth of water, &c., not to say, that it places the female subject in an attitude, not very congenial with our common sense of delicacy. Unless a baptistery be provided, which cannot commonly be done; it prevents that solemn ordinance being performed in the church, where we think all public acts of religious worship should be performed. There must be a resort to some stream or pond of sufficient capacity and depth, attended often with no little disorder and confusion. But I will not say all on this subject that I think might be said. It is not denied that Baptism by immersion was practised at a very early period in the east; but with them it was attended with much less inconvenience

than with us. Their climate was mild most of the year round; they wore loose garments, went with naked feet, or only with sandals, and were in the common habit of bathing.

3. It is acknowledged on all hands that Baptism is emblematical, and is intended to represent moral purification—the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ in procuring the pardon of sin, and the regenerating and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. But it is evident that the idea of moral purification may be as well represented by sprinkling or pouring, as by immersion. And a small quantity of water will be as significant, *as an emblem*, as a large quantity. The quantity of water effects nothing towards the end designed. If indeed the design were “the putting away of the filth of the flesh,” which the apostle says, *it is not*, (1 Pet. iii. 21,) the thing would be quite otherwise. The quantity of water would then be a material point; and it might be necessary not only to plunge the body into it, but then to rub and wash it well. But as Baptism is only emblematical of moral purification, and the “answer of a good conscience before God,” in having obeyed his commandments; the quantity of water is wholly immaterial—a drop is as good as an ocean.

But how is the blood of Christ represented as being applied to the sinner’s heart? *Always by sprinkling.* Having our hearts *sprinkled* from an evil conscience,” says the apostle, “and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Heb. x. 22.) “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and *sprinkling* of the blood of Christ.” (1 Pet. i. 2.) Here are the two sources of moral purification; the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. By the one, comes the pure heart; by the other, cancelled guilt. The blood of Christ is called the blood of *sprinkling*, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.” The blood of the paschal lamb, a type of Christ, was to be *sprinkled* on the door posts of their houses. So the apostle tells us, (Heb. ix. 19—22) that “when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and *sprinkled* both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he *sprinkled* likewise with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged

with blood: and without shedding of blood there is no remission." One source of that moral purification then, of which Baptism is the external sign, viz. the blood of Christ, seems uniformly represented as being applied by sprinkling. Isaiah in reference to the same thing, speaking of the extension of Christ's kingdom, says, "So shall he *sprinkle* many nations." (Isaiah lii. 15.) And Ezekiel, speaking of the restoration of the Jews, says, that they shall be cleansed from all their filthiness and idols;—and how? by immersion? Not at all, "I will *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." (Eze. xxxvi. 25.) Here is the idea of cleansing, as it is all along, and yet it is by sprinkling. And I have no doubt that there is an allusion here to water Baptism.

But how is the Spirit, which is the other source of that moral purification of which Baptism is the external sign, represented as being applied? The Holy Spirit is every where represented as being *poured out, shed down, or distilled* like rain or dew. The texts of Scripture to this effect are very numerous, and familiar to every one, and I need not recite them. Now if there is to be any similarity or agreement between the sign and the thing signified—between Baptism with water, and spiritual Baptism, or that moral purification effected by the blood and spirit of Christ—between having "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water," as the apostle expresses it; surely Baptism should be performed by sprinkling or pouring, and not by immersion. And the apostle John tells us that the Spirit, the water, and the blood *agree in one*. They agree in the moral purification of the heart: the Spirit effecting it by regeneration, the blood by its atoning efficacy, and the water representing and sealing it as an external sign—and should they not agree in the manner of their application?

4. But we shall be told that this is all speculation; that we must go to the very words of institution, and to the practice of the apostles, to ascertain the mode of Baptism—That Christ is king in Zion, and head over his church, and has a right therefore to prescribe laws for its government: and that it is our duty to *obey*, and not to decide or conjecture what is right and fit in the matter. "To the law, and to the testimony."—To this I say *agreed*: and our appeal shall now be directly to that quarter.

"Baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the

Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Here, we are told, the matter is decided—that the original Greek word βαπτίζω, means to *immerse*, and *nothing else*. Now if this be so, dispute about the mode is at an end. If the word admits of no other meaning but immersion, then there can be no other mode. But this is a mere begging of the question, and taking for granted the thing in dispute. What authority has any one for saying that the word has no other meaning? If we look into Lexicons, we can find as many as five or six different meanings to the word; and if we look at the use of it, we find many cases, in which it cannot possibly mean immersion. In classic use, it sometimes means to *stain*, to *dye*, to *soak*, to *imbue*, to *wash*, to *cleanse*: this may be by dipping, sprinkling, or pouring. Origen, a Greek Father, and one of the most learned men of his day, says, “Elias did not baptize the wood on the altar, which was to be washed, but ordered another to do it,” &c. Here is an allusion to the four barrels of water which the prophet directed should be *poured on* the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. (1 Kings xviii. 33.) Origen regarded baptism as equivalent to *washing*, and that by *pouring* the water on. Athanasius used the word (ραντίζομενον) *sprinkled*, as clearly equivalent to (βαπτίζομενον) *baptized*. The *baptism* of tears and blood, was a favourite phraseology with the early Christians; but surely this was not by immersion. “An ancient oracle, quoted by Sydenham, runs thus;—Ασχος βαπτίζε· δυναί δε τοι εθεμεις εστι—*i. e.* Baptize him as a bottle; but it is not lawful to immerse, or wholly to plunge him under the water. Here *baptize* is put in opposition to *immerse*, and cannot mean the same thing.” In the Septuagint, a Greek version of the Old Testament, made more than 200 years before Christ, the word βαπτίζω, is often used as equivalent to the word λασω, to wash. When the body of Nebuchadnezzar is said to be wet with the dew of heaven, the Septuagint has it, *baptized*; but surely not by immersion. John the Baptist says, (Matt. iii. 11.) “I indeed baptize you with water, but he that cometh after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” If we look in Acts ii. 1—4. we shall see how this was done—‘And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting—(*i. e.* the sound filled the house.) And there appeared cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon

each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues; as the Spirit gave them utterance." Here the appearance of fire sat upon their heads, and the Spirit filled them, but they were immersed in neither—there was nothing like immersion in the case.

How would it sound to speak of being *immersed in the Holy Ghost and in fire*? If John's disciples had understood the word to mean nothing else but immersion, would they not have been startled at such an expression? But if βαπτίζω ὑμας ἐν ὕδατι, means, I immerse you *in water*, βαπτισεῖ ὑμας ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ, must mean, he shall baptize you *in the Holy Ghost and in fire*—the construction is precisely the same.

Christ calls his last sufferings a Baptism; but there was nothing like immersion in the case. He bore the curse of the law, and the wrath of God; but that is always said to be *poured out*. The Israelites are said to have been baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. (1 Cor. x. 2.) But there could be no immersion there, either in the cloud or in the sea: for it is said that the pillar of cloud stood behind them, between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and that they went through the sea on *dry ground*. The Egyptians were indeed immersed, and sunk *like lead in the mighty waters*. But the Israelites might have been sprinkled with the spray from the sea which stood as a wall on each side: and it would seem that they were sprinkled with rain at the same time; for the psalmist, speaking of this same thing, says, "The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook." (Psa. lxxvii. 17, 18.) Here then Baptism cannot mean immersion.—In Mark vii. 2—4. it is said, "And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not." In the original Greek it is, except they *Baptize*, (βαπτισωνται,) they eat not. But how did the Pharisees, and all the Jews *Baptize* when they came from the market? Certainly not by immersing themselves in water; but by *washing their hands*, as it is said in the preceding verse, "except they wash their hands oft, they eat not." Here baptizing is equivalent to washing, and neither by immersion.

In Matthew xv. 2. we read, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the Elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." In Luke xi. 38, it is said that when a certain Pharisee who had asked Jesus to dine with him, saw him sit down to meat, "he marvelled that he had not first washed, (in the original, baptized,) before dinner." What! did the Pharisee marvel that he had not first plunged himself into water before dinner? No, certainly: but that he had not first washed his hands according to the tradition of the Elders, as mentioned in Matthew.— In Mark vii. 4. we read, "And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables," or couches, as the original properly means. And here the word rendered *washing* is in the original *baptizing*. And how did they baptize their cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and couches? Some of them by immersion, perhaps; but certainly not all. We find provision made for these various washings or baptisms of the Jews at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. (John ii. 6.) "And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece." Here was an ample provision for washing cups, pots, &c. and the hands and feet of the guests, but certainly not for immersing their bodies in water.

