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AN  
HUMBLE ATTEMPT  
TO  
RECONCILE THE DIFFERENCES OF CHRISTIANS  
RESPECTING THE  
**EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT,**  
BY SHOWING THAT THE  
CONTROVERSY WHICH EXISTS ON THE SUBJECT  
IS  
CHIEFLY VERBAL.

To which is added

AN APPENDIX,  
EXHIBITING  
THE INFLUENCE OF CHRIST'S OBEDIENCE.

—◆◆◆—  
BY EDWARD D. GRIFFIN, D. D.

Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Newark, New-Jersey.

—◆◆◆—  
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.....

1819.

*Southern District of New-York, ss*

**B**E it remembered, that on the twenty-sixth day of March, in the 43d year of the Independence of the United States of America, JONATHAN SEYMOUR of the said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

*“An humble attempt to reconcile the differences of Christians respecting the extent of the Atonement, by showing that the controversy which exists on the subject is chiefly verbal To which is added an Appendix, exhibiting the influence of Christ's Obedience By Edward D Griffin, D. D. Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Newark, New-Jersey.”*

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled “An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned:” And also to an Act, entitled, “An Act, supplementary to an Act, entitled, an Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints”

JAMES DILL,  
*Clerk of the Southern District of New York.*

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## PREFACE.

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IF there is a subject within the whole range of thought which calls for the application of our best powers in a course, (I do not say of *metaphysical*, but) of *close* and *patient* investigation, it is the work of redemption. This stupendous plan gives full scope to the higher orders of intellect. "Which things the angels desire to look into." I know not how often, in tracing the following pages, these words have rushed upon my mind with new and deeper reasons for that angelic research. So many are the relations which this great work involves, so complicated and various its influences, so connected it is with some of the abstrusest questions relative to the nature and powers of man, that the more it is studied the less will be the wonder that the best instructed angel is still bending forward with prying scrutiny to look into these things.

And shall the children of a day think that they have learned enough on this amazing subject, when they have gathered a few scraps of knowledge,—half a dozen general notions respecting the mission and work of Christ,—without any definite idea of the end of his atonement, or the purpose which his righteousness was to answer in the government of God? How many alas! calculate thus, and content themselves with knowledge scarcely sufficient to support a general faith. This is the besetting sin and danger of an age of business. Thus men will not reason when they see the Son of God in the clouds of heaven, and find themselves at his bar. These Christians by rote! how much of the real glory of the Gospel do they lose; how much of its amazing views; how much of its sublime consolations; how much of its sanctifying power. And to what hazard do they put their eternal interests. How are

they to know, with such a twilight vision, that it is the real Gospel they believe ? that it is the very Christ of God which fills their eye ? How, unless the clear and distinguishing glory of Messiah falls upon their view, are their selfish hearts to be tested ? Many, it is feared, go down to death from our communion tables, for want of having their hearts revealed and their hopes destroyed by the discriminating light of those rays which beam from the face of Jesus Christ.

It is time that these indolent and contracted calculations were broken up. It is time that men discovered that the "great mystery of godliness" presents a subject for more than general and loose reflections ; that if there is any use for their immortal powers, it is on this vast and unfathomable wonder of redemption.

And now if any are unwilling to harness themselves for a conflict with indolence, and to bring their minds up to patient and elevated thought, let them close the book here. But if they have entered into the feelings of heaven, and caught a desire to search into a subject which a thousand ages of study will not exhaust, let them offer an humble prayer and then begin.

## INTRODUCTION.



THE author of the following sheets has long believed that the controversy existing among Calvinists on the extent of the atonement, is little more than a dispute about words, and might be terminated in a manner satisfactory to both parties by kind and candid explanations. He certainly has no pretensions to any uncommon skill or influence to accomplish so desirable an end; but grieved to find, on his return from a conflict with men of a far different spirit, a division among brethren who are natural allies, and ought to be united in the same mind and judgment, he was constrained to offer his thoughts, in humble hopes of persuading the more candid on both sides that no serious difference exists between them.

In one principle both parties are agreed; that our instructions on this subject are to be drawn from the Scriptures alone, and not from bold and presumptuous speculations. Reason has only to kneel and ask what the Oracle says. Her province is to ascertain the meaning of the sacred page by comparing Scripture with Scripture, and in one description of cases, (but not without great caution and humility,) with common sense. The test of common sense is to be applied only to distinguish between the figurative and literal meaning of texts which were obviously intended to be

subjected to such a scrutiny ; as for instance, those which speak of God's eyes, and hands, and feet, of his repenting, of his fury's coming up in his face, and the like. The right of applying common sense in this description of cases, is a great Protestant principle, asserted by all the Reformed Churches in their disputes with the Romanists about transubstantiation. When our Saviour says, "This is my body," and, "This is my blood," Protestants affirm that his language is figurative, because a literal construction would be an outrage to common sense. In like manner when Christ and believers are said to be one, common sense refuses actually to identify them, and pronounces the language figurative ; for manifestly Christ is not literally one with believers any more than he is with the bread and wine. So when it is said that he was made "*sin* for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the *righteousness* of God in him," common sense decides that *sin* and *righteousness* are both used in a figurative sense ; for Christ was not literally *sin*, but was only *treated* as a *sinner* ; and we are not literally *righteousness*, but are only *treated* as *righteous*\*.

A considerable part of the dispute has arisen from a failure thus to distinguish between the figurative and literal meaning of texts. But there are two other

\* 2 Cor. 5. 21. The first clause cannot be translated, "hath made him to be a *sin-offering*," for that would destroy the antithesis. He was made *sin* just as we are made *righteousness*. Both words are figuratively used, but from their opposition to each other neither can be changed without destroying the point of the sentence. Besides, the former word is restricted by being repeated with a literal meaning ; "who knew no sin." The order of the words in the original is this : "For him who knew no *αμαρτιαν*, for us he hath made *αμαρτιαν*." *Αμαρτιαν* must not be rendered *sin* in one place and a *sin-offering* in another in the same clause of a sentence.

points of difference of still greater influence, one respecting the *nature*, the other the *objects* of the atonement.

One respects the nature. *We* mean by atonement nothing more than that which is the ground of release from the curse, and we separate it entirely from the merit of Christ, or his claim to a reward. Our brethren comprehend under the name, not only what we understand by expiation, but merit also with all its claim. And if they could see the propriety of limiting the term as we do, few of them would deny our conclusions. In their mouth the word is always co-extensive with *ransom*, (*λυτρον*;) the price of redemption, (*λυτρωσις*;) and the question which they raise is about *particular redemption*, on which there really is no dispute; we believing as fully as they do that redemption, in the higher and more perfect sense, was accomplished only for the elect. It is to be noticed that *ransom*, and words of that nature, are used in two senses in the New-Testament; first, for the blood of Christ laid down for a moral agent, to deliver him from death if he on his part will accept the offer. This I call the *lower ransom*, and it is exactly what we mean by the atonement. Secondly, for expiation and merit united. A ransom has two influences; it supports the claim of the redeemer, and it is that out of respect to which the holder of the captives lets them go. According to this, the ransom of Christ includes his merit, which claimed the release of the captives as his reward, and his atonement, out of respect to which, as the honour of the law was concerned, the Father consented to their

discharge. This I call the *higher ransom*, and its absolute and unfailing influence depends on the claim of merit to its stipulated recompense. This was not offered for all; for none of us will say that Christ so purchased the whole race by the merit of his obedience, that he could claim them all as his promised reward.

The second point respects the *objects* of the atonement. We consider the satisfaction as made exclusively for *moral agents*; our brethren speak of it as if it was made for mere *passive subjects of regenerating influence*, and in their reasonings they overlook moral agents. In which character men were really contemplated in the provision, is indeed the question on which the controversy chiefly hinges. If it was made for moral agents, it might be made for those who were never to be regenerated; if made for passive receivers of sanctifying impressions, it was made only for those who are ultimately new-born. If made for the passive, it must be absolute; and if absolute, the event shows that it was not made for all: if made for moral agents, it must be conditional; and if conditional, it could not be limited to a part.

These three points comprehend the whole ground of the dispute. If the parties can discriminate with the same eyes between figurative and literal language, and especially if they can agree to separate atonement from merit, and can be of one mind respecting the character in which men were contemplated in the provision; there will no longer be any difference even in words, and thus this unhappy division will be healed.

# PART I.



## NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT.



### CHAPTER I.

#### ATONEMENT MERELY THE GROUND OF RELEASE FROM THE CURSE.

ATONEMENT is a word wholly derived from the Old Testament, and is not found in the New except once by mistake, where the Greek term ought to have been rendered reconciliation\*. In all other instances throughout the Bible it is a translation from the Hebrew כפר. By this then its meaning must be limited. No Greek word of the New-Testament can be allowed to be parallel with it that differs from כפר in the least shade, and no examination of other terms can throw any light on this question of logomachy. כפר is the only standard by which the meaning of the English word must be controlled and fixed.

Now it is agreed that כפר signified a *covering*, because the thing denoted was a *cover for sin*. It was never used, I believe, in a single instance, (by whatever word translated,) to express any other idea, except when applied to things wholly remote from the present subject. It never glanced at any bearing on our positive reward. A fair specimen of its use may be seen in the following passages. "Moses said unto

\* Rom. 5. 11.



the people, ye have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up unto the Lord, peradventure I shall make an *atonement* for your sin." "I have sworn unto the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be *purged*, [covered,] with sacrifice nor offering for ever." "By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be *purged*; and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin." "The wrath of a king is as messengers of death, but a wise man will *pacify* it." "I will *appease* him with the present that goeth before me\*." The typical expiations denoted by the word were generally made by the **חַטָּאת** or *sin-offering*, and sometimes by the **זֶשֶׁן** or *trespass-offering*, two words derived from roots signifying a *sin* and a *trespass*, and the former root sometimes the act of cleansing by a *sin-offering*†.

And now to follow these shadows into the Gospel dispensation, the Hebrew words which denoted the sin and trespass-offering are translated by the LXX, (the former repeatedly‡, the latter once§,) *ἵλασμος*, (and its derivative *ἐξίλασμος*,) the very word by which John twice designates the great propitiatory sacrifice||, offered by our High-Priest "to atone, (*ἱλασκεσθαι*,) for the sins of the people¶." The atonement of the New Testament, then, was made by "an offering FOR SIN\*\*," and by a "propitiation for our sins." That which was accomplished by the great *sin-offering*, answers exactly to the **כַּפֵּר** of the Old Testament, and is that *cover for sin* which we call the atonement.

We have therefore no authority to call any part of Christ's influence an atonement but that which consti-

\* Gen. 32. 20. Ex. 32. 30. 1 Sam. 3. 14. Prov. 16. 14. Is. 27. 9.  
 —† Ez. 43. 22, 23. —‡ Ez. 43. 22, 23, & 44. 27, & 45. 18, 19. —  
 § Amos 8. 14. —|| 1 John 2. 2, & 4. 10. —¶ Heb. 2. 17. —\*\* Is.  
 53. 10.

tuted the cover for sin. Whatever other influence he had must be distinguished by a different name. Other influences he certainly had. Other influences are even ascribed to his death. But his death comprehended not only an atoning sacrifice, but the highest merit of obedience. To his blood our justification is once ascribed\*; but justification in that passage means only pardon, as it does also in another place†. Sometimes the sacred writers, taking it for granted that more is known of Christ than that he atoned, pass in their rapid course from his expiation to the life which comes through him, without stopping to notice any intervening influence. But whatever is ascribed to his death, whatever to his blood, whatever to him as the *ἰλαστήριον* or mercy-seat‡, or as having opened a way to the mercy-seat by the rending of the vail of his flesh§, still the meaning of *כַּפֵּר* confines the atonement to the cover for sin.

One might suppose that the Synod of Dort, that great representative of the Calvinistic world, had the same view. They every where speak of the atonement as made *for sin*, and talk of its sufficiency, (*ad omnia peccata expianda*, as their common phrase is,) to expiate for the sins of the whole world. And this is the uniform acceptance of the word in common conversation, which shows the general impression as to its original meaning. To atone, in every one's mouth is to make reparation for an injury or amends for an offence.

Now *to cover sin* is a figurative expression, and plainly means no more than that sin is so far hid from view *that it is not to be punished*. Atonement then is

\* Rom. 5. 9.—† Acts 13. 39.—‡ Rom. 3. 25, 26.—§ Heb. 10. 19, 20.

merely that which was adapted to *prevent punishment*, or that which came in the room of punishment and laid a foundation for our discharge from every part of the curse. It reached no further, and had no bearing on our positive reward. This was left to another influence hereafter to be considered.

The curse of the law consisted of two parts, abandonment to depravity and positive misery. That the former was included requires some proof. The law, I suppose, had doomed mankind, I do not say to *sin*, (for to punish sin with sin, or judicially to doom agents to act, is a thing unknown,) but to the everlasting loss of the sanctifying agency of God. If there is such a thing as leaving men to judicial blindness; if in anger God abandons sinners "unto their own heart's lust," to walk "in their own counsels," saying, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man;" if for their iniquities he gives "them over to a reprobate mind," saying, "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed\*;" then there is such a thing as abandoning sinners by way of punishment. And how, I ask, without giving them up to tormenting passions, could there be such a hell as the divine law contemplates? And why should it be thought more inconsistent to withhold the Spirit by way of punishment, than to bestow it, (as we shall see that it is bestowed,) by way of reward? It greatly supports this idea that the mission of the Spirit was not obtained for a sinful world but by the death of a Mediator. "It is expedient for you that I go away;

\* Gen. 6. 3. Ps. 31. 12. Is. 6. 9—12. Rom. 1. 24—32.

for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you." And when he "ascended on high," among other "gifts" "received for men" was this, "that the Lord God might dwell among them;" and within ten days he sent the blessing forth\*.

These were the two parts of the penalty of the law, and one could no more be set aside without an atonement than the other. But the cover for sin removed or rendered removable every part of the curse which sin had incurred. That which came in the room of our whole punishment, took away the curse of abandonment, and rendered sin pardonable on the supposition of faith, and when accepted by the Father, made remission sure to believers. Further it could not go, and had nothing to do with our positive reward†.

\* Ps. 68. 18. John 16. 7. Acts 2.

† Some have thought that the cover for sin must be extended so far as to include a foundation for our reward, by cancelling, not only the *debitum penæ*, (debt of punishment,) but the *debitum negligentie*, (debt of negligence.) But negligence, after taking from it every thing which deserves *punishment*, is not *sin*, but a mere defect, and therefore is not to be remedied by the cover for sin. It is said that sin disabled us from gaining a legal title to a reward, and a cover for sin is not complete till it has provided for restoring the title by grace. But it was not sin that produced the disability which remains after the debt of *punishment* is cancelled. All sin is then covered, but even then we have not a perfect righteousness from the beginning to show, and it is too late to produce one. This is the only difficulty. But that omission of obedience, you say, was sin, and defrauded God of his rights, and drew down a sentence of disfranchisement, cutting us off from ever gaining a reward. The omission was indeed sin, because it was disobedience. The whole sin lay in the disobedience, "for sin is the transgression of the law." But there was something more in the omission than sin, there was a defect; there was something more in it than disobedience, there was the want of obedience. As it stood related to the rights and demands of God, it was positive injury and disobedience; as it stood related to the promise, it was a mere failure to produce that positive good to which

When I say that the curse of abandonment was removed, I do not mean that the *law* ceased to pronounce the sentence on men. The law never ceases to pronounce any part of its sentence against those who have once sinned, even after they are pardoned. But what I mean is, that it was as consistent with the honour of the law to give the Spirit to men as though the curse of abandonment had not been pronounced or incurred. It was not indeed consistent with the highest honour of the law to give the Spirit to men till the merit of Christ was introduced to make the gift a legal reward to him. But it was as consistent as though the curse

the promise was made. The reward was promised, not to the absence of sin, but to positive obedience; and the mere want of that positive thing, without the presence of sin, is enough to vitiate our title, and remains a defect after all sin, even the sin of "negligence," is covered. On the other hand, all that was threatened to sin was punishment, not the loss of reward; that followed the mere want of obedience, not viewed as disobedience, but as the bare absence of good. There was no need of a sentence of disfranchisement to cut us off from reward. The mere failure to render that to which the promise was made, without such a sentence, was enough to exclude us. If I promise a man a certain reward for a day's work, and he comes at noon, there is no need of a punitive sentence to vitiate his title to the stipulated recompense. His mere failure cuts him off without involving the idea of punishment. You say the cases are not parallel, because his failure violated no obligation. But so far as our omission violated obligation, it was sin, it was disobedience, and stands related, not to the loss of reward, but to positive punishment. In that omission there are two things, a sin and a defect,—the presence of that which entitles to punishment, and the absence of that which entitles to reward; and when all the sin of the omission is covered, there still remains a defect which prevents our title to a recompense. When the *debitum penæ* is cancelled all the sin of the omission is covered, and the *debitum negligentia* which remains must be discharged by another influence. That other influence is the merit of Christ's obedience, and the way in which it procured our positive good, was by first obtaining it as a legal reward to himself. As certainly then as we spread the cover for sin over the *debitum negligentia*, and make it the foundation of our reward, we put *merit*, and not merely by the *testimony* of obedience, into the atonement.

had not been pronounced. The curse therefore no longer stood in the way. It was as consistent as though there had been no sin. But after sin was covered, so far as it stood related to this part of the curse, there still remained a defect of positive righteousness. And it was the principle of Eden, as will appear in another place, not to grant the Spirit, after man had had an opportunity to act, but in approbation of a righteousness perfect for the time the subject had been in existence, and not to grant it as a covenanted reward but out of respect to a finished righteousness. After sin was covered, the Spirit could not be granted, according to that original principle, but out of respect to the perfect righteousness of Christ. The cover for sin was not therefore enough to open the way for the mission of the Spirit. All that it could do was to remove the obstruction which *sin* had raised, or that which lay in the curse of abandonment, but not that which was occasioned by the defect. This is what I mean by removing the curse of abandonment.

This part of the curse was removed without the agency of man as a prerequisite. That is, the obstruction which *sin* had raised to the grant of *regenerating* influence to passive receivers, was taken away without reference to the conduct of the same creatures as agents. No such prerequisite could be required without preventing the removal altogether, because the curse must be taken away, and regenerating influence bestowed, before men would be holy. And in the nature of things such a prerequisite could not be necessary. After such a death to support the penalty of the law, the influence of the penalty could not be weakened by any favour shown to men, unless it spread a shield over irreclaimable wickedness. An influence to

*turn them from wickedness* could not abate the authority of the penalty. The atonement therefore rendered it consistent with the honour of the law, so far as the influence of the penalty was concerned, to bestow regenerating grace on men, without any previous faith or repentance. And this is what I mean by removing the curse of abandonment.

It was not so with the other part of the penalty. This could not be removed without the intervention of human agency. For to have applied actual remission to those who should persist in rebellion, and thus to have cast the shield of impunity over stubborn transgressors, would have ruined the law and defeated the very end of the atonement. Pardon then could not be dispensed, (to those who hear and understand the Gospel,) without the existence of faith; and no atonement could absolutely procure pardon which did not as absolutely procure the gift of faith. Whether the atonement contained all that influence which ensured actual reconciliation, depends therefore on the single question whether by its own unaided power it secured the gift of faith. That *some* influence of Christ secured this gift to the elect, we admit and earnestly contend; but was it the atonement?

This is not the place to settle a question of this sort, or to say any more about it than what is suggested by the name. The *cover for sin* could only prevent the evil which sin deserved, but could not secure positive good, unless the mere absence of sin without positive righteousness could secure good. How then could it obtain the Spirit? But you say, it could not *cover sin* without actual pardon, and it could not secure pardon without obtaining the gift of faith. True, nor does the name determine whether it is the actual cover of sin or

only a cover *for* sin. A cover for a cask is still called by that name though it is not put on, and has an actual and complete existence without being used. There may be a cover for a moral agent, which at the risk of an awful responsibility he still rejects.

This leads me to remark that if the atonement was a provision for moral agents, it is wrong to say that it was made only for believers. Though Christ is not a *mercy-seat*, (*ἰλαστήριον*,) but “through faith in his blood\*,” (cannot otherwise be propitious, or render God propitious, to those who approach him,) and though the atonement was to be *applied* only to believers; yet as moral agents have an existence independent of their character, so far as it was a provision for such, it was prepared for them while yet in their sins. In this sense it might be made for “the ungodly,” for those who are neither “righteous” nor “good,” but “sinners” and “enemies†.”

One point is fixed: the *cover for sin* could reach no further than the curse which sin had incurred, and could extend no influence to our positive reward, unless reward follows the mere absence of sin without positive righteousness. It is this limitation of the atonement, every where conspicuous in the Scriptures, which has given rise to the opinion that the *whole* influence of Christ is confined to pardon. With that thought I have no communion, and hope to show in the Appendix that his merit is the ground of all our positive happiness; but in the body of the work I have nothing to do with any thing but the *cover for sin*.

\* Rom. 3. 25.

† Rom. 5. 6—10.



## CHAPTER II.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ATONEMENT UPON DIVINE  
GOVERNMENT.

WHAT end did the death of Christ answer as an atoning sacrifice? It opened the way for the pardon of believers. But why could not believers have been pardoned without it? *How* did it open the way? I am not answered by being told that it expressed the wisdom and benevolence of God. Until I discover some important end answered by it, I can see no wisdom or benevolence in it, but something very much like a waste of human life. What was that end? Do you tell me that the eternal principles of justice required that sin should be punished? But sin was not punished; for innocence suffered and sin escaped. What end was answered by laying this affliction on the innocent? Precisely the same, as respects the support of law, that would have been answered by our punishment. The atonement, we have seen, was a cover for sin,—was adapted so to bury sin from view that it should not be punished. It therefore came exactly in the room of punishment, and ought to answer the same end. When it had done that, it had removed the necessity of punishment, and constituted a complete cover for sin. It might answer that purpose more fully, but we have no right to ascribe to it any other end.

What end then does punishment answer? The same that was aimed at in attaching the penalty to the law, only in a more intense degree. And what was that? The support of the authority of the law. Without a penalty the law is nothing more than a summary of ad-

vice, which every one is at liberty to regard or neglect as he pleases. Did the penalty show God's attachment to the precept? But how? By being set to guard the precept, or to give authority to the law. In this way alone it revealed any thing of God. Whatever of him was shown by bringing forward a sanction *to support the authority of a holy and benevolent law*, and nothing more, was disclosed by the penalty. The sole end of the penalty then was to support the authority of the law, and to discover as much of God as such an expedient for such a purpose could reveal. The support of law therefore comprehended all other ends, and may be put for the whole. The same end is answered by the execution of the penalty, only in a higher degree. Without the execution it would have been the same as though no penalty had existed. The law would have lost its authority, the reins would have been thrown upon the neck of every passion, anarchy, discord, and misery would have ravaged the abodes of being, and all the happiness which is bottomed on holy order, and all the discoveries of God which are made in a holy and vigorous moral government, would have been lost. This unbounded mischief would have followed a prostration of the authority of the law: that prostration would have followed a proclamation of impunity to transgression: and this proclamation would have been implied in a neglect to execute the penalty. The only way to prevent this infinite mischief, was to proclaim and prove that transgressors should be punished. In this single declaration and proof the whole antidote lay. For whatever else of God was proved, if it did not go to establish this, it could not uphold the authority of the law. If it proved that he was holy, or just, or good, or true, or wise, or attached to his precept, or

all these together, it could not support the authority of the law any further than it gave evidence that transgressors should be punished. Nothing of God could be expressed by punishment but what is contained in the single proposition that he does and will support his righteous law by punishing transgressors. Did it express his holiness, justice, benevolence, and wisdom? But how? By showing his determination to uphold the authority of a righteous law by punishing sin. Besides furnishing motives to obedience, it was intended to set him forth as the object of confidence, complacency, joy, and praise. But how? By showing his inflexible purpose to maintain his holy and benevolent law by adequate punishments. The ultimate end of government, as of all other things, was to exhibit the glory of God, so needful to the happiness of his kingdom, and to secure to him that treatment which was his due, and in which the blessedness of creatures was involved. This was the ultimate end of punishment. But before it could answer this end it must accomplish an immediate purpose subservient to government and the dominion of holiness. Before it could express the holiness, justice, benevolence, or wisdom of God, or hold him up as an object of confidence, complacency, joy, or praise, it must be fitted to answer an important end subservient to the reign of holy principles. What was that end? The support of the authority of a righteous law by discovering a fixed resolution to punish transgressors. This then was the immediate and proper end of punishment. In that punishment I care not how much of God you suppose to be revealed,—how much attachment to his law, how much hatred of sin, how much justice, or even truth: you may add more or less of these things; but the whole is expressed in the sin-

gle proposition that he will support his righteous law by punishing sin. To give proof that he will punish, is certainly disclosing every thing of God which punishment can reveal. The end of punishment then in any given instance, besides pronouncing the subject personally ill-deserving, and being an exercise of justice in that particular case, is merely to uphold the authority of the law by revealing God's determination to punish transgression.

Precisely the same was the end of that which came in the room of punishment and answered its identical purpose. In whatever the atonement consisted, it expressed all that punishment would have expressed, except that the Sufferer was personally a sinner; and was all that punishment would have been, except a literal execution of justice. This it could not be. Justice never required the personally innocent to suffer, but the personally guilty; and no plan of substitution or representation, and nothing but a personal identity between Christ and the sinner, rendering him personally a transgressor, could make out an act of literal justice in the infliction of sufferings on him. Equally certain it is that the sufferings did not pronounce him personally a sinner. These two uses of punishment being separated from the atonement, the only end remaining is, the support of the law by showing God's determination to execute its penalty on transgressors. This was its precise and only end. This answered, it became an expression of amazing wisdom, benevolence, and mercy, and laid a foundation for the most luminous display of all the divine perfections in the application and progress of redemption. But before it could do this it must answer an end properly its own, which therefore is to be considered the immediate and proper end of

the atonement; and that was what has already been stated. It made an impression on the universe, stronger than would have been made by the destruction of all Adam's race, that God was determined, notwithstanding his mercy to men, to support the authority of his law by executing its penalty on transgressors. How much was implied in this declaration, I am not concerned to inquire;—how far it “condemned sin in the flesh,” how far it pronounced transgression to be as hell-deserving as the law had said, how far it asserted the rectitude of the divine government and took the part of the Father against the sins of the world. If it answered any or all of these ends, as it undoubtedly did, it was by giving the Father an opportunity to prove to the universe that he would execute his law on future transgressors. It expressed every thing, (except that the Sufferer was a personal sinner,) that could have been expressed by punishment, or that could be implied in a determination to punish the future transgressors of a holy law. In the expression of punishment or a determination to punish, you may comprehend as much as you please: the same was expressed by the atonement. Say that punishment or a determination to punish proves that God is just, and attached to his law, and believes it good, and is like it himself, and hates sin, and if you please, is a Being of truth; then all these were expressed in that single declaration of the atonement that he would punish sin. Every thing of God which punishment could reveal, was disclosed by an atonement which proved that he would punish. Every end which punishment could answer, (except a literal execution of justice, and an implication of the moral turpitude of the sufferer,) was accomplished by an atonement which proved that God

would punish. The whole use then of an atonement which was to answer the exact purpose of punishment, was to show that God was determined to support his holy law by punishing sin.

Let me illustrate the operation of this august measure by the following case. The bank of England is essential to the prosperity of the nation. The law against forgery, with its penalty of death, is essential to the existence of the bank. Ten noblemen are found counterfeiting the notes of that institution. What is to be done? If the law is not executed every one will conclude that he may counterfeit with impunity, and the bank and the nation are lost. They must die. In this state of things the prince of Wales comes forward and offers to die in their stead. The offer is accepted, and on a conspicuous hill in full view of the assembled nation he is executed. What impression is made on the multitude? Do they now conclude that people may counterfeit with impunity, because they see the penitent noblemen pardoned? No, they are more deeply impressed with the inflexible resolution of government to punish forgery, than though half a nation of counterfeiters had died. This is the point gained. The law is raised to the highest pitch of authority by the strongest possible proof that its penalty will in future be executed.

In giving this proof, for such a purpose and at such a price, the government showed their attachment to the law, their abhorrence of forgery, and their determination to be just in the future infliction of punishment, though justice in that instance did not literally take its course. But they showed these things through no other medium than a fixed resolution at all events to execute the penalty of the law. In the discovery of this single purpose the whole expression was involved.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE MATTER OF ATONEMENT.

IN examining this subject it is necessary to keep immoveably before the eye the end which an atonement was intended to answer in the government of God. It was the same that would have been answered by punishment. And what was that? To furnish practical proof that God would support the authority of his law by executing its penalty on transgressors. When that proof was given, and the end of punishment was thus answered, the Protector of the law was *satisfied*. The thing which produced that satisfaction, was the atonement or cover for sin. When I ask after the *matter* of the atonement, I ask what that thing was. What was that by which the Protector of the law furnished the same practical proof of his resolution to execute the penalty, that he would have given by punishment itself? My general answer is, it was *humiliation imposed and sufferings inflicted by his own authority and hand on his beloved Son*. What could so naturally show that God would inflict evil for sin, as the actual infliction of evil on account of sin? as the tokens of wrath discharged against the Son of his love standing avowedly in the place of sinners?

The law, as it stood related to transgressors, had two parts, precept and penalty. As it stood related to those who had not sinned, it had also a reward for obedience, and I add, for nothing but obedience. Accordingly the task devolved on him who took the sinner's place, consisted of two parts; obedience which stood related to the precept, and sufferings which came

in the room of the penalty. By obedience also, and nothing but obedience, he obtained a reward in which his people were to share. In accordance with all this our salvation consists of two parts; a release from the penalty, and a participation of the positive good involved in Christ's reward. Here then in one line were the penalty of the law, the sufferings of Christ which came in its room, and our release from the penalty as the consequence. Here also in another line, were the precept of the law with the reward of obedience annexed, the obedience of Christ with the reward which followed, and our admission to the positive good involved in that reward. All this appears plain and natural. The sufferings and obedience of Christ, two parts inseparable in fact but separable in influence, constituted one whole. That was followed by another whole, to wit our salvation, consisting of two parts, equally inseparable in fact but separable in contemplation, viz. deliverance from hell and elevation to heaven. Now what I assert is, that the appropriate influence of one part of the first whole stood related to one part of the second whole, and that the appropriate influence of the other part of the first whole stood related to the other part of the second whole; in plain language, that the sufferings of Christ came in the room of our sufferings, and his merit in the room of our merit; that by one he lifted us from hell to earth, by the other he raised us from earth to heaven.

There is a distinction to be set up here between the *matter* of atonement and the *making* of atonement. The matter of atonement was the thing which satisfied, the making of atonement was the presenting of that thing. When Aaron offered an expiating victim he



was said to make atonement, though the atoning power did not lie in Aaron's arm, but in the bleeding lamb; and though Aaron's action could have no other effect than to present the victim to God according to his appointment, in other words, to bring it, with whatever power it had, into the necessary relation to God. According to the same form of expression, the *Priest* of the New-Testament is said "to atone for the sins of the people," and "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself\*." The same form of expression is used whenever we speak of Christ's *making* atonement. And it is common also in other matters. It is medicine, and not the act of the physician, which works the cure. But it must be *administered*, and administered in a *right way*. And when this is done we commonly say, the physician healed the patient. So it was the sufferings of Christ and not his action which satisfied: but they must be presented by the Priest, and presented in a right way, that is, unmixed with any disobedience in his life: and when all this is done we very properly say that Christ made atonement; not only ascribing to him the effect of his sufferings, but referring to his act in presenting them. The obedience of Christ was necessary to atonement in the two following respects.

(1.) To render him, in typical language, a Lamb *without blemish*. In plain language, his general obedience, (and of course his general subjection to law,) was necessary to set him forth as the *beloved Son*, and thus to render his sufferings sufficiently expressive of God's inflexible resolution to punish sin. He must be infinitely dear to God to give his sufferings this full expression. He must be the Son, and the well beloved

\* Heb. 2. 17. and 9. 26.

Son, to be thus dear. He must be subject and obedient during his probation, to be, in the eyes both of God and man, the well beloved Son; for obedience constituted as essential a part of the filial relation during his minority, as inheritance does since he has come of age. There being but one Lawgiver, and essentially but one law, this subjection of the Son placed him completely under the law given to other creatures. And when he was under law, he was not only bound by the precept, but liable to the penalty in case of disobedience. And now his general obedience became still more necessary to qualify him to make atonement, as in case of disobedience, so far from being able to expiate for the sins of others, he must have suffered for his own. Obedience in this view went merely to qualify his sufferings.

(2.) The act of the Priest in presenting the Victim must necessarily be an act of obedience. The Father must command him to die, or the stroke would not have come from his own hand\*. But the infliction must be made by the very Magistrate who is thereby to show that he will punish others. At his command the Victim must be bound, at his word the stroke must be given, and under his authority and hand the Substitute must die. But in no way could the stroke be inflicted by divine authority, but either by being obediently submitted to, or by being forced by main strength upon one struggling against the authority; in which latter case the sufferings would have been personally de-

\* Compulsion, before the Son was subject to law, would neither have been possible nor just. And after he became subject, with a perfect willingness to die, there was no way to control him which was necessary, or proper, or suited to display him as the obedient Son, but through the medium of his will.

served, and could no more have atoned than the pains of the damned. The necessity of the command appears in another point of view. The satisfaction must be rendered to One holding the authority of the Godhead, and of course by One not on the throne, and therefore, as the throne of God must reign over all beneath it, by One under law: and when he was under law, he had no right to die uncommanded. A mere consent of the Father in such a case was impossible. There is no indifference in God, especially in matters of so much importance; and a distinct expression of his will, however mild in form, must have had all the authority of a command.

Accordingly the Scriptures teach us that the whole appointment to the priestly office came from the throne. "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee\*;" alluding to the subjection which goes into the very idea of sonship. The same Scriptures teach us that the death of Christ was obedience; (or rather I will say, that his *consent* to die was such; for we cannot ascribe obedience to mere passivity or suffering, it being in its very nature active, and always consisting in some act of the mind, terminating there, or producing some act of body, or preventing some act of body or mind.) "This commandment have I received of my Father." "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." "Lo I come to do thy will, O God:—by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." He "took upon him the form of a servant,"

\* Heb. 5. 4, 5.

and “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross\*.” By this command on the one part and obedience on the other the Father appeared demanding satisfaction, and laying on the stroke with his own hand. “It pleased the Lord to bruise him.” “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all,” saying, “Awake, O sword, against—my Fellow†.”