In Hebrews ix. 10. we read of "diverse washings and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation;"—in the original, *διαφοροις Βαπτισμοις*, *diverse Baptisms*. The adjective *διαφοροις*, means *different, of various kinds, dissimilar*. These diverse washings or baptisms, doubtless included all the different ablutions, and ceremonial cleansings prescribed in the Mosaic law; and these were performed in diverse ways. How some of them were performed, the apostle goes on to tell in verse 13—"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, *sprinkling* the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more the blood of Christ," &c. And also in verse 19 and following—"For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and *sprinkled* both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover, he *sprinkled* likewise with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry." It is evident from the connexion and scope of this portion of Scripture, that the apostle

designed to include these *sprinklings* in the *διαφοροις βαπτισμοις*, *diverse baptisms* mentioned in verse 10.

After all this, can any one say that the word *βαπτίζω*, means to immerse, and *nothing else*? The general idea is washing or cleansing; but as it regards the mode, we could scarcely find a more indefinite word. If the mode be so material—an *essential point*, why has it been left so indefinite, that perhaps nineteen-twentieths of the Christian world at the present day, and ever since the days of the apostles, have believed that Baptism by sprinkling or pouring was valid Baptism? Is it so, that nineteen-twentieths of the Christian world have not been able to arrive at the truth on this subject; and are therefore actually out of the visible church, and without valid ordinances? Is it true that the Baptist denomination, which had its origin about 300 years ago, (as I believe history will fully prove,) is the only true visible Church of God in the world? I cannot think so.

5. Since the word itself does not determine the mode of Baptism, let us look at the practice of the apostles, and see if we can find any thing there that will determine it to signify immersion only. First, however, I must notice the Baptism of John. But here it must be observed that the Baptism of John was not Christian Baptism. John's Baptism formed as it were, a connecting link between the Jewish and Christian church, but belonged properly to neither. If therefore we know certainly John's mode of Baptism, and in what manner the Saviour was baptized, it would not certainly determine the mode of Christian Baptism. The Baptism of John was local and temporary, intended only to prepare the way for the Messiah; it might therefore be very different in its mode of administration, from an institution of the Christian church, intended to be universal; adapted to every region of the earth, and to every condition of society; and to be perpetuated to the end of time.

In Matt. iii. 5, 6, we read, "Then went out to him (John) Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and *εβαπτίζοντο εν Ιορδανη*, *were baptized in Jordan.*" The same phraseology occurs, Mark i. 5. "And they were all baptized in the river Jordan." At first sight it may be thought that this determines the mode of John's Baptism. If he baptized in the river Jordan, surely it was by immersion. But this is by no means a necessary consequence. He might stand in the water, and yet baptize the multitudes that came to him, by sprinkling or pouring it on them. But the preposition



here rendered *in*, has at least sixteen different meanings in the New Testament; such as, *with, by, through, to, near, &c.* we may therefore say, *at Jordan, near Jordan, or with Jordan; i. e.* with the waters of Jordan. The same preposition is used when it is said, I baptize *with* water, but he shall baptize *with* the Holy Ghost and *with* fire. And if it determines the mode here, and we must say they were *immersed in Jordan*; then it must determine the mode there, and we must say, I immerse *in water*; but he shall immerse you *in the Holy Ghost* and *in fire*. The same preposition is used when it is said that John was baptizing *in* the wilderness; and also when it is said, he was baptizing *in* Enon, a town. But every one sees that it would be ridiculous to speak of immersing or plunging people in a wilderness, or in a town. It is plain therefore that the preposition  $\epsilon\nu$  has nothing to do with the mode, but only designates, either the element, as, *with water, with fire*; or the place, as *in the wilderness, in Enon, at or near Jordan*.

From the numbers that flocked to John's Baptism, it is thought he must have performed the service in a very expeditious and summary way. It is said (Mark i. 5.) that "there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were *all* baptized of him." A judicious writer has computed that if one tenth part of this population were baptized by immersion, allowing three minutes to each individual; the Baptist must have stood eight hours in the water per day for three years, to have accomplished the work!