The whole influence of this act of the Son lay in its being an exercise of obedience. It was not merely a consent to die *after* being commanded, but *as* one commanded; a consent to be dragged to execution as a culprit by divine authority, that the stroke might come from him who was wont to act as the legal Executioner. The whole efficacy of the act was the pure efficacy of obedience, not as a merit, nor as a testimony, but as mere submission to divine authority. Had it not been obedience, the sufferings would have been of no validity, for they would not have been exacted by the supreme Magistrate from the beloved Son, nor have been any evidence that he would punish others. The whole effect of the act was to bring the sufferings into a proper relation to God by drawing out the stroke from his own hand.

This discloses the very influence of what was set forth by the action of the priest under the old dispensation. To draw my language from that type, it was necessary that the divine Victim should be offered by God’s appointed Priest, and according to his command and direction. The action of the Priest, when stript of its figurative garb, was the mere yielding of sufferings to the demand of the supreme Magistrate. What did the action of the ancient priests express? Merely that the

\* John 10. 18. & 14. 31. Phil. 2. 8. Heb. 10. 9, 10.—† Is. 53. 6, 10. Zech. 13. 7.

victim was offered *to God according to his direction*. And what did the obedient consent of our High Priest express? Merely that the Victim was offered *to God agreeably to his appointment*. The whole need of this pontifical act was the need which existed that the sufferings should be *inflicted by the Father's authority and hand*.

These two operations of obedience had the exact effect to secure the infliction of sufferings on the *beloved Son* by the *Father's hand*. One qualified the Sufferer by rendering him dear to the Father, the other brought his sufferings into the necessary relation to God. Now did obedience enter into the *matter* of the atonement by answering either of these purposes? But other things answered these purposes which were never put into the *matter* of the atonement.

(1.) There were other things which constituted the personal qualifications of the Sufferer, which were never put into the *matter* of the atonement. These were, first, infinite dignity, necessary to render him *infinitely* dear and of infinite *value* in the sight of God: secondly, a passible nature, rendering his sufferings possible: thirdly, humanity, instead of the angelic nature, that he might have a life to lose without being annihilated; that he might suffer in the very nature which was polluted with sin, and endure the very death which transgression had brought upon the race. It was necessary for him to be a man for other reasons. If his obedience must be familiarly exhibited before the world to set him forth as the *beloved Son* of God, he must obey the law which men were accustomed to contemplate; his obedience must be expressed by actions common to them, and under circumstances trying to feelings belonging to their nature. He must

of course be bound by the particular law given to man; and this he could not be without being a man. For instance, he could not be bound to deny his bodily appetites if he had not a body. He could not be laid under obligation by the seventh commandment in particular, if he did not possess such appetites as are common to men\*. There was another reason which does not belong to the present subject. He must have all the sensibilities and trials of our nature, that he might become an object of easy, familiar, and affectionate confidence, as One who had learned from experience to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities†.

But we do not put into the matter of atonement the passible nature and humanity of Christ, though they were necessary qualifications to fit him to make expiation; nor yet his dignity, though that was necessary for much the same reason that his general obedience was. Why then should his obedience be thus distinguished?

Supposing the interest which he had in the Father's heart had not been founded on his holy and obedient character, but on such natural affections as exist in men; should we then put his influence as a Son into the matter of atonement? Suppose your son, who has no hold of your heart but what nature gave him, should undertake to suffer under your authority for a rebellious servant. Your affection for him makes his sufferings expressive and convincing to the servants of your firm resolution to support the authority of your

\* I do not take into consideration the necessity of his *honouring* by obedience the *same law* which men had refused to obey. That was a matter which bore relation to his *reward*.

† Heb. 2. 14—18.

laws. That practical proof of your resolution is what *satisfies* you as guardian of the domestic code. The *means* of that satisfaction is the matter of atonement in the case. Was his influence upon your heart any part of that which satisfied? No, it only enabled his *sufferings* to discharge that office.

(2.) There were other things which affected the *relations* of his sufferings which were never put into the matter of atonement. First, the voluntary consent of the Second Person to come under the obligation of a command to die. This was necessary to render the command just, and thus to place the sufferings in a proper relation to God and his law; as otherwise they would have been the sufferings of a martyr, (allowing the infliction of them to have been possible,) and instead of showing that God would punish transgressors, would only have proved that he would oppress the innocent\*. But certainly we cannot put into the atonement an act performed before there was a Mediator. Secondly, his subjection to the law given to man. This was necessary that the stroke which fell on him, though not a literal execution of the law, might more familiarly appear to be inflicted for the sin of man: and so far as it had this effect, it brought his sufferings into a proper relation to man, and to the Being against whom man had sinned. Thirdly, the laying of the scene of his sufferings in this world. This also was calculated to make a more distinct impression that he suffered for the sins of the human race, and served to bring his death into a proper relation to him against whom the human race had rebelled.

\* I do not say that the consent of the Son *while under law* was necessary to render his sufferings just; for had he refused after his subjection, what he endured and infinitely more would have been the just desert of personal delinquency.

But though his antecedent consent, his subjection to the law given to man, and his residence in our world, had a necessary influence on the relations of his sufferings, who ever put either of them into the matter of the atonement? Why then should his obedience receive that distinction?

There are but four lights in which imagination itself can view the obedience of Christ as related to the atonement.

(1.) As mere submission to authority, and as such going simply to constitute a relation. This was its use in the act of the Priest. The influence of that act lay not in its being a merit, or a testimony, or in its rendering the Agent dear to the Father, but merely in its placing him under the control of authority.

(2.) As a qualification rendering him *dear* to the Father, not with any reference to a reward, not therefore as a merit, but merely to give his sufferings sufficient expression. This was its use in constituting the well beloved Son, or in typical language, the Lamb without blemish.

(3.) As a testimony, by which something was pronounced respecting God and his law.

(4.) As a merit, standing related to a reward. The very idea of merit is, that it is something which *deserves* approbation, reward, or whatever else befits the subject.

Obedience, as it stands related to *the honour of the law*, is a testimony; obedience, (the same identical act,) as it stands related to a *reward*, is merit. No matter in what it consists, whether in bearing witness, (one may be rewarded for giving testimony,) or in yielding to sufferings, or in performing any other service; yet as it stands related to a reward, it is merit.



By merit I shall therefore mean obedience viewed in the light of claiming a recompense.

If obedience entered into the matter of atonement, it must have been in one of these four shapes. The first two have already been considered, the last two are yet to be examined.

Did then the obedience of Christ enter into the matter of atonement in the form of a *testimony*? And here it must be steadily kept in mind that the great point to be proved was, that God would support the authority of his law by punishing sin\*. And now I will show you,

(1.) That the obedience of Christ gave no such testimony;

(2.) That if it did, atonement was not made by tes-

\* It has been said in a loose and indefinite way, that the testimony of Christ's obedience honoured the law, and so rendered the pardon of sin more consistent with its honour. But because it honoured the law in one way, it does not follow that it honoured it in the *same way* that punishment would have done, or in such a way as in any degree to answer in the room of punishment. Because a man has been honoured by a commission, it does not follow that it has become consistent with his honour to conceal a culprit from the law, or to pass by a malignant insinuation against himself. What was to be done to render the pardon of sin consistent with the honour of the law? Proof was to be given that the authority of the law should still be supported by punishment. Could the obedience of Christ furnish that proof? This is the sole question. The testimony of his obedience did indeed honour the law; but that honouring was required for a different purpose, to render *positive good* communicable in a way honourable to the law. This, no less than pardon, must be dispensed in such a way. It was a principle of the first covenant that none should be rewarded till they had honoured the law by the testimony of a perfect obedience. That principle was not to be given up; and therefore Christ must obey before he could be rewarded with that positive good which was intended for men. It has been said that obedience and sufferings united their testimony to certain truths. But did they unite their testimony to prove that God would punish? Did obedience give this testimony? If not, it testified nothing to the purpose.

timony, but by giving the Father opportunity and means to testify in his own name.

(1.) The obedience of Christ gave no such testimony. It declared indeed that the Sacred Persons were attached to the precept, and were like it themselves, and were willing, so far as the expression of these truths could avail, to promote obedience in creatures. But did all this prove that God would punish sin? No, for first, we have the testimony of facts that these attributes are not inseparable. How many parents, good themselves, and affirming their laws to be good, like old Eli, are irresolute in punishing. And until you first prove the inflexible resolution and universal consistency of God, you know not that the attributes are united in him, and cannot argue from one to the other. But after it was given out that man was to be pardoned, whatever evidence had existed before, there was not now sufficient light respecting that resolution and consistency, till the sufferings of the beloved Son furnished it. And God plainly so declared by resorting to this new revelation of the very things in question. The proof of that resolution and consistency must be *completed, by first proving that he would punish*, and proving it by the sufferings of Christ, before one could infer from his holiness and attachment to the precept that he would punish, and before a testimony to that holiness and attachment could throw any light on the latter question. The proof that he would punish must first be completed; and that completion finished the atonement, for the only object of the atonement, as we have seen, was to prove that God would punish. Secondly, before this new revelation was completed and had decided otherwise, it could not be known that occasional exercises of absolute clemency were not consistent with a perfect character

and government, because it could not be known that they would not subserve some important end. Indeed after it was known that man was to be pardoned, and before the great substitution was revealed, the manifestations of God were decidedly in favour of the conclusion, allowing his character and government to be perfect, that absolute clemency in some instances was consistent with the perfection of both. Until then the atonement by its finished testimony had decided the question, no proof of God's holiness and attachment to his precept, nor yet of the consistency and perfection of his character, could evince a uniform resolution to inflict evil on account of sin. And it cannot be doubted that one end of the atonement was to convince the universe that no such exercise of absolute clemency could consist with a perfect government. Thirdly, whatever might be supposed to have dictated the clemency to man, whether wisdom or weakness, yet when the purpose was known, to all the proofs that God would punish drawn from the general perfection of his nature, the answer would still be returned, *He was such before, and yet he resolved not to punish man.* Until a great and direct practical proof was given that he would punish, testimonies to his holiness and attachment to his precept could throw *no light* on his future rigour, for still the answer would be, All this he was before, and yet he did not punish man.

Let us put these things together and see what would naturally be the cogitations of creatures in the different stages of divine manifestations. From the precept, the penalty, the punishment of devils, and all other exhibitions of God, there was evidence enough before man fell to persuade the well-informed that God would punish. But now a new thing is revealed ;

man is to be pardoned. This raises a doubt how far God will punish in future. Whence the failure no one can tell, for none can know any thing of God further than he is revealed in words or actions. A consistory is held in heaven, and the question is, will God punish hereafter? Here is a fact before them; man has transgressed and is not to be punished. Whence has the fact arisen? From any reluctance to rigour inconsistent with energy of government? "God is not sufficiently revealed," says Raphael. Gabriel comes forward with testimony that God is holy and attached to his precept, as an argument that he will punish. "It does not answer," says Ithuriel; "he was as holy and as much attached to his law before, and yet he would not punish man." Here Abdiel rises. "For my part," says he, "I am persuaded that our blessed Creator is perfect, and that it consists with that perfection to let sin sometimes escape without rebuke. Shall not patience and clemency be displayed as well as justice? I have heard the proof of God's holiness and attachment to his precept; I believe it all, but am not convinced that he will always be severe. I am bound to form my opinions of God from what he appears in his words and actions. He has not said that he will always punish\*; but in this glorious clemency to man he has plainly said that he will not; and no proof of his perfection can convince me that what he now declares is false."

It is plain that no evidence of God's holiness and attachment to his precept can convince Ithuriel or Abdiel that he will always exercise rigour, or furnish

\* The legal threatening is not a pledge of *truth* that the sinner will be punished; (for then how is that pledge redeemed when he is pardoned by the sufferings of another?) but a mere declaration of what is just and may ordinarily be expected.

*the least light* to lead them to such a conclusion. There must be a new revelation, made by actually inflicting evil on account of the sin of man. And when those holy beings saw the sword of the Almighty thrust through the heart of his beloved Son, in the room of the only sinners who were ever to be pardoned, then they were convinced, not only that no irresolution or inconsistency existed in God, but that it did not comport with a perfect government ever to let sin escape without a frown.

But some suppose that at least the *last* act of Christ's obedience gave out the testimony that God would punish sin, because it was a voluntary surrender of himself to die on purpose to convince the universe of this very truth. There are two extremes about this subject which we can contemplate with clearness. First, if the Father, still holding the authority of the Godhead, could have consented to suffer in the room of sinners, it would indeed have shown his resolution to punish. The king who consented to lose one of his eyes to save one of his son's, and thus gave two eyes to the law which demanded two, convinced his kingdom that future transgressors would lose both eyes, no less than though justice had taken its literal course. Secondly, where the father and son *have two distinct minds*, the consent of the latter to die for transgressors is no testimony that the father will punish. Take the case of the prince of Wales which has been supposed. In consenting to die he held this language: "I esteem the penalty just and its execution important, which shows that I view transgression as a great evil, and of course that I regard the precept as right and valuable. I am willing to give *my father* this opportunity to prove that *he* will firmly execute his law, and sincerely hope he may; but I cannot answer for my fa-

ther; he must speak for himself." Now though there are not in all respects *two minds* between the divine Father and Son, they are exhibited in the economy of redemption as two distinct *Agents*. There is a foundation somewhere among the mysteries of the Trinity and personal union for a distinction to exist between the Father as holding the authority of God, and the Mediator *in his whole Person*; and not only for a distinction, but for opposite relations, as opposite as any which can be found among men; such as King and Subject, Master and Servant, the Commander and the One who obeys, the Representative of God and the Representative of sinners, the Demander of satisfaction and the Satisfier, the Inflicter of stripes and the Receiver, the Hearer of prayer and the Suppliant, the One who makes and performs one part of a covenant, and the One who makes and performs the other, the One who owes and grants a reward, and the One who earns and receives it: otherwise there is no foundation in the Trinity for the work of redemption. On the perfect distinctness and marked and stable opposition of these relations, the whole efficacy of the mediatorial influence depended. And this distinction extends to the whole Person of Christ, as both divine and human. Not a single official act can be ascribed to the mere man, or to the mere God, but to the Mediator. Those acts in which the man most appears, draw dignity and efficacy from the God; and those acts in which the God most appears, draw influence from the man. The divinity of that Person goes through and qualifies all the acts and sufferings of the Mediator, and when it has done that it does no more in the economy of redemption. His Godhead, as it is exhibited in this august drama, merely helps to constitute the Person of the Mediator. Whoever found in

the Gospel any other Second Person than the Son, the Mediator, the Christ? All that is divine in him is thus set apart from the Father and included under the name of the Mediator; that Mediator whose Person is so distinct, and whose relations are so opposite to those of the Father. When the Mediator has expressed himself, there is no other Second Person to help out or to elevate the expression. Now in this stupendous drama the Father alone holds the arm of authority, and neither the Second nor Third Person appears on the throne from beginning to end; (except the temporary authority delegated to the Son as a reward, which he will resign at the end of the world, when he will again become "subject" to the Father, "that God may be all in all\*.") In the whole exhibition the Son appears either a Servant or a Vicegerent till the curtain falls. The point to be proved was that God would punish; which, according to the distribution of parts, could be made out only by showing that the Father would punish. And now the question is, whether the Servant in that awful tragedy, in his most degrading act of submission, could pledge himself for the firmness of his Master and King, and for the future exercise of that authority which was dragging him like a criminal to the stake; whether the act of that Servant, urged on by the pressure of a command, without the liberty of choice, with the sword of the Almighty at his breast, under a necessity to obey or suffer the endless penalty of the law, could be considered as the testimony of a distinct and independent witness, or any thing more than the echo of the Father's will. No, the only declaration which I hear from the Son is this: "I am willing to give *the Father* this opportunity to prove to

\* 1 Cor. 15. 28.

the universe that *he* will punish sin. In this I give my opinion that the penalty is just and ought to be enforced, that sin is evil and ought to be punished, that the precept is good and ought to be supported. But it is not for me who have no authority, but am crushed under authority, to answer for the Father. He is about to answer for himself in the awful strokes to be inflicted on me." This leads me to say,

(2.) That whatever testimony the obedience of Christ gave, atonement was not made by testimony, but by affording the Father opportunity and means to testify in his own name. A great and glorious testimony was to be sent forth into the universe *by means* of the atonement, but that testimony was to come from the Father. He stood the Representative of the Godhead, filling the whole field of vision allotted to him who held the arm of authority. The great question to be decided was whether *he* would resolutely punish. Who was competent to speak for God and pledge himself for the Most High? It became him who was to answer for the Godhead, to speak for himself. Accordingly he appears the Principal in every part, the Originator and Director of the whole. All is appointed and demanded by his authority, and done in his name, that the testimony may be exclusively his; as the expression of a measure ordered by the master of a house and executed by his servants, is the expression of the master alone. The satisfaction which he demanded as the Protector of the law, was not the testimony of a Servant or Son, but an opportunity to give to the universe with his own arm a great practical proof that he would punish sin. What could the testimony or obedience of another do to that end? Nothing would answer but sufferings unsparingly inflicted on the Son of his love with his own hand. And when he had



drained upon him the cup of trembling, as Guardian of the law he was satisfied. Had the person of the sinner stood before him unshielded by a Substitute, he would have shown with his own arm his resolution to punish by sufferings inflicted on the sinner. This would have been the satisfaction demanded in the case; and no part of it would have consisted in the consent of the sufferer. If the sinner was to escape, the satisfaction demanded was an opportunity to inflict sufferings on a Substitute, which should give out the same testimony as from his own lips, or rather should shed the same practical proof from the awful gleamings of his own sword. And when he had actually inflicted these sufferings to the full extent which the necessity of the case demanded, and had thus testified by the tremendous voice of his own authority, he was satisfied. Shall we then say that the action of the Father helped to make atonement? No, for while all the testimony came from him, all the atonement came from the Son. The *matter* of atonement then came from the Son. This brings us to the conclusion that the matter of atonement was that which answered to these two descriptions; it was something *yielded by the Son*, (not the *act* of yielding,) and something *by which the Father testified* that he would punish sin. Now certainly the testimony of Christ was not that by which the Father testified. The obedience of Christ was not that by which the Father proved in his own Person that he would punish. The consent of Christ did not show that the Father would inflict evil on sinners *without their consent*. Nothing answers to these two descriptions but the bare sufferings of Christ. I do not say, the sufferings of — no matter who; but the sufferings of the beloved Son of God. I do not say, sufferings caused by accident or self-inflicted; but suf-

ferings inflicted by the supreme Magistrate of heaven and earth. When we speak of the sufferings of the damned, or the death of a malefactor, we always include the act of the magistrate: we do not mean dead sufferings, but sufferings inflicted by way of punishment. It was sufferings inflicted by the Magistrate which were threatened in the divine law, and sufferings inflicted by the Magistrate must come in their room. But because the act of the Magistrate was necessary, to say that sufferings alone did not constitute the matter of atonement, is like saying, for the same reason, that sufferings alone do not constitute the punishment of the damned.