The Baptism of Christ is much relied upon to prove immersion, because it is said that he went up straightway out of the water. (Matt. iii. 16.) But the preposition  $\alpha\pi\omicron$ , here rendered *out of*, in its ordinary and proper meaning, signifies *from*; and, as I conceive, should be so rendered here. The Baptism of Christ therefore, affords no evidence of immersion.

Much reliance has been placed also on the passage, (John iii. 23.) "And John was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was *much water there*." The original is,  $\pi\omicron\lambda\lambda\alpha \acute{\iota}\delta\alpha\tau\alpha$ , *many waters*, or *many springs* or *streams of water*. And this would be necessary for the accommodation of the multitudes that flocked to John's Baptism. Suppose some person, 100 years hence, should read the history of a Methodist camp-meeting, who did not know what mode of Baptism they practised; and should find it stated that they had selected such a place because there was much water there—because there were many springs or streams of water convenient; and should also read that

they had received and baptized a large number of converts: if he should hence conclude that they were Baptists, and practised immersion, would he not form a wrong conclusion?

6. I will next notice what, it seems to me, might be called a Scripture definition of the mode of Baptism. In Acts i. 5. we read, "For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." How this Baptism was effected we learn, Acts iii. 16—18. "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith God,) I will *pour out* my Spirit on all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants, and on my handmaidens will I *pour out*, in those days, of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy." Here Baptism was evidently by *pouring*.

The next case we notice is that of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost. How could this vast multitude be immersed by the apostles, in a few hours, as we must suppose, in the afternoon of the day? It was the third hour, or nine o'clock, when Peter began his speech: and we cannot suppose that he and the other apostles finished their speaking, giving instruction, hearing the confessions of the people, &c., before noon. Suppose all the apostles to be engaged in baptizing for five hours; it would require that each one should baptize fifty each hour, that is, nearly one every minute. This would be a laborious business and I believe no man could perform it in the ordinary way of immersion. But where did they procure the water necessary, and the suitable places, for baptizing so many? At that season, water was very scarce at Jerusalem. The brook Kedron, which is the only stream of any consequence near, it is said, is dry at that season—Pentecost being near the last of March. Where did they all find the necessary changes of raiment? Many of them were strangers from all the adjacent country, who had come up to attend the feast. I must think that Baptism on the day of Pentecost, was performed in a very expeditious and summary way, and cannot suppose that it was by immersion.

The next case we notice is that of Philip and the Eunuch, Acts viii. 38, 39. "And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water," &c. What water they found on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is called desert, we know not; but probably

only some small streamlet or spring; as travellers give us no account of any considerable stream in that direction. But if they met with a fountain sufficient for immersion, I wonder that there is nothing said about the change of raiment that is necessary.—But it is said that they both went down, εἰς τὸ ἵδωρ, *into the water*; and came up, ἐκ *out of the water*. This they might do, without his being immersed, as I have said before. But if this form of expression proves that one was immersed, it proves that both were; for it says that they *both went down into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch*. If then it proves any thing, it proves too much: for none, I suppose, would admit that both were immersed. But it is not necessary to suppose that they went into the water at all. The preposition εἰς, here used, is as indefinite, and has as many meanings, as the preposition ἐν, in the former case. It is very often rendered, *to, unto, at, &c.* and the preposition ἐκ, very commonly means *from*. We may therefore, with equal propriety say, they went down both *to* the water, and came up *from* it. There is therefore no proof of immersion here.

The next case we consider, is the Baptism of Paul. (Acts ix. 18.) I think it would be difficult for any one to read the original, in view of the circumstances of the case, and believe that Paul was immersed. He had been blind for three days, and had neither eaten nor drunk, from his great distress of mind. He must therefore have become very feeble. But when Ananias had come and laid hands upon him, and prayed, it is said, “Immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received his sight forthwith, and arose, (ἀναστὰς, *rising, or having arisen,*) was baptized.” Here is nothing like going to a fountain, having change of raiment, or the like; but it seems plainly intimated that he received the ordinance on the spot, either standing on his feet, or sitting up in his bed, if he had been lying, which is probable. Afterwards he received meat and was strengthened. If immersion had been the mode, is it not likely he would have received meat first, while preparation was being made?