Let us now look at the Scriptures. And here we have nothing to do with those texts which ascribe both parts of salvation to the *death* of Christ. These may raise a question whether atonement lifts us to heaven, but cannot touch the question whether obedience helps to deliver us from hell. The solution is, that the death of Christ comprehended both atonement and merit. Neither have we any thing to do with those texts which seem to ascribe both parts of salvation to the obedience of Christ, unless in opposition to those who exclude a vicarious sacrifice altogether. There is a passage of this nature in the 5th of Romans\* ; where the apostle is setting forth the full contrast between the first Adam who plunged us *to hell*, and the Second Adam who raised us *to heaven*, with an eye fixed in both cases on the final *result*. In contemplating the Second Adam, he is standing in heaven and seeing the redeemed arrive, and fastens his attention on the obedience by which the latter half of the salvation was accomplished: and this he did the rather to give a full point to the contrast, the influence of the first

\* Ver. 17—21. with ch. 6, 23.

Adam lying in *disobedience*. But if such passages do not prove that obedience is the *sole* ground of pardon, we have no right to make them say that it is the *partial* ground, but must understand them as sinking the process of pardon in the great consummation. Nor yet have we any thing to do with those texts which ascribe to the Priest the act of *making* atonement. They only affirm that he presented that which was the matter of the atonement *to God*, and thus brought it into the necessary relation to him. Can any thing more be gathered from the type to which they refer? What influence can possibly be ascribed to the Levitical priests but that of presenting the victims *to God according to his appointment*? Do you add to this, a testimony from the priest that God would punish? But how do you get this testimony out? Through the direct expression of the act as looking at the *penalty*? But the priest stood there, not to assume the tone of pledging himself for God, but merely to do as he was commanded. Through the expression of the act as looking at the *precept* of the moral law? This is testimony circuitous indeed. Let us see how it stands. Aaron's consent to obey a *ceremonial* command, (no matter what,) is testimony from him that all the precepts of the *moral* law are good, and so good that God will not fail to punish the transgression of them! and this testimony enters into the very essence of the expiation! No, his atonement lay in no such testimony as this, (less direct than that of his ordinary conduct,) but in the sin or trespass-offering presented to God. There is one passage however which speaks of the action of our great High Priest, which deserves some attention. It is in the 10th of Hebrews. "Then said he, Lo I come to do thy will, O God:—by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus

Christ once for all :—for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” Here, you say, a purging quality is expressly ascribed to the obedient action of the Priest. But the fact is that a higher effect is ascribed to that obedience combined with the sufferings, no less than *actual pardon*, including the action of the Spirit which obedience alone secured. The apostle is speaking of the joint influence of obedience and passion as comprehended in the death of Christ, not merely to render *sin pardonable*, (the proper office of the atonement,) but to accomplish actual remission, involving regenerating grace. *Sanctified* here means *separated from the curse of the law, purified from guilt or liability to punishment, pardoned*. The meaning of the passage is, that by obediently surrendering himself to die, and by his actual death, Christ has obtained for as many as by that influence have been brought into a believing state, actual and everlasting remission. Here is the *application* of the atonement as the reward of Christ’s obedience, and not merely the matter of expiation. But show me a text which affirms that either his general or final obedience, *as a testimony*, helped to render *sin pardonable*. This must be adduced if any thing is done to the purpose.

I will now show you from the Scriptures that the thing which was offered *for sin*, and which *came in the room of punishment*, and which *laid the foundation for pardon*, was no other than suffering.

(1.) It was this which was offered *for sin*. “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.—The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted;—he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.—He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the trans-

gression of my people was he stricken.—It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed.—He shall bear their iniquities.—He was numbered with transgressors, and he bore the sins of many.” “After three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.” “Who was delivered for our offences.” “He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin.” “He loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation, [propitiatory sacrifice,] for our sins.” “He is the propitiation, [propitiatory sacrifice,] for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust.” “Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree.” “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time *without sin* unto salvation\*.”

(2.) It was this which *came in the room of punishment*. “He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.—The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed†.”

(3.) It was this which *laid the foundation for pardon*. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” “Being now justified, [pardoned,] by his blood, we shall be saved *from wrath* through him. For 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.” “Almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without

\* Isai. 53. 5—12. Dan. 9. 26. Rom. 4. 25. 1 Cor. 15. 3. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Heb. 9. 28. 1 Pet. 2. 24. and 3. 18. 1 John 2. 2. and 4. 10.

† Isai. 53. 4, 5.

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.—For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins:—for then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins\*.”

But this question respecting the *testimony* of obedience, it must after all be confessed, has no very important bearing on the extent of the atonement. The great point is to distinguish between the matter of expiation and the *merit* of obedience *with its claim to a reward*. This discrimination can be made whether the *testimony* of obedience goes into the matter of atonement or not. We can distinguish between atonement and a claim to reward for making atonement, whether the matter of expiation consists of two ingredients or one. I suppose that sufferings alone satisfied and rendered sin pardonable; but if obedience, while earning a reward, sent out a testimony which helped to satisfy and render sin pardonable, it is no matter as relates to the distinction between the satisfying matter and that which constituted the claim to a reward. Take the illustration before used. I want to make a clear distinction between that which heals the patient and that which establishes the claim of the physician to a fee. According to my theory the healing efficacy lies in the pill; the action of the physician has no other influence than to administer it in a right way; and the claim to a fee is grounded on that action. Here we can easily distinguish between the healing medicine and the action which creates the

\* Rom. 5. 9, 10. Gal. 3. 13. Col. 1. 14. Heb. 9. 22, 23. & 10. 2, 4.

claim. Now change the ground and assign a new office to the action. Say that the physician's approach had an influence upon the patient's imagination which helped to work the cure. The remedy then consisted of two ingredients, the pill and that influence upon the imagination: the action of the physician had two effects; it administered the medicine and shed a healing influence: the reward is for the action still, and neither for the pill nor for the casual influence dropt upon the patient's mind\*. In this case though we cannot set up the broad distinction between the healing matter and the action, we can still distinguish between that matter and the action *viewed as entitling to reward*. The action considered as sending forth such a casual influence, is distinguishable from the action viewed as related to a reward. The difference is still plainly seen between the healing influence and the claim to a fee. Upon the theory which I have advocated, we can set up the broad distinction between the influence of passion and the claim of action. But the distinction is visible enough upon the other plan. In either way we have the distinction between the influence of the atonement and the claim to a reward for making atonement.

This leads us to see the immense importance of discriminating between the matter of atonement and the *merit* of obedience, in order to separate the proper influence of the expiation from a claim to reward. Our brethren have a strong reason for retaining obedience in the matter of atonement. It is vital to their system to place *merit* there, in order to give to the atonement a power to secure the gift of faith, and thus to accom-

\* Christ, we shall see, is rewarded only for the *merit* of obedience, and neither for sufferings as such, nor for any testimony which his action gave out.

plish actual reconciliation. Without an influence to secure the gift of faith it must either fail to accomplish reconciliation by its own power, or must obtain remission for stubborn unbelievers. Our brethren therefore are willing to comprehend in the atonement the *whole* influence of Christ; and if they succeed in this they carry their point, at least so far as relates to the meaning and proper application of the term. For if the atonement contains an influence which secures the gift of faith, there is atonement for none but those who will ultimately believe. It becomes then a vital question whether *merit* is comprehended in the matter of the atonement.

In settling this question it is necessary to recur again to the radical idea of *merit*. In God merit is excellence, viewed as *deserving* honour, love, gratitude, praise, and service. We put into his merit also whatever he is to us or has done for us which justly entitles him to our acknowledgments. In those who are under law merit is obedience, considered as *deserving a legal reward*. It is obedience *viewed purely in its relation to a recompense*. If then we put merit into the matter of atonement, we place it there, not as that by which any thing is to be *proved*, (for that would be a testimony not a merit;) not therefore as any thing which is to witness that God will punish sin; (indeed how can the merit of one prove that God will punish another?) not therefore as any thing which is to answer in the room of punishment. Here then we abandon the whole end of the atonement, and give up the need of a vicarious sacrifice altogether. It comes out that the release of the sinner is granted to Christ purely as a reward. And this is the ground taken by those who deny a vicarious sacrifice and place the whole atonement in obedience. But the fault of this scheme



is, that such an atonement furnishes no proof that God will execute his law, and answers in no degree the end of punishment, and therefore is not fitted to come in the room of punishment and to be a cover for sin. On the other hand, the dispensation of pardon on this ground would be a plain declaration that God would not always inflict evil on account of sin. Suppose a culprit is released as the reward of a dutiful son. There is no evil inflicted in the case; what evidence that any will ever be inflicted? What has been may be again, and punishment may always be set aside out of favour to some one who has obeyed, or even without that consideration. Indeed the clemency plainly declares that rigour is not always necessary, and is not always to be exercised. Nor can you make merit *partially* the ground of pardon without proportionably drawing after it the same effects. In exact proportion as pardon is dispensed on the ground of being a reward to Christ, and not on the ground of substituted sufferings, you abate the evidence that sin must always receive a frown. Indeed there is no halving of things in this way. If the legal impediment to pardon is partly taken away by Christ's deserving a reward, it must have been such as could not need a vicarious sacrifice to remove it. For if the impediment was, that the law had threatened sufferings and sufferings must come in their room, how could the *merit* of a Substitute touch the difficulty? And what *need*, I further ask, of any thing but the sufferings of the Son of God to clear away such an impediment as this?

What possible influence could merit have in removing the impediments to pardon? To what does the proposition amount? That the sins of believers are pardonable because Christ deserved a reward! What conceivable relation can exist between these two

things? Christ's desert of reward, considered by itself, could lend no influence to render sin pardonable. Where is the text that asserts or hints at any such thing? On the contrary have we not seen that sufferings, and sufferings alone, are every where displayed in the Scriptures as the ground of remission?

If in any way merit could enter into that provision for moral agents which we call the atonement, it must be on the principle that *the honour of the law* demanded that the release of believers from misery should be a reward to Christ. That no *positive* good could be dispensed to men, in consistency with the highest honour of the law, otherwise than as his reward, I admit and expect to prove. But a bare release from the curse was a mere *negative* good, and therefore was fully provided for by his "being made a curse for us." It so happens indeed that the release *is* a reward to Christ, as the matter lies between the Sacred Persons; because to *him* it is a *positive* good, both as a public approbation of his offering and a gratification of his benevolence. But whether he is gratified and honoured in this thing or not, is a point lying wholly between the Divine Persons, and not at all affecting the atonement as a provision for moral agents. Christ's being gratified and honoured by the pardon of believers, *does not make their pardon consistent with the honour of the law*. And on the other hand, had he ceased to exist after offering the spotless sacrifice, and thus ceased to be susceptible of reward, the pardon of believers would not have injured the law. The provision for moral agents in relation to pardon, was therefore complete without any influence derived from the claim of Christ to a reward.

But you say, this is not what we mean. We allow that nothing helped to render the sins of believers

pardonable but the sufferings of the Son of God: but we insist that the cover of sin is nothing short of that which accomplishes actual remission: and as merit procured the gift of faith, without which pardon could not be dispensed, it had an essential influence in constituting that cover. The question then turns on this, whether the כפר of the Bible, (viewed as accepted of God,) merely obtained pardon for *believers*, or had a further influence to *make believers*. This is a question to be examined in another place. In the mean time let it be remembered that we have arrived at the conclusion, that the merit of Christ, or his claim to a reward, had no influence to render *the sins of believers pardonable*. And if it shall appear hereafter that the atonement, aside from its covenanted acceptance, was limited to this very influence, it will be established that merit constituted no part of the cover for sin\*.



## CHAPTER IV.

### CHRIST'S OBEDIENCE AND REWARD.

THERE is one point to be settled at our entrance upon this subject; and that is, that Christ was rewarded for nothing but obedience. To one who never brought this proposition before his eye, it may wear at first sight a forbidding aspect; but a few reflections will convince him that it must be true. Christ was

\* The author has the pleasure to acknowledge his obligations to his friend and brother, the Rev. Dr. James Richards of Newark, for important assistance in this chapter, as well as for his judicious remarks on the book in general. This however is said without making him responsible for any of the opinions which the book contains.

“under law,” and his reward was a legal one; but the law never promised a recompense to any thing but obedience. No claim could be created on the Father but by a promise from him, and no promise appears but to One under law, for services rendered in obedience to the command of his King. One of the duties enjoined upon him was to lay down his life. So far as that was a duty it was obedience, and no further than it was a duty was it entitled to a reward. That act was of greater merit than other acts of obedience, because it involved greater self-denial; but the sufferings bore no other relation to the reward than as being the highest test of obedience. Christ was rewarded for his obedience “unto death,” not for his sufferings viewed as *uncommanded*; not therefore for sufferings in themselves considered. What claim could uncommanded sufferings have to a reward? Should a creature in any part of the universe inflict pain on himself which God had never required, who would be bound to recompense him? There is no such duty of supererogation in the kingdom of God. But if the sufferings of the Son, only as commanded, could be entitled to a reward, it was the obedience of surrendering himself to die, and not the pain as such, which created the claim. Accordingly we are expressly taught that his whole reward was for obedience. He “became *obedient* unto death, even the death of the cross; *wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name\*.” This name was *the Son of God*, which he obtained “*by inheritance*†;” and the plain meaning is, that by *filial* obedience he obtained the inheritance and all the honours of a *Son*, that is, his complete reward.

Having settled this point, I will now exhibit in one

\* Phil. 2. 7—11.—† Heb. 1. 4.

connected view the different influences of Christ's obedience, that the reader may have them clearly before his mind in all our future stages.

(1.) The most simple influence of obedience was in the action of the Priest; where it operated, not as a merit, nor as a testimony, nor as an endearing quality, but as simple obedience; having no other effect than to cause the sufferings to be yielded to the demand of the Father and inflicted by his authority and hand.

(2.) Obedience constituted the well beloved Son, or in typical language, the Lamb without blemish; and its influence here terminated in rendering him *dear* to the Father, without any reference to a reward; merely *making his sufferings expressive* of God's inflexible resolution to punish sin. This was not therefore the proper influence of *merit*.

These two influences went to qualify the sufferings and to bring them into the necessary relation to God. They therefore appertained to the atonement.

(3.) Obedience gave out a *testimony* honourable to God and his law. Some choose to put this influence into the matter of the atonement, as going to render sin pardonable. Whether this is done or not is of no material consequence as relates to the main question to be discussed in this treatise. I suppose however that its operation was merely to supply the place of that testimony which our perfect obedience would have given out on its way to a *reward*. Our obedience would have stood connected only with a reward, and would have given out a testimony honourable to the law. If the testimony of Christ takes the place of our testimony, it has nothing to do with the pardon of sin, but is merely an effluence of obedience as it stands related to a reward. But that effluence itself, it is

proper to say, bears no relation to the reward. It is merely a casual influence which issues from obedience as it goes along. Or to speak more literally, it is the mere relation which obedience bears to the honour of the law, and not the relation which it bears to a recompense. The relation which it bears to a recompense, lies in no report which it sends forth, but in its own intrinsic excellence. So the good man is rewarded for his goodness, and not for the influence which his example may chance to have on others.

These three ends were answered by obedience, not as a thing related to a reward, not therefore as a *merit*, but as merely fitted to render the sufferings expressive, to bring them into a proper relation to God, and to honour the law. When obedience had exerted upon the sufferings the first two influences, (some add the third,) the atonement was complete, though not yet accepted; and complete of course without the influence of merit, or without owing its completion to any claim which Christ had to a reward: because it was not necessary to the honour of the law that the release of believers from misery, (a mere negative good in regard to them,) should be a reward to him. And if without injuring the law pardon might be granted to believers without being a reward to Christ, then the *Protector of the law was satisfied*, (so far as satisfaction stood connected with pardon,) without the aid of Christ's merit, and had in his hands all that he could receive from the Son to *enable* him to grant remission to those who would believe. And thus that provision for moral agents in relation to pardon which depended on satisfaction yielded to the Guardian of law, was complete without the influence of Christ's merit. The effect of all this was that the sins of men, allowing them to be believers, were *pardonable*. On the ground

of that satisfaction God *could* remit the offences of the penitent without injuring the law, but he was not *bound* till another influence was superadded. This was as far as bare atonement, separated from its covenanted acceptance, could go.

When the sins of men were thus rendered pardonable in case they would believe, there was a change wrought in their relations to the law. This change we can contemplate distinctly from every thing else; and can plainly see that the sufferings of the beloved Son, separated from his claim to a reward, could accomplish this and no more. That which produced this change in the relations of moral agents, ought to have a name. I call it the atonement, and affirm that it answers exactly to the כפר of the Hebrews, when the latter is separated from its covenanted acceptance. But whether it does or not will appear in the next chapter.

All the other influences of obedience which are to be named were influences of *merit*, and produced their effects only by obtaining a reward. Before proceeding further therefore, let us stop and fix on some marks by which a thing may be known to appertain to Christ's reward. I lay down the following principles. All that Christ did as one of the contracting Parties was to obey even "unto death." Whatever that obedience and death, stript of every extrinsic circumstance, could accomplish, was done by himself; the rest was done by the Father, and so far as it expressed approbation of Christ, or honoured him, or directly gratified his benevolence, was a part of his reward. Every effect then which followed his obedience and death, beyond what their own necessary influence could accomplish, and was honourable and gratifying to him, appertained to his reward. What

then did the necessary influence of his obedience and death effect? It rendered every thing which followed *consistent with the honour of the law*, and created a *covenant claim* on the Father for the whole. It went no further. The *bringing to pass* of all that followed was the Father's part, and was done in pursuance of his covenant engagements; which engagements were suspended on Christ's obedience "unto death." All therefore which actually followed was Christ's stipulated reward. I now proceed to say,

(4.) That the merit of obedience gave to the Redeemer a covenant claim to the acceptance of his atonement. Because the sufferings of a Substitute were *capable* of answering in the room of the punishment of the believing and reclaimed, God was not *obliged* to accept them and release believers, until he had bound himself by promise; and that promise was suspended on the condition of Christ's obeying "unto death." It was that obedience then which gave him a covenant claim to the pardon, on the ground of his atonement, of as many as would believe. This was a covenant claim to the *acceptance* of the atonement, and rendered the pardon of believers *certain*. This claim was completed when he expired, and was acknowledged when he arose\*.

The atonement, viewed as thus accepted, secured the pardon of believers; and in going thus far and no further it exactly answered, as we shall see in the next

\* It has been said that the acceptance of the atonement as pronounced in the resurrection of Christ, was a public acquittal of him from the guilt he had assumed. The meaning cannot be that he was acquitted from *sin*, for he had no sin, but that he was acquitted from a *liability to suffer*. His resurrection was a public declaration that his sufferings were accepted for sinners, and that therefore he was under no necessity or obligation to suffer further. In this sense he was acquitted as the Representative of others; or in plain language, his atone-



chapter, all the purposes ever ascribed to the כפר of the old dispensation after it was accepted of God.

Thus it was not the same influence which atoned that ensured the acceptance of the atonement. That which atoned was the sufferings of the beloved Son inflicted by the Father's hand; that which ensured the acceptance was the merit of Christ, constituting a claim to a reward for general obedience and particularly for making expiation. The completion of the atonement and the security of its acceptance were two things. One constituted a provision *in the Father's hands* for moral agents; the other appertained to Christ's reward, and merely transferred the provision to *his hands*, by securing to him the pardon of all who would believe.

(5.) The merit of obedience gave to the Redeemer a covenant claim to be honoured and gratified by that open recognition of him and explanation of the design of his death which gave it a bearing upon public law and the relations of men; which declared its acceptance and fairly placed mankind on what we call probation. The removal of the vail which had concealed his glory and the design of his death from men, and the whole annunciation of him to the world by his resurrection and the promised mission of the Spirit, belonged to the Father. His obedience "unto death" entitled him to be thus publicly acknowledged and offered to the world. That obedience was

ment was accepted as the ground of the pardon of those who would believe. His resurrection was furthermore a public attestation of his *personal acceptance*, as one who had obeyed and become entitled to the reward. It has been said that if his sacrifice had not been accepted he never would have left the sepulchre. This needs explanation. Had not his sacrifice been accepted it would have proved that he had not obeyed, and then he must have suffered the full penalty of the law, and of course could not have left the sepulchre at that time, nor ever with glory.

terminated when he said on the cross, "It is finished." This was the last act by which he yielded himself to the ignominy of the sepulchre, which was to consummate his atonement. Now he became entitled to burst from the veil which had enclosed him. He who in obedience to the Father had studiously concealed himself that he might accomplish his humiliation; who, content with furnishing just evidence enough to support a general faith, had often charged men not to make him known, and particularly had commanded those who witnessed the manifestation of his sonship and future glory on mount Tabor, "Tell the vision to no man until the Son of man be risen again from the dead\*;" was now entitled to be "declared the Son of God with power—by the resurrection†," and to receive that Spirit whose inspiration should make him fully known, first to the disciples on the day of Pentecost, and then to the world on the evangelic page. Never till then did the dearest of his disciples know enough to say, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." This public explanation, which carried in it an offer and conditional promise of life to the world; which laid a foundation for faith, and actually placed men on probation; was an essential part of his reward. Thus a state of probation, with all the offers and promises which it involves, was procured for the world by the merit of the Redeemer.

Thus we are gradually sliding into the consideration of that *positive* good which could not, consistently with the highest honour of the law, be issued to the world otherwise than as the reward of Christ. All that was *negative*, or related to a mere deliverance

\* Matt. 17. 9.—† Rom. 1. 4.

from the curse, might have been granted on the ground of the atonement had Christ not been in existence to be gratified and honoured by it. Not so with *positive* good. It was a law of the first covenant that no positive good should proceed from God but in approbation of a righteousness perfect for the time the subject had been in existence. This principle, as I hope to show in the Appendix, was not to be given up. And by contriving to measure out all the positive good intended for the human race as a reward to Christ, the principle was preserved. And if the whole of that good followed as the effect of his work, and was honourable and gratifying to him, we have public evidence that the whole was to him a reward. We have seen that a state of probation, with all the offers and promises which it involves, appertained to his reward; and we have equal evidence that all the privileges and comforts fitted to such a state came in the same way. If Christ is the "Heir of all things\*," and if the all things which constitute his inheritance are as extensive as the interest which he was empowered to manage, or the all things in heaven and earth over which he was appointed to rule; if his *inheritance* comprehends all that which constituted him "the *First-born* of every creature," and gave him "in all things—the pre-eminence," and all that by which he was made "better than the angels" and "obtained a more excellent *name* than they," to wit, the name of the *Son of God*†; then there is nothing on earth which is not included in his inheritance. If furthermore he received the whole inheritance of a Son for his *filial* conduct, as the Appendix will prove, then he obtained the whole by the merit of his obedience. And if lastly, this whole portion of a Son was committed to

\* Heb. 1. 2.—† Col. 1. 15—20. Heb. 1. 4.

him, not for his own private use, but for the benefit of those who actually partake of it, then all the blessings which the universal race enjoy, as they come from God, are grounded on the obedience of Christ, and pass to mankind through him.

It is often said that positive blessings come to us *for Christ's sake*, or out of respect to *his righteousness*: what meaning can there be in these expressions other than what has now been explained? If a positive blessing is bestowed out of respect to Christ's righteousness, it is the *reward* of his righteousness. If it is not the reward of his righteousness, how is it bestowed for his sake? This general principle being settled, I proceed to say,

(6.) That the merit of his obedience obtained for him the gift of faith to the elect. No truth is more clearly set forth in the Scriptures, than that the raising up of a holy seed was an essential part of the reward of his obedience "unto death." "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death\*." Thus his obedience "unto death," like travail pains, was to bring forth a numerous seed, in other words, was to procure the sanctification of his elect. After a prophetic account of his death in the second Psalm, there is subjoined a promise of reward: "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord hath said

\* Is. 53. 10—12.

unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” Thus the *inheritance* of a *Son*, received for his *filial* obedience, includes a redeemed kingdom, a holy seed. The same truth is taught in many other places. “Thou spoked in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon One that is mighty, I have exalted One chosen out of the people.—He shall cry unto me, Thou art *my Father*, [that is, he shall be my Son.]—Also I will make him my *First-born*, [my Heir,] higher than the kings of the earth.—His *seed* also will I make to endure for ever, and his *throne* as the days of heaven\*.” But there is no need of multiplying quotations; his kingdom of redeemed subjects, received as the reward of his obedience “unto death,” forms the leading topic of the Old Testament and the New.

Thus the gift of faith to the elect is Christ’s reward. But this is not all: it could not be bestowed in any other way in consistency with the highest honour of the law. The sanctifying Spirit is a *positive* good if there is any positive good in the universe; and therefore, according to the principle established in Eden, was not to be granted but as the reward of a perfect righteousness. In the first moment of Adam’s existence, the necessity of the case required that the Spirit should be given him not as a reward. During his probation, and while a claim to eternal life was not established, the Spirit was not indeed *due* to him as a reward, and might, as the event proved, be withheld, even before he had sinned: yet during that period it could not be bestowed but in approbation of a righteousness perfect for the time the subject had been in

\* Ps. 2. 6—8, & 89. 3—37.

existence; because as soon as the first sin arose, and approbation ceased to be entire, it could be bestowed no longer. Had Adam remained faithful during his probation, the Spirit would have been eternally given him as a covenanted reward. And then the first motion of sanctifying power on his infant son, would have been the reward of the perfect righteousness of the father; and all subsequent motions would have been the reward both of father and son. It is exactly so in respect to the Second Adam. In the first moment of his existence under law, the necessity of the case required that the Spirit should be given him not as a reward. During his probation, and before his claim was established, the Spirit could not be given him but in approbation of a righteousness perfect for the time he had been under law. After his probation was closed, he had an eternal claim to the action of the Spirit upon his human nature as a reward. And now the first motion of sanctifying grace on those who were given him for a seed, is solely his reward: subsequent motions are a legal reward to him, and a gracious reward to them. In the case of both Adams, the honour of the law required that the Spirit should be given to the seed only as the legal reward of the federal Parent; that the principle of granting no positive good till the law had first received the homage of obedience, might be preserved.

We shall now be able to make a clear distinction between *the provision for moral agents* in relation to pardon, and the influence which secures the gift of faith. Whatever renders the sins of men *pardonable* if they will believe, and especially that which *secures* to them pardon if they do believe, is certainly a complete provision for them *as moral agents* in relation to pardon. You may put into that provision whatever you please, and still a provision for the pardon of men if they as

agents will believe, is entirely distinct from the personal claim of Christ to the gift of faith to them as mere passive receivers of sanctifying impressions. But the *matter* of the provision, as I have considered it, is entirely different from the matter of the claim. That which renders sin pardonable, is the mere sufferings of the beloved Son inflicted by the Father's hand; that which constitutes the claim of Christ to the gift of faith, is the merit of his obedience; as wide a difference as between passion and action. Or if you bring in the *testimony* of obedience to render sin pardonable, still there is a manifest difference between the testimony which obedience gives out, and the intrinsic merit of it which claims a reward. In both views that which renders the sins of believers pardonable, is wholly distinct from that which secures the gift of faith. But you say, if the provision for pardon is considered as embracing all that which renders the pardon of believers *certain*, the claim of merit enters into the provision, for it was merit which ensured the acceptance of the sufferings. True, but it was merit claiming a *different reward* from the gift of faith. The same merit may ensure the acceptance of the sufferings, and thus place the provision for pardon in the hands of Christ, by making sure to him the remission of all who will believe, and may also secure the gift of faith; but it is merit in two distinct operations, and in two operations which are separated in fact: for who will doubt that the sufferings were so accepted for some that they would be pardoned if they would believe, who yet never receive the gift of faith? But however similar the matter of the provision may be to that of the claim, yet a provision for the pardon of men if they will believe, is wholly different from the claim of Christ to the gift of faith. Whether the atonement includes the provision only, or the provision and claim,

is not now the question ; but let the distinction between the two be marked and remembered.

Thus the influence of merit is directly concerned in the *application* of the atonement, or in bringing about *actual pardon*. This is the last effect of obedience as it stands related to the covering of sin. Here I might close the chapter ; but from a wish to exhibit all the offices of obedience at one view, I will proceed in a cursory manner to its bearing on our positive happiness and the exaltation of Christ.

(7.) As a very important part of the reward of the Redeemer, the merit of obedience obtained for him the sure and complete salvation of all who once believe, including all the positive blessings of the life that now is and of that which is to come. This will be largely proved in the Appendix. All positive good was given him as his reward, and thus proceeded from God on the original principle of Eden. But it was not given him for his own private use, but for the benefit of men ; to be partly bestowed on the race at large in comforts fitted to a state of probation, and to be in a higher sense offered to all, and actually given to some as a final good. Given to whom ? For whom did he receive the final good ? Here let it be distinctly remarked, that as the reward was bestowed for the *public* and official obedience of Christ, *the grant was of course public*, (to make an open exhibition of his reward and his influence on the happiness of mankind,) and was no part of that secret contract which selected the individuals of the elect. In that public grant, the good that was to be offered to men, and to be bestowed on them as a gracious reward, was not made over to him for the benefit of the elect as such, or for the *unbelieving* elect, but for believers, the members of his body, the Church. This public grant of the outward parts



of the inheritance, took no notice of elect or non-elect, but only of believers, the body of Christ. All things were detached from Godhead and made over to him for the ultimate use of his body. This form of the grant accomplished two things. First, it grounded the positive happiness of believers on his obedience. They partake of his reward as "joint heirs" with him who is the "Heir of all things." Secondly, it brought the all things into a new relation to a whole world of moral agents. A grant made for the benefit of believers, was a grant made for the benefit of *all who would believe*; leaving all at liberty to share in it if they would do their duty, and becoming thus a grant for all as moral agents. This was not a provision by which all or any *as passive receivers* might obtain the *first* gift of faith, but it was a provision by which all *as agents* might receive the whole amount of positive good as a gracious reward for believing and obeying. In that grant was contained the public ministration of the Spirit, not for the benefit of all as mere passive receivers of sanctifying impressions, but for the use of all as moral agents, to give them convicting light, (such as is adapted to present motives to agents,) and to be offered to them in its highest operations as an unalienable good if they humbly and believingly seek it. There was a provision then in this grant for the continued sanctification of Simon Magus if he as an agent would once believe, though not for his regeneration as a mere passive receiver of sanctifying impressions. And this new relation to a world of moral agents of the all things of which Christ is Heir, was a part of his reward. He was rewarded by that grant which drew the new relation after it, and which without that circumstance would not have been the same reward. Thus the merit of Christ's obedience procured eternal!

life and all positive good for the race at large, in the highest sense in which they could be procured for mere moral agents, that is, for creatures not to be acted upon by sanctifying influence except as a reward to themselves. Accordingly a part of that good, viz. a state of probation with all the means and comforts which it involves, is for his sake conferred on the race at large, and the rest is offered to all as what he procured for them in such a sense that it is to be theirs if they will make it their own.

These points, I hope, will present themselves to those who are acquainted with the sacred page as self-evident truths. If not, I must rely on the proof to be exhibited that such a provision for all as agents was made in the *atonement*; for it is not the object of this treatise to go beyond the expiation: and none will doubt, if sufferings made provision for all as agents in reference to their pardon, that obedience made an equally extensive provision in relation to their positive happiness. Indeed many of the texts which I shall bring to prove so extensive a provision in the atonement, equally prove the other part; but I shall quote them only to establish the former point. And this notice I give once for all, that I may not seem to quote passages with inattention to a part of their meaning.

Thus this public grant to Christ for the benefit of believers, constituted a provision for a whole world of moral agents. This was its first and simplest operation. But besides this provision for *agents*, there was another part of Christ's reward which related to sanctifying impressions on mere *passive receivers*. This in general was promised him in the *public covenant*, as we have seen; but the individuals who were to be the subjects of these impressions were fixed in a *secret compact*, altogether distinct from that from which the

public transactions took their nature and their bearing upon public law, and relating merely to Christ's reward. In virtue of that secret compact, altogether distinct from that on which both parts of the provision for moral agents were founded, the elect were *caused to believe*, and were thus brought into that state where all the provisions and promises could act upon them, and where others also, had they *of their own accord* believed, would have found the same provisions.

And now if you ask about the *secret* purposes of the Divine Mind, the blessings of that grant were *specially* intended for the elect; but if you inquire about the form of the public instrument, the blessings were delivered to Christ for all alike.

(8.) The merit of obedience gave to the Redeemer a covenant claim to the administration of his Father's government, with all the public honours which surround his throne. That government, which he desired and considers a reward, he exercises, not only over mere passive receivers of sanctifying impressions, (quickening whom he will,) but over a world of moral agents, offering them indiscriminately the benefits of his purchase, and commanding, inviting, promising, threatening, rewarding, and punishing, as though they were independent of the Spirit. This new and more benign government over a world of moral agents, founded on those new relations which his work had established, it was an important object with him to administer, as calculated to bring out to view the riches of the divine nature, and to promote the happiness of the universe. This was the ultimate end of those provisions for moral agents which the omniscience of God foresaw would in many instances, through the misconduct of men, fail to prove an ultimate blessing.