We next notice the Baptism of Cornelius and his family. (Acts x. 47.) And here the expression, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized; which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we,” plainly intimates that water was to be brought in a vessel; and could not with any propriety be used, if the person was to be taken to some fountain or pool to be dipped.

The next is the jailer and his household, (Acts xvi. 33.) And here it seems next to impossible to conceive how they could have been immersed in the dead hour of the night, and within the enclosure of the prison: for we cannot suppose they went out to a stream or fountain. The jailer's house was no doubt a part of the prison building; and he brought them out of the dungeon in which they had been confined, into his own house; and having washed their stripes, was straightway, (*παραχρημα* *immediately*,) baptized, he, and all his.

The two passages, Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12, are often referred to as proving immersion. One says, "we are buried with him by Baptism into death;"—the other, "buried with him in Baptism." The language here is evidently figurative; and it is believed by some of the best commentators that there is no reference whatever to the mode of Baptism. But if the burial by Baptism be understood to mean a literal immersion in water; why not take the death as literal also? Buried, *i. e.* immersed, by Baptism, into or *unto death*—and then it would be an immersion like that of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. But it would be difficult to find any similarity between Baptism in any form, and the burial of Christ; whose body was laid in a tomb, in a niche in the side of the wall, and not covered, or buried, in the common sense of that term, at all.

7. I have now gone over the principal cases that touch upon the mode, both in the Baptism of John, and the practice of the apostles: and we have found no place in which immersion is certainly proved; but we have found several, in which it seems improbable, not to say, impossible, that it should have been practised. Can it be then, that so great stress is laid upon the *mode*, in the New Testament, that nothing is Baptism but an entire immersion of the body in water?—that so large a portion of the Christian world has honestly adopted an error upon this subject, that actually unchurches them, and throws them out of God's visible kingdom on earth? I cannot think so.

I have heard the following plan proposed; and I would recommend any one to try it. Let him make four columns on a piece of paper; at the head of the first, put *certainly by immersion*; at the head of the second, *probably by immersion*; of the third, *probably not by immersion*; of the fourth, *certainly not by immersion*. Then let him take his Concordance, and, beginning at the first of Matthew, look for every place in which the word baptize, Baptism, &c. occur in the New Testament; and after

carefully examining the passage, let him set it down under the head to which he may think it belongs. When he has gone through in this way, he will then see how the majority of cases stand, and how the weight of Scripture evidence preponderates. This trial will of course be the fairer, and more correct, if he be acquainted with the original, and use the Greek Concordance, and the Greek Testament instead of the English. For there are a number of places, as we have already seen, in which the original word baptize, is rendered *wash*. These passages, of course, the mere English reader must overlook. The Greek scholar will also know better the force of the original language, and the indefinite character of those Greek prepositions rendered *into*, and *out of*, upon which so great stress is laid in deciding this question. Let any one, I say, pursue this course candidly and fairly; and I believe the result will be, that, under the fourth head, *certainly not by immersion*, he will put down several cases: under the third, *probably not by immersion*, a goodly number: under the second head, *probably by immersion*, he may perhaps put down a few: but under the first head, *certainly by immersion*, he will not be able to put down a single case. He would find however that the word is often used without any allusion to the mode whatever.

I have heard of this case being proposed to a Baptist minister: suppose there had been a law in Judea, making it a capital crime, for one man to immerse another in water: and suppose that John the Baptist had been taken up and brought to trial, under this law, for immersing our Saviour; and that you had been one of the jury in the case. And let it be allowed that all the evidence to be adduced to prove the fact, was the simple statement as we have it in the New Testament by the different evangelists, corroborated by other cases of Baptism mentioned. Now, what would have been your verdict in such a case, on a trial for life and death? The Baptist preacher took a day for consideration: and his answer finally was,—“If I were a Presbyterian as you are, I suppose I should acquit him; but being a Baptist, I should condemn him.” I believe it would be hard for an impartial judge to make out a verdict of guilty, in such a case. The evidence would not be sustained as sufficient in a court of law.