Thus the parts of Christ's reward were, first, the

acceptance of the atonement; secondly, that public recognition of him and explanation of the design of his death which laid a foundation for faith; thirdly, the gift of faith to the elect; fourthly, the grant of all positive good for the use of men as probationers, and in a higher sense for as many as would believe, constituting a provision for a world of moral agents; fifthly, the administration of his Father's government, particularly over a race of agents brought into a new relation to God. By this enumeration we may learn what reward was *promised* to Christ in the covenant of redemption. If he had a *claim* to each of these parts, we know that his claims could be founded on nothing but contract. Either then all these things were promised, or God bestows sovereign rewards for which the Recipient has no claim. Against the latter alternative I allege, first, that, so far as we can judge, there was the same reason why the whole reward should be promised as a part,—why the whole influence and effect of Christ's work should be settled by covenant as that a part should be. Secondly, the whole reward was legal and conferred by the Lawgiver; and it is according to the principles of a legal government to promise the whole reward beforehand. Thirdly, if it was important for the honour of the law that all positive good should be known to be issued as Christ's reward, it would tend to make a more distinct impression of this truth, to have it understood that all had been promised him as his reward. Fourthly, whatever God saw beforehand would be a suitable reward to Christ, and was determined to confer, must have been known to the Son; and the only difference between promising and not promising related to the *bond*; and why a part of what both divine Persons knew to be a suitable reward, and knew would be conferred, should be ex-

empted from the bond which fixed the other part, no one I believe can conceive. Fifthly, every part of the reward *was* promised in general terms in the revelation made to the Church. And why greater promises should be made in public than had been made in private, it would be hard to tell. On the whole we may safely conclude that Christ had a covenant claim to every part of his reward, and that the reward itself discloses what the covenant was. The light thus cast upon the covenant of redemption, I shall have occasion to make use of in a subsequent part.



## CHAPTER V.

### ATONEMENT NOT RECONCILIATION.

THE chief design of this chapter is to fix the meaning of the word *atonement*, and to separate that part of Christ's influence which falls under this name from all the rest.

We are reconciled *by* the atonement, because that is the *ground* of our reconciliation: but atonement is not itself reconciliation or pardon, neither does it contain the influence which *secures* reconciliation.

I. Atonement is not itself reconciliation or pardon. For then either no atonement was made for Paul before his conversion, or he was pardoned while in a state of settled rebellion. The former will not be said, the latter cannot be true. At the time of his conversion, he was exhorted to be baptised and to "wash away" his "sins." Then for the first time he "obtained mercy," and found that, so far from being par-

doned from eternity, he had escaped the unpardonable sin only by acting "ignorantly in unbelief\*."

It is indeed said that "when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son†;" but this can only mean that when we were in a state of enmity and condemnation, we were arrested and brought into a state of holiness and justification. It cannot mean that we were justified while enemies; for the great object of the Epistle, and of the context itself, is to prove, not justification *without* faith, but justification *by* faith.

This dream of eternal justification has no support in the word of God. We read indeed of the decree of election, and of a seed given to Christ before the foundation of the world; but these were not eternal justification. Condemnation and justification express the relations and actual treatment of moral agents, which cannot be older than the existence of creatures; that decree and promise regarded the elect in the light of mere passive receivers of sanctifying impressions. The latter appertained to the covenant of redemption; justification takes place under the covenant of grace. Those were a purpose and promise *respecting* men; this the actual treatment of men. It was eternally purposed and promised that the elect as passive should be regenerated, and that when they should believe they should be justified by faith, a privilege which was to be common to all if they would believe. All that was peculiar to the elect in the purpose or promise respected them as passive, but justification respects men as agents. To make that peculiar thing justification, is utterly confounding the two characters of men, and what I shall hereafter have occasion to call the two corresponding departments of divine operations. It is speaking of one department

\* Acts 22. 16. 1 Tim. 1. 13. 16.—† Rom. 5. 10.

in the language of the other, and ascribing to one the acts of the other; and is as inconsistent and as expressive of falsehood, as for Paul to have addressed a Jewish synagogue as one speaking to a Roman senate, giving titles and alluding to facts as present which existed only at Rome.

Or if you insist that the distinctive purpose and promise respected the elect as agents, and secured to them as such a privilege which other agents would not enjoy, still it was not eternal justification. Was it the eternal purpose and promise that they should be justified? So it was the eternal purpose and promise that they should exist, and that they should believe: but did they exist and believe from eternity? They could not be justified *in Christ* before they had sinned and were condemned: and did they sin and were they condemned from eternity? Eternally condemned and eternally justified! An eternal design to justify was no more eternal justification, than an eternal design to create was eternal creation. You might as well talk of the eternal enactment of the law, or the eternal mission of the Spirit.

The universal language of Scripture is that justification is in time. In Abraham's day the justification of the Gentiles was yet future. "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\*." Even the prediction and promise were not justification.

There never was any agreement or understanding between the Sacred Persons, either in heaven or on Calvary, that agents should be justified until as agents they had believed. Christ never stipulated that men should be justified from eternity, but died that they

\* Gal. 3. 8.

might be justified after their effectual calling. "For this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, *they which are called*, [not they which were *elect*ed,] might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." The order of links in the golden chain is this: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified\*." The whole doctrine of justification *by faith* lies with the weight of a world on the same side.

The elect themselves before their conversion, instead of being justified, are actually under condemnation. It is expressly affirmed that they are "by nature the children of wrath even as others." The first motion of faith in every instance, (among adults,) is the boundary between a state of condemnation and justification. "He that believeth—is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already." "As many as are of the works of the law, [which is explained to mean, as many as have not faith,] are under the curse." Accordingly pardon is every where placed after repentance. "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon." "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts,—and will be their God;—for I will forgive their iniquity." What else is implied in prayers for pardon offered up in time? What else can be meant by actual remission in answer to prayer? What else by God's being now "ready to pardon," and by the exhortation to sinners "to flee from the wrath to come"? What by the pa-

\* Rom. 8. 30. Heb. 9. 15.



rables of the publican and the prodigal son? Paul was sent to turn the Gentiles from the power of Satan unto God, that they "might receive forgiveness of sins." The whole consistory of apostles were sent forth to preach "repentance and remission of sins," and to say, "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." "Him hath God exalted—to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." "Repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out." "Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee\*."

Thus the elect themselves plainly lie under condemnation until, (if adults,) they believe. Though in relation to them as passive receivers of sanctifying impressions, there was a decree and promise that they should receive faith, yet as agents; (and as such only do they bear any relation to the law, its precept, threatening, or promise, to sin, condemnation, pardon, justification, punishment, or reward,) they are not justified till they believe.

Nor could it possibly have comported with the honour of the law for any atonement, let it consist in what it might, or for any thing else, to have procured remission for men, and cast over them the shield of impunity, while continuing to trample the law in the dust, and spurning the expedient devised for its support. This would have ruined the law and defeated the very end of the atonement, which was to convince the universe that transgressors should not go unpunish-

\* Ex. 34. 9. Num. 14. 20. 2 Chron. 30. 18. Neh. 9. 17. Ps. 25. 11. Is. 55. 7. Jer. 31. 31—34. & 33. 3. Luke 3. 7. & 15. 11—32. & 18. 13, 14. & 24. 47. John 3. 18. Acts 2. 38. & 3. 19. & 5. 31. & 8. 22. & 26. 18. Rom. 3. 28. Gal. 3. 10. Eph. 2. 3. James 5. 15. 1 John 1. 9.

ed. Instead of pronouncing in the ears of the whole creation that the breakers of the law in all worlds and ages should die, it would have proclaimed impunity to rebellion in all its maddest and most confirmed ravings. No atonement could protect a single impenitent sinner, and pronounce upon him that he should never be punished, without losing the whole expression which it was intended to make. Look at the case of the prince of Wales. Why did he die? To make a deep impression on the multitude that no counterfeiter should ever escape. Suppose that his death and the covenant connected with it had bound the arm of government not to strike the ten criminals though going on in their old ways, and had thus let them loose to counterfeit with impunity. When these culprits stalk abroad untouched, and drive their nefarious trade from year to year without a frown, who is convinced by the death of the prince that the law is to have its complete dominion, and that all future counterfeiters shall die? Instead of awing transgressors, his death has thrown the reins upon their neck and completely ruined the law.

Thus whatever respect the atonement might have to the elect as destined to be receivers of sanctifying impressions, it could not break the relation to condemnation which they as agents sustained, and pronounce them acquitted, until, (if adults,) they had believed. It was not therefore reconciliation, provided a complete atonement for Paul existed before Paul believed.

II. Nor does the atonement contain the influence which *secures* reconciliation. As it could not justify unbelievers, it had no way to secure reconciliation but by ensuring the gift of faith. And this is what is generally ascribed to it by those who talk of its recon-

cing power. The great question then is, does the atonement by its own proper influence secure the gift of faith?

This at once calls upon us to decide what the atonement is, and how much of the influence of Christ falls under this name. Our own opinion is, that the name is applicable only to that which answered the end of punishment, by showing the universe that God would support his law by executing its penalty on transgressors; which thus secured the authority of the law and satisfied its Protector, and besides removing the curse of abandonment, reconciled with the honour of the law the pardon of believers, (whether of all indiscriminately who would believe, or of those only who it was foreseen would believe;) which thus removed the legal impediments to the acquittal of believers, and rendered their sins pardonable, and so became the ground of pardon. Such an influence, separated from that which *secures* the gift of faith, was to Paul before his conversion, (aside from its bearing on his *regeneration* by removing the curse of abandonment,) nothing but a provision for a moral agent, presenting to him a ground on which he might be pardoned if he would believe, and taking away the *penal* bar to his continued sanctification, but having no power to *secure* the gift of faith. Standing by itself, it had simply changed his relations as an agent, and as it bore on pardon, had merely rendered his sins pardonable if he would perform his duty, and pardonable on no other terms. And after his conversion, it was such a provision applied, and became the ground on which a sinning agent was pardoned, and so far as related to the curse of abandonment, the ground on which he continued to be sanctified\*.

\* The removal of the curse of abandonment, though even as it bore on regeneration it took away what agents had *caused*, was no part of

Here then is a mighty change wrought in the relations of moral agents, (whether of a part or the whole of mankind I am not now inquiring,) distinct from every thing relating to the same creatures as mere passive subjects of regeneration. The influence which produced this change was certainly distinct from that which related to mere recipients of regenerating power, though both should be allowed to have existed in the same thing. Now what shall we call this influence? It is so distinguishable in its effects, and at the same time so important, that it deserves a separate name, and ought not to be lost in general appellations. What name shall we give it? Is it not in fact the *cover for sin*? Then we must call it the atonement. And then the atonement is that which changes the relations of moral agents in reference to a release from the curse, and not that which procures the positive gift of the Spirit to passive recipients.

This is our idea of the atonement: but whether it is correct or not depends on the question whether the atonement contains that influence which secures the gift of faith. In this and the foregoing chapters I have been separating and shaping materials for the decision of this question. Let us see to what they amount.

We have found that the atonement is the cover for sin, by which is meant that it hides or is adapted to hide sin so from view that it will not be punished; that therefore it came in the room of punishment and answered the same end, or was adapted to come in the

a provision for agents but as it removed the penal bar to the gift of the Spirit *on their doing their duty*. A provision for agents is not that which undoes what agents have done, but that which agents may improve, and the effects of which depend on their improvement as a *sine qua non*. This removal, as it took away the penal bar to the *regeneration* of Paul, was not a provision for an agent; as it removed the penal bar to the gift of the Spirit *on his faithfully seeking it*, it was,

room of punishment and to answer the same end; that that end was to support the law by convincing the universe that God would punish transgression; that the means of this conviction were the sufferings of the beloved Son inflicted by the Father's hand, which therefore constituted the matter of the atonement; that when the end of punishment was thus answered, the Protector of the law was satisfied, and the legal impediments to pardon were removed; that the result of this was that the sins of believers, and of none else, were pardonable, and God could forgive them without injuring the law, but was not obliged till another influence, a promise made to the obedience of Christ, had created the bond; that atonement is distinguishable from its covenanted acceptance, it being that which came from the Son and satisfied the Father, and not the security given by the Father to the Son that believers should be pardoned on that ground; that this ground on which men might be pardoned, viewed as *already believing*, could not be the influence which secures the gift of faith; that the atonement therefore, separate from its covenanted acceptance, was, in relation to those for whom it was made, a mere provision in the hands of the Father for moral agents, rendering it possible for him to pardon them when they should believe; and that its covenanted acceptance merely placed that provision for moral agents in the hands of Christ, by securing to him the pardon, on that ground, of all who would believe. Besides this connected chain whose links seem indissoluble, we have found that an entirely different influence, constituted not by sufferings, not by any thing which answered in the room of punishment, not by any thing which is the ground of pardon, but by the merit of obedience, and consisting in a claim to a reward, obtained the gift of faith for the elect.

Not only are we led to this conclusion by the general chain, but there is something in almost every link which indicates the same thing.

(1.) The measure in question is an *atonement*. From the accepted use of its English name I draw an argument. To atone, in every one's mouth is to make amends for an offence, that the offender may be pardoned as he is, or is capable of being, not that the appeased may *fit* him for pardon.

(2.) The measure is a cover for sin : but what has a cover for sin to do with securing the gift of faith ? Where no sin exists God is not obliged to sanctify, unless he has bound himself by covenant. When no sin existed in heaven or Eden, he ceased to sanctify, because he had not promised to continue his influence. When sin was actually covered, so far as it bore on the question of sanctification, that is, when the penalty of abandonment was taken wholly away, he was under no obligation to bestow the gift of faith. One hinderance to sanctification was thus removed, but no obligation to sanctify was created. And this is not all. The mere cover for sin could not even render the gift of faith consistent with the honour of the law. Something more than the absence of sin was required of Adam, after he had entered upon existence, to render the exertion of sanctifying influence upon his heart consistent with the honour of the law. He must have a positive righteousness, perfect for the time he had been in existence, and the influence must be a token that he was thus far approved ; for the moment he ceased to be approved, the law forbid the influence to be continued. After his probation, had he remained faithful, the influence would have been for ever granted to him and his seed as the reward of a perfect righteousness. And the honour of the law required

that it should not be bestowed in any other way. The same principle still exists: and as men have not a perfect obedience to show, even after the sin of disobedience is covered, (including all the disobedience of *omission* itself,) they can never be sanctified but as the reward of Christ. After sin is covered a defect remains, not caused by sin or the presence of positive evil, but by the absence of positive good: and that defect the righteousness of Christ must supply. The mere cover for sin therefore, so far from securing the gift of faith, could not even render it consistent with the honour of the law. It could only remove the penal bar which stood in the way.

It is equally evident that a cover for sin could only affect the relations of moral agents. If it covers *sin*, it only covers what an agent has done; for the passive have not sinned. If its whole effect and tendency is to cover *sin*, it stretches itself over none but agents, and exhausts all its virtue upon their relations. If it had respect to the relation which sinners bore to the *law*,—if its tendency was to free from *condemnation* and *punishment* in a way not injurious to the law, its whole aspect was upon agents; for none but agents bore any relation to law, condemnation, punishment, or pardon. No relations but those of agents could possibly be affected by a cover for sin, except so far as the penalty of abandonment, which agents had incurred, excluded impressions from the passive. But even this indirect effect on the passive was produced by changing the relations of agents, by removing a penal bar which they had raised against themselves.

The cover for sin then could touch none but agents. It produced all its effects by changing their relations. Of course it was designed for no other purpose. We know from the shape of the garment for whom it was

intended. It was never provided for men as passive, but for men as active. And now if the atonement is that cover, it was never offered or accepted for mere recipients of sanctifying impressions, but for moral agents; not for men as active and passive both; not at once to render their sins pardonable and to obtain for them the gift of faith; but merely to be the ground of their release from both parts of the curse. Be the number for whom it was offered greater or less, it was offered for them only as agents, to take away the penalty of abandonment which they as agents had incurred, and to render pardonable the sins which they as agents had committed. To this I add, that it was offered and accepted with an express understanding that it should be applied to them for pardon only when as agents they should believe: and thus the enjoyment of it was not secured to them as passive and motionless, but was suspended on their own act as a *sine qua non*, an act which they were in duty bound to perform. The only operation which it had on the elect themselves, besides removing the penalty of abandonment, was to render their pardon consistent with the honour of the law when they as agents should perform a reasonable duty by believing. And this makes it out to be neither more nor less, (as it related to pardon,) than a provision for moral agents. No matter if by another influence that effort of their agency was secured; the atonement itself, so long as the enjoyment of it depended on their own conduct, was a mere provision for moral agents.

(3.) The atonement, as it stood related to pardon, was adapted to come in the room of punishment and to answer the same end; and besides removing the



curse of abandonment, it had no other use\*. But it could not answer the end of the punishment of a man viewed otherwise than as *already a believer*. Faith must exist then before it could accomplish any part of what it was adapted to accomplish in relation to pardon. It was no part of its office therefore to secure the existence of faith.

No substitute whatever could answer the end of the punishment of continued transgressors. This end is to show that God will punish sin, and to avoid the evil of shielding continued transgression. But no substitute, by protecting Judas in his mad career, could convince the universe that God would punish sin, or prevent the evil of shielding continued transgression, but would accomplish the very thing it was guarding against. There would have been an end to be answered by the punishment of men, (besides a literal exercise of justice,) had they repented and no atonement had been provided for them; and that would have been to support the authority of the law by showing that God would punish sin. That end of the punishment of the penitent and reformed, the atonement can answer. But there is another end to be accomplished by punishing obdurate transgressors; and that is to avoid casting a shield over those who continue to trample the law in the dust. This end no atonement can answer so as to supply the place of the punishment of such: for the moment it attempts to do this, it accomplishes the very evil it was intended to prevent. All that an atonement could do that was to answer exactly the end of punishment, was to answer the end of the punish-

\* I use *punishment* here for that part of the threatened evil which is set aside by pardon. The curse of abandonment was really a part of punishment; but for want of another term, and to avoid circumlocution, I am obliged to use the word here in this restricted sense.

ment of a sinner *already reformed*. It could have no influence therefore to *reform* him. As certainly then as the cover for sin, (the ground of acquittal from the curse,) besides removing the penalty of abandonment, could do no more than answer the end of punishment, the atonement could not secure the gift of faith. And its being adapted to answer the purpose of the punishment of a man whenever he will believe, constitutes it in relation to him a provision for a moral agent.

But the theory which assigns to the atonement a power to obtain sanctifying grace, wanders out of the way and draws in an influence which, instead of answering the end of *punishment*, (for the *merit* of one, we have seen, cannot answer the end of the punishment of another,) lays claim to a *reward*. That merit by which faith is obtained, can in no degree come in the room of punishment and help to constitute a provision for moral agents in relation to pardon.

(4.) The atonement was made by sufferings, or at most by sufferings combined with the *testimony* of obedience: but what influence have sufferings, or sufferings and testimony united, detached from the merit which claims a reward, to obtain the gift of faith? Or to look at the thing more generally, how can suffering for another what he deserves to suffer, make him holy? To intercept a stroke aimed at another, may ward it off from him, but what has that to do with changing his heart?

(5.) The atonement removed the *legal impediments* to pardon. But this position, which will be allowed to describe the proper office of the atonement, does not carry the idea that it removed the bar which unbelief raises, but the obstructions which past sins have caused and which faith cannot put away; not those which arise from rejecting the Gospel, but those

which have arisen from breaking the law. I shall show presently that this was all that the כפר of the Old Testament accomplished.

The influence which removes the legal impediments to pardon is identically that which is the *ground* of pardon, and becomes the ground merely by removing the impediments. But the merit which secures the gift of faith does not, as we have seen, answer the end of punishment so as to become the ground of pardon. Nor does the claim which it supports on God for a gift, render pardon consistent with the honour of the law. The gift itself is no part of the ground of remission. In the public instrument of the covenant of grace, the *exercise* of faith is made the *condition* of pardon; but even that is not the *ground*: much less is the *gift* of faith, and still less can a *claim* to that gift, or the *merit* which supports the claim, be that ground.

If then the atonement is that which removes the legal impediments to pardon, and thus becomes the ground of remission, it is entirely distinct from the influence which secures the gift of faith.

(6.) The atonement is that which *satisfies* God as Protector of the authority of the law. In that character, (and in that only can the satisfaction be predicated of him,) he was satisfied when the end of the punishment of believers, (and of men in no other character can it be said,) was so answered that the *law was safe* though they were pardoned. That satisfaction of course had nothing to do with *making* believers. It was the state of finding the sufferings to have answered the end of the punishment of men, (whether applicable to the whole or a part,) viewed as *already believing*, or the state of finding the sins of *believers* pardonable. That satisfaction certainly was not produced by any merit supporting a claim on the Father

for an influence to *make believers*, for they are already believers. Besides, to establish a claim against a person, is a strange way to satisfy him for an offence. To oblige another to satisfy me, is not to satisfy him. It was not merit, as we have seen, which reconciled remission with the honour of the law; and certainly it was not a claim to the gift of faith which rendered the sins of *believers* pardonable. Nor could it result from that satisfaction, in itself considered, that faith would ever be bestowed. Because the sins of believers were pardonable, it did not follow that God was bound to make men believe. And that which so secured the law as to make the sins of believers pardonable, fully satisfied the Protector of the law. If the law was safe he had gained his point, and had not to wait for a claim to be established against himself before he could be satisfied. He was satisfied in the security of his law if never called upon to bestow a gift on men. And that relation of things which satisfaction implied, was complete though none were ever to believe; for though none ever believed, it would still be true that believers might be pardoned without injuring the law.

If then atonement was the influence which satisfied the Protector of the law, and rendered the sins of believers pardonable, it was not atonement which secured the gift of faith.

(7.) The gift of faith to the elect was Christ's reward, conferred for the merit of his obedience "unto death," that is, for *making* atonement. There is a distinction to be set up between the atonement and the reward for making atonement, no less clear than between a day's work and its wages. And there is an equal distinction to be drawn between the *influence* of the atonement and the *claim* to the reward, no less obvious than between the influence of a physician upon

his patient and his title to a fee. Atonement exerted its influence upon God's *law*, and spread itself as a covering over sinning *agents*; the claim of Christ exerted itself upon God's *promise*, and stood related to *passive receivers* of sanctifying impressions. The influence of the atonement was a cover which men might carry home with them, and wrap around them; the claim of Christ remained in himself, and could not be transferred. The influence of the atonement upon the elect themselves, (allowing them to have been the only objects,) was distinct from the claim of Christ to their renewal and consequent salvation.

But you say, all this is not what we mean. We admit that the influence which secures the gift of faith is no part of that which answered the end of punishment, which removed the legal impediments to pardon, which satisfied the Protector of the law in relation to the remission of sins, which is the ground of pardon, which spent itself on the relations of moral agents, and constituted a provision for them. All this, we admit, has nothing to do with the actual gift of faith. But then the *cover of sin* cannot accomplish its end till sin is *covered* or pardoned; and it cannot secure pardon unless it obtains the gift of faith. We must therefore give the word a wider meaning, and apply it to a sufficient part of Christ's influence to secure that gift. But where, I ask, is the authority for this? Not in the *name*; for that, we have seen, cannot decide whether the thing is the *cover of sin*, or only a cover *for sin*. Where then is the proof that atonement by its own separate influence secures actual pardon? You say, "The Hebrew word for atonement signifies *to cover*; and when sins in the Old Testament are spoken of as atoned, the meaning always is that they were *covered, removed, never to be charged on the person who com-*

mited them. A transaction which only renders it *possible* for sin to be pardoned is no atonement, what ever else it may be\*.”

This is a point not to be passed over without a distinct examination. Every one acquainted with the Hebrew language knows that the same word runs into different meanings, preserving some general analogy to the original one, but going off through several gradations until resemblance is almost lost; and that two or more branches of meaning sometimes start from the same root, subdividing into other ramifications. The radical meaning of כפר, the Hebrew word for atonement, is to *cover*. From this root several branches proceed, one of which relates to atonement. I will exhibit three uses of the word, and leave it to the reader to judge whether they belong to the same branch.

I. It is used in its primary sense, and without any express reference to the typical expiations. Thus it signifies to *cover* or *blot out* a covenant†, to *cover* or *blot out* sin by *pardon*‡. And hence it is used for a *disposition* to *pardon*, a merciful temper and conduct towards offenders§; and hence for a reconciled state of feeling||. Is it certain that either of these uses of the word has any reference to the application of the same word to the typical expiations? Supposing the English name for atonement was *cover*, and you should read, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,

\* A manuscript which has been transcribed by many hands and widely circulated, must be considered so far published as to be the proper subject of remark, and liable to be quoted, though without a reference or a name. This is my vindication for those quotations through the book which acknowledge no author.

† Is. 28. 18.—‡ Deut. 21. 8. 2 Chron. 30. 18. Ps. 65. 3. & 73. 38. & 72. 9. Prov. 16. 6. Is. 6. 7, & 22. 14, & 27. 9. Jer. 18. 23.—

§ Deut. 21. 8.—|| Ezek. 16. 63.

whose sin is *covered*," would you certainly infer that the term in this verse was derived from the name of the atonement, or had any reference to it? If not, the above uses of the word throw no light on the meaning of כפר when applied to the atonement

II. It is used in two senses, (evidently borrowed from the expiations, but applied to other matters,) for a means or operation effectual or ineffectual as the case might be.

(1.) The general idea suggested by those expiations was that of life offered for life that the latter life might be preserved. Whether, that the life might be preserved absolutely, or only that there might be a provision to preserve it, to take effect upon certain conditions, was of no importance as respected the general character of the transactions. In either way there was life offered for life that life might be preserved. This was enough, (which ever way it was,) to give currency to the use of the word for whatever was offered to God or man in lieu of life, whether absolutely or otherwise; for it was not the absoluteness or conditionality of the offerings which connected them with the word, but their being in one way or other offered *for life*. Hence the word is used to denote a ransom given in the room of life to cover or shield life: and sometimes, where human qualifications were not necessary, or were supposed to exist, the ransom is contemplated as taking absolute effect\*: in other instances it is supposed to be frustrated through some imperfection in the character or state of him for whom it was offered†.

(2.) The general idea suggested by those expiations was that of appeasing wrath. Whether they re-

\* E. 30. 2, 15, 16. Prov. 13. 3. and 21. 18. Is. 43. 3.—† Job 36. 18. Ps. 49. 7. Prov. 6. 35.

conciled absolutely, or were only a provision for reconciliation, applicable where the offender was duly prepared, was of no importance as respected the general character of the transactions. In either way there was a design or tendency to appease wrath. This was enough, (which ever way it was,) to bring the word into use in the common affairs of life to express what is meant by the English term *appease*\*.

III. It is used to denote the ceremonial expiations themselves. These expiations were effectual in two, and only two, cases: (1.) where no faith was required or was possible, as in those instances where inanimate things were ceremonially purged†: (2.) where faith existed, or was supposed by the temporal Head of that nation to exist. In the case of individuals, the very act of offering was a profession of faith, and set forth, not so much the abstract power of the atonement, as a Christian's approach to God through a Mediator, and the success that would follow. When a Hebrew brought his lamb to the priest to be offered for his sins, it answered to a Christian's bearing Christ in the arms of his faith to God, and saying, Here is my Lamb for a burnt-offering. And that reconciliation will follow such an act, is what no one denies. In regard to those general atonements for the whole congregation which may be supposed to have turned away temporal judgments, let it be remembered that they were offered for a nation of professed believers. And if those pictures of the real atonement could turn away temporal wrath from the visible Church, it only taught us that the atonement itself will turn away eternal wrath from true believers. Not only a general profession of faith, but special humiliation must

\* Gen. 32. 20. Prov. 16. 14.—† Lev. 16. 20. Num. 35. 33. Ez. 43. 20, 26. and 45. 20.



combine with those national expiations to give them any effect. The great day of atonement was always a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer; and without these accompaniments it would have been of no validity\*.

Thus where a real or visible faith existed, the ceremonial expiations had a correspondent effect: but did they always accomplish reconciliation? What means then that oath, "I have sworn unto the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever†"? Could they ever avail without the co-operation of a visible faith? What mean then those terrible reproofs, "I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds." "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices?—I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats.—Who hath required this at your hands? Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me: the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them‡"? And how came it to pass that these expiations did not reconcile the scribes and Pharisees?

Certainly then the ceremonial expiations accomplished nothing but where faith was impossible and not required, or where it was supposed to exist. Or if they took a man from a state of condemnation and reconciled him to God, they surely obtained for him the gift of faith. The great and decisive question then is, did the כפר of the Old Testament obtain the gift of faith? *It certainly did not.* Here I plant my foot.

\* Lev. 23, 27.—† 1 Sam. 3, 14.—‡ Ps. 50. Isai. 1.

Show me a single instance in which these expiations were made with any such intent. Where is the chapter and verse? They were never offered to procure *holiness*, but only to obtain *pardon*. So far from being designed to ensure faith, they always supposed its existence, and had no effect where it was not.

And now see how the argument from the Old Testament is shaped. Because the כִּפּוּר of that dispensation reconciled where faith was not necessary or possible, or where it was supposed to exist, the atonement must reconcile even where it has to bring faith with it for the purpose. And for this end a power must be given it to obtain faith, though it never had that power in one of the instances recorded in the Old Testament, and though neither the gift of faith naturally follows a cover for sin, nor can merit, by which the gift is obtained, constitute that cover by answering the end of punishment. No, the whole analogy of the Old Testament lies against this conclusion. If then you apply the name of atonement to that part of Christ's influence which secures the gift of faith, you contradict all the instances in which the term is used in the Bible\*.

The conclusion is, that the atonement neither ensures faith by its own proper influence, nor accomplishes reconciliation without it.

The great mistake on this subject has arisen from confounding the different influences which meet in the death of Christ. That death, including the consent of the Sufferer, is to be viewed in two lights; as an atoning sacrifice, and as the highest act of obedience. And yet the merit of that obedience, as constituting a claim to a reward, is confounded by the writers on the other side with the atonement. And then they raise the question, whether the *death* of Christ obtained the

\* The word in Rom. 5. 11. is not Bible but translation.

gift of faith for the elect and thus accomplished actual reconciliation. We fully acknowledge that it did; and thus the dispute ends. But when we say this we do not make the same acknowledgment respecting the atonement. The *merit* of Christ's obedience "unto death" certainly obtained the gift of faith, and in union with his expiation, accomplished reconciliation for the elect; but merit made no part of the atonement.

Dr. Owen, and other writers on that side, constantly bring up the question about the *death* and *ransom* of Christ, and whether *redemption* was universal. We certainly have no dispute with them on this point. Says Dr. Owen, "Redemption, which in the Scripture is λυτρωσις sometimes, but most frequently απολυτρωσις, is the delivery of any one from captivity and misery by the intervention, (λυτρωσις,) of a price or ransom. That this ransom or price of our deliverance was the blood of Christ, is evident. He calls it λυτρωμα, Mat. 20. 28. and αντιλυτρωμα, 1 Tim. 2. 6. that is, the price of such redemption\*."

I have no objection to all this, except a small inaccuracy in the last sentence. Nothing is said in the texts referred to about the *blood* of Christ. I admit however that redemption, in the larger sense, is our deliverance from the bondage both of sin and death; that it was accomplished by the larger *ransom*; and that this ransom is sometimes called the *blood* of Christ. But λυτρωμα, when used for the larger ransom, expresses more than כפר did when standing for atonement†. It occurs no where but in the above

\* Salus Electorum. p. 174. Falkirk Ed.

† כפר, when meaning a ransom, is translated λυτρωμα by the LXX. (Exod 21. 30. and 30. 12. Num. 35. 31, 32. Prov. 6. 35. and 13. 8.) But this Greek word, like the corresponding English term, expresses a price which may either be absolute or conditional. There is nothing in

quoted text, and in the parallel one in Mark. "The Son of man came—to give his life a ransom for many." *αντιλυτρον* occurs no where but in the passage above referred to. "Who gave himself a ransom for all." But the kindred words are of more frequent occurrence. *λυτρωσις* appears thrice. "He hath visited and made redemption for his people." "All them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.\*" *απολυτρωσις* occurs ten times. It is used to denote redemption from Jewish persecution, from the pains of martyrdom, from the grave, and from all evil at the last day†. The other passages are as follows. "Justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." "By means of death for the redemption of—transgressions‡." The corresponding verb carries the idea to a redemption from the power of sin, which *כפר* never expressed. "Who gave himself for us that he might redeem, (ransom, *λυτρωσῆται*,) us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed, (ransomed, *ελυτρωθητε*,) with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; who—was ma-

it to limit it to the absolute sense: and we shall see that this and other words of a similar nature are used in a lower and conditional sense in the New-Testament.

\* Luke 1. 68. and 2. 38. Heb. 9. 12.—† Luke 21. 28. Rom. 8. 23. Eph. 1. 14. and 4. 30. Heb. 11. 35.—‡ Rom. 3. 24. 1 Cor. 1. 30. Eph. 1. 7. Col. 1. 14. Heb. 9. 15.

nifest in these last times for you who *by him* do believe in God\*.” The same idea is brought out where the *λυτρον* or ransom is not expressed. “Who gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil world.” “Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.” “For their sakes I sanctify myself, [devote myself to die,] that they also might be sanctified through the truth†.” Thus by his obedience “unto death” he obtained a right and claim to deliver the elect from the bondage of sin by sanctifying grace. Hence it is said to Christians, “Ye are bought with a price;” (*τιμης ηγορασθητε*.) And their song in heaven is, “Thou wast slain and hast redeemed, (*bought, ηγορασας,*) us to God with thy blood.” “And no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed, (*οι ηγορασμενοι,*) from the earth.—These were redeemed, (*ηγορασθησαν,*) from among men‡.” Another word is used in the same sense. “The Church of God which he hath purchased, (*ωξεριπονησαλο,*) with his own blood.” “Ye are a chosen generation, —a people for a purchase;” (*λαος εις ωξεριπονησιν;*) meaning, says Parkhurst, “a people acquired or purchased to himself in a peculiar manner§.” When therefore you contemplate the death of Christ as a whole, including both expiation and the merit of obedience, it did reconcile the elect to God. “It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and,

\* Tit. 2. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 18—21.—† John 17. 19. Gal. 1. 4. Eph. 5. 25—27.—‡ 1 Cor. 6. 20. and 7. 23. Rev. 5. 9. and 14. 3. 4.—  
§ Acts 20. 28. 1 Pet. 2. 9.

(having made peace through the blood of his cross,) by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprouvable in his sight\*.”

\* Col. 1. 19—22. Reconciliation is never ascribed to a less cause than the death of Christ as a whole; and it means, I think, the mere destruction of enmity between the parties, without reference to any thing positive, except as a necessary consequence. This noun and its kindred verb are used in our translation of the New-Testament fourteen times. In one instance, (Rom. 5. 11.) the noun ought to have appeared where *atonement* is used; and in one instance, (Heb. 2. 17.) the verb appears where *to atone* ought to have been used. Fourteen times then these words ought to have appeared, and fourteen times, and no more, the corresponding Greek words are found in the New-Testament. In six places *καταλλάσσω* is used; (Rom. 5. 10. twice. 1 Cor. 7. 11. 2 Cor. 5. 18, 19, 20.) in four, its derivative noun *καταλλαγή*; (Rom. 5. 11. and 11. 15. 2 Cor. 5. 18, 19.) in three *αποκατάλλασσω*; (Eph. 2. 16. Col. 1. 20, 21.) and in one *διαλλάσσω*; (Mat. 5. 24.) all derived from *αλλάσσω*, which signifies *to change*. The cause to which the effect is ascribed, appears only in the following passages. “We were reconciled to God by the *death* of his Son.” (Rom. 5. 10.) “It pleased the Father,—(having made peace through *the blood of his cross*,) by him to reconcile all things unto himself.—And you—hath he reconciled *in the body of his flesh through death*.” (Col. 1. 19—22.) “That he might reconcile both unto God in one body *by the cross*.” (Eph. 2. 16.) The meaning of the word seems limited to the destruction of enmity between the parties in the following passages. “Go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother.” (Mat. 5. 24.) “Let her—be reconciled to her husband.” (1 Cor. 7. 11.) “In Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are *made nigh* by the blood of Christ. For he is our *peace* who hath made both [Jews and Gentiles] one,—having abolished in his flesh the *enmity*,—to make in himself of twain one new man, so making *peace*; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the *enmity* thereby; and came and preached *peace*.” (Eph. 2. 13—17.) “It pleased the Father,—(having made *peace* by the blood of his cross,) by him to reconcile all things unto himself.—And you that were sometime *alienated* and *enemies* in your mind,—hath he reconciled.” (Col. 1. 19—21.) While we were yet

We can now understand what is meant by the larger *ransom*. By *giving himself, devoting himself* to die, and actively laying down his *blood*, Christ obtained as firm a claim to the redemption of his elect from the bondage of sin, (and so from that of death through his expiation,) as a man could have to the release of captives, who had paid by contract a mighty ransom for their redemption; while the blood laid down, was that out of respect to which, as the honour of the law was concerned, the Father consented to their *release*. These two parts were sufficient to constitute a complete *λυτρον*. A ransom has two influences; it supports the claim of the redeemer, and it is that out of respect to which the holder of the captives lets them go. Let the ransom of Christ possess this double influence, and it comprehends in its matter all that was active and passive in his voluntary death, and in its power, not only the whole efficiency of the atonement, but his entire claim to that reward which consisted in the *release* of the captives from both parts of their bondage, or his perfect right to sanctify and lead them forth from punishment. The part of the ransom which supported *his claim*, was the *giving* or *sanctifying* of himself, as it is expressed four times in the above quotations; but the part which the Father respected as the *ground* of the release, was the *blood and life laid down*.

*sinner*s Christ died for us; much more then being justified by his blood, we shall be *saved from wrath* through him. For if when we were *enemies* we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved [from wrath] by his life." (Rom. 5. 8—10.) "Who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, *not imputing their trespasses unto them*, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then—we pray you in Christ's stead, *be ye reconciled to God*." (2 Cor. 5. 18—20.)

Thus he actively “gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all *iniquity*,” but “redeemed us from the *curse* of the law [by] *being made*, [passively,] a curse for us\*.”

The lower ransom was the blood of Christ laid down for a moral agent, to deliver him from death if he on his part would accept the offer. “I exhort—that—supplications—be made for all men;—for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth: for there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a *ransom*, (*αντιλυτρον*,) for all†.” “Even denying the Lord that *bought*, (*αγορωσαντα*,) them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction‡.” The latter word is the same that expresses the purchase of believers in the following passages: “Ye are bought with a price.” “Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God with thy blood.” “The hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth.” The higher ransom then is that which *effects* deliverance from sin and death; the lower ransom is the *means* of deliverance, dependant for its effect on the conduct of men. The higher ransom comprehends both expiation and merit; the lower ransom is nothing but the atonement. In this lower sense *redemption* was as general as the means, and might be accepted or refused§.

But how, if the whole claim of Christ rested on the merit of his obedience, did he purchase the Church with his “*blood*”? And how are we “redeemed” from our “*vain conversation*—with the *precious blood* of Christ, as of a lamb *without blemish* and *without spot*”?

\* Gal. 3. 13. Tit. 2. 14.—† 1 Tim. 2. 1—6.—‡ 2 Pet. 2. 1.—  
§ Heb. 11. 35.



This will appear to be a very natural figure, (for "purchased" is certainly figurative,) when we consider in how many respects the blood resembled a pecuniary price. It was the thing laid down upon the board. It was the very thing which he was commanded to lay down, with a promise that if he would lay down that precise thing he should have a redeemed seed; and by laying it down he purchased them. What gave it a greater resemblance to a pecuniary price, the thing laid down was really *useful* to the government of the other Party. And there was a reason for calling it "precious," with an implied comparison with other prices of less value. The self-denial, which as the test of obedience really created the claim, was in proportion to the thing laid down, just as it is in proportion to the sum of money paid in a purchase. Compared then with other tests of obedience, the blood supported a greater claim, as of a thing more precious; and by its claim and self-denial united, it resembled a vast treasure paid to purchase some valuable good. It had another point of resemblance. A price has no claim till it is accepted; and the blood of Christ had no claim separate from that covenanted acceptance which the merit of his obedience procured. That merit in reality created the whole claim, but it did it by laying down that blood. Here lies the difference from an ordinary purchase. In the latter case the money, abstracted from the character of him who offers it, and from all merit in laying it down, commands the article. In the other case the blood, abstracted from the merit of obedience, obtains nothing. This discrepancy must be admitted upon every plan: for who will say that the blood alone, separated from the obedience which attended it, obtained the sanctification and pardon of the elect? The blood, though

it went into the larger ransom as the *ground* of the release, really had nothing to do with the *claim* but as the mere test of obedience.

The only difficulty arises from our being said to be redeemed from the *power* of sin by the *blood* of the *unblemished* Lamb. Here, you say, obedience is distinctly referred to, but as having no other power than to qualify the Victim. And the inference is, that the atonement itself secured the gift of faith. We have already contemplated the *active* form of this expression, (*viz.* that Christ *purchased* the Church with his own blood,) and found no difficulty in it; and if it had been added, with his own *spotless* blood, it would have created no more difficulty; for that was certainly understood. Christ purchased the Church and redeemed it from iniquity with his own spotless blood, as of a lamb without blemish. We see how by a slight figure this could be said in perfect consistency with our system. Now Peter only leaves out the *Purchaser*, and throws the sentence into a *passive* form, and with these two alterations expresses the same thing. "Ye were—redeemed—from your vain conversation—with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish." Who was the Redeemer? Introduce his agency so as to give the sentence an active form, and how will it read? Christ hath redeemed you from your vain conversation with his own precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish. And this is just what we had before. Peter did not intend to deny the influence of Christ's *merit* in this redemption; but using a passive form, he had no way to bring it in. Had he expressed the same idea in an active form, he might have said, Christ, by obediently yielding his spotless life, claimed and accomplished the sanctification of his elect, and obtained this reward and influence by giving "himself

for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.”

As in this place the whole seems to be ascribed to the passion of the unblemished Lamb, so in the 10th of Hebrews every thing seems imputed to the action of the Priest; and while we are contemplating the Priest, he at once becomes a King. (ver. 13.) It could not be expected that the apostles would preserve all the nice classifications of systematic writers. Their business was with the multitude, and they often throw the subject upon the imagination and heart in a rich and affecting confusion. It is not from such insulated passages that we are to gather systems. We must compare scripture with scripture, and build ourselves upon the analogy of faith.

Thus if you confound the influences which meet in the death of Christ, and ask what that *death* accomplished, we answer, reconciliation for the elect. If you ask about the higher *ransom*, that redeemed all for whom it was offered. But if you ask about the *atonement* or lower ransom, that, even viewed as accepted of God, did no more for the elect themselves than to remove the curse of abandonment, and to render it certain that they would be pardoned if they would believe; making out thus, as relates to pardon, a mere provision for moral agents. This must be the limit of the atonement if it did not secure the gift of faith.

Whether it was in fact an atonement for all, (intentionally or otherwise,) depends therefore on the question, whether it had these two effects upon all. But for this question we are not yet prepared.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE MEANING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AS CONNECTED WITH  
THE JUSTIFICATION OF BELIEVERS.

THE original and literal meaning of righteousness is perfect personal holiness. Used in reference to the subject about which we are inquiring, it means neither more nor less than *that which gives a title to justification*, not of debt, but according to God's gracious covenant, to the utter exclusion of boasting. Sometimes the term seems to denote that which is the *condition* of justification, but more generally that which is the *ground*. The manner in which the word slid into this use is obvious. Under the first covenant both the condition and ground of justification were a literal righteousness, or unsullied holiness. That was the natural mode of justification: and in that process the term justification was used in its original and literal meaning, to denote a legal sentence that the person respected was just. Hence it became a familiar truth that a righteousness was necessary to justification, and bore to it the relations both of a condition and a ground. When the new method of accepting men was introduced, it was natural to refer to the former method as the standard, and to borrow its terms. The acceptance itself, though far from being legal, was called justification; and to preserve consistency, that which is the *ground* of acceptance, (and I think, also, that which is the *condition*,) was called a righteousness. The terms thus applied are plainly used out of their original meaning; for the gracious acceptance of a sinner is certainly not a legal process. The justification is not by works of the law, and of course the

righteousness which gives a title to it is not a legal righteousness.

In this way it has come to pass that whatever under the new covenant gives a title to a *gracious* justification, is called our righteousness, and the man who possesses it is denominated righteous. That this is the case the following passages will show.

“Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I *righteousness*;—in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be *justified*\*.”

“By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be *justified*.—But now the *righteousness* of God, [of God’s ordaining,] without the law, is manifested,—even the *righteousness* of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ.—Being *justified* freely by his grace.—Where is boasting then?—Therefore we conclude that a man is *justified* by faith without the deeds of the law.—If Abraham were *justified* by works he hath whereof to glory.—But what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for *righteousness*. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that *justifieth* the ungodly, his faith is counted for *righteousness*. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth *righteousness* without works; saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. [To impute righteousness then, is not to impute sin, or in plain words, to forgive.]—We say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for *righteousness*;—and he received the sign of circumcision, the seal of the *righteousness* of faith,—that he might be the father of all them that believe,—that *righteous-*

\* Is. 45, 24, 25.

ness might be imputed unto them also.—For the promise—was not to Abraham or his seed through the law, but through the *righteousness* of faith.—It is of faith that it might be by grace.—It was imputed to him for *righteousness*: now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but for us also to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our *justification*. Therefore being *justified* by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.—As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, [were condemned,] so by the obedience of One shall many be made *righteous*, [shall possess that which entitles them to justification: this is the sole idea, and makes the antithesis complete.]—To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto *righteousness*, [unto that which secures justification of life, as the antithesis requires.]—The Gentiles which followed not after *righteousness*, [a course of conduct acceptable to God,] have attained to *righteousness*, [that which entitles to justification or acceptance with God,] even the *righteousness* which is of faith. But Israel which followed after the law of *righteousness*, [the law by which they hoped to be justified,] hath not attained to the law of *righteousness*," [could not be justified by the law, or, hath not attained to the rule or method of justification\*.]

“A man is not *justified* by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ:—for if *righteousness* come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.—Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for *righteous-*

\* Rom. 3. 20—28. and 4. and 5. 1, 19, and ver. 16. and 9. 30, 31.

ness.—The Scripture, foreseeing that God would *justify* the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham.—That no man is *justified* by the law—is evident, for The just shall live by faith.—If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily *righteousness* should have been by the law.—The law was our school-master to bring us to Christ, that we might be *justified* by faith.—Christ is become of none effect unto you, whosoever of you are *justified* by the law.—We through the Spirit wait for the hope of *righteousness* by faith\*.”

“The Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for *righteousness*, and he was called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is *justified*, and not by faith only†.”

The Gospel is called “the word of righteousness,” and “the ministration of righteousness,” in opposition to “the ministration of condemnation,” because it reveals the ground and condition of justification‡.

From these passages it plainly appears that by righteousness is meant nothing more than that which under the gracious covenant of God gives a title to justification; a title in no sense legal, by no means founded on justice, but purely of grace, to the utter exclusion of boasting; that to be “made righteous” by Christ, is only to be entitled by him to a gracious justification; that to impute, reckon, or account faith for righteousness, is to accept it in the room of a literal righteousness; that to impute righteousness to a man, is not to impute sin, in plain words, to forgive, or in a larger sense to confer on him a title to a gracious

\* Gal. 2. 16, 21. and 3. and 5. 4, 5.—† James 2. 23, 24.—‡ 2 Cor. 3. 9. Heb. 5. 13.

reward; and that to impute to one the righteousness of Christ, is merely to justify him, or *treat* him as righteous, on account of the righteousness of the Redeemer.

That this term was derived from the first covenant, and is used of course under the second in a figurative sense, appears more evident from its being used under the second, as under the first, to denote both the *ground* and *condition* of justification. It more generally expresses the ground, which is no other than the atonement and obedience of Christ\*; but if I mistake not, it sometimes denotes the condition, or that personal qualification which for the sake of Christ is graciously accepted in the room of a literal righteousness. The sincere but imperfect obedience of Israel, (in which however faith was unquestionably included,) was denominated their righteousness. The zeal of Phinehas “was counted unto him for, [in the room of,] righteousness.” Abraham “believed the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness†.” It is several times repeated in the New-Testament that Abraham’s faith, (a personal qualification,) was reckoned to him *for righteousness*, instead of righteousness, or as being what a literal righteousness was under the first covenant, a condition of justification. Circumcision was “a seal of *the righteousness of faith*,” or a seal of the promise that faith should be *accounted for righteousness*, or be accepted as the condition of justification‡.

\* Is. 42. 21. and 45. 24, 25. and 54. 17. and 61. 10, 11. and 62. 1, 2. Jer. 23. 6. and 33. 16. Dan. 9. 24. Rom. 5. 21. and 10. 3—11. 1 Cor. 1. 30. Phil. 3. 9.—† Gen. 15. 6. Deut. 6. 25. and 24. 13. Ps. 106. 31.

‡ If it should be thought that this opinion is not warranted by the passages quoted, I shall not contend for it, as it is not material to any part of the system. I see nothing however unnatural or dangerous in it: but the evidence is before the reader.



Thus it would seem that as under the first covenant both the ground and condition of justification were a literal righteousness, so under the second covenant the ground and condition of justification are figuratively called by the same name; not because they are the same thing, (for then justification would be of debt and not of grace,) but because they fill the same place in the matter of justification. On the whole, it seems undeniable that righteousness means neither more nor less than that which gives a complete title to justification "*by grace.*" Of course to make one righteous through Christ, or to impute to him the righteousness of Christ, is to invest him, not with a personal claim on justice, but with a title to a free, gracious, unmerited justification through the righteousness of his Redeemer. It is to secure to him the privilege, not of being *considered* literally righteous, (for he is not, and God views things as they are,) but of being *treated* as righteous.

The strongest figure, I believe, in the Bible to countenance the idea that believers have in Christ a literal righteousness, and a real claim on justice, is found in Rom. 8. 3, 4. "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; *that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us* who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." To understand this passage it is necessary to take up the connexion of the whole Epistle. In the first five chapters the apostle had been supporting the doctrine of justification by faith without the deeds of the law. In the last verse of the third chapter he had started the objection, "Do we then make void the law" as a rule of life? and had dismissed it with this brief reply, "God forbid! yea we establish

the law.” In the sixth chapter he resumes the objection, and shows that conformity to the law is necessarily implied in that union to Christ by which we are justified. In the seventh chapter he pursues the same general subject, and explains the end which the law subserves, and the relation which believers bear to it. The eighth chapter opens with an inference from these two subjects united, viz. justification by faith alone, and the necessity of holiness: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death: [the Gospel has delivered me both from the dominion and condemnation of 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; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.” As though he had said, all our past and present sins being covered by the atonement of Christ, and all the defect of our obedience by his obedience; and we being brought back to honour, love, and obey the law, or as he had said in another place, to “keep the righteousness of the law,” and to “obedience unto righteousness\* ;” it is, to all the purposes of honouring the law and completing our title to justification, as though the righteousness of the law, or a legal righteousness, had been fulfilled in us. No other *can* be the meaning; for it would contradict the plain argument of the whole Epistle to affirm that the best Christian on earth possesses a *legal* righteousness, or has in any way the righteousness of the law literally fulfilled in him. The expression is obviously

\* Chap. 2. 26, &amp; 6. 16.

figurative, like that in which the same apostle speaks of filling up “that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ—for—the Church\*.”

\* Col. 1. 24. Some have a shorter way of getting over this text, affirming that by the righteousness of the law fulfilled in us is meant no more than that we “keep the righteousness of the law.” But the connexion between the 3d and 4th verses seems to intimate that the atonement had something to do with this fulfilment of the righteousness of the law in us.

I have made no account of that well known passage in the 85th Psalm, “Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other;” because there are reasons to doubt whether righteousness in this place means any thing more than *faithfulness*. Long before the days of David, “the righteous acts of the Lord,” meant those dispensations of providence which manifested his mercy and truth\*. But in consequence of the more express and ample covenant engagements with David and his house, such terms are more frequently found in the Psalms, and generally mean the covenant mercy or faithfulness of God†. “God of my righteousness,” appears to mean, “God of my mercy‡.” “Let them not come into thy righteousness,” that is, into thy favour§. “I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only;” that is, of thy faithfulness||. The *fruit* of mercy is once expressed by the same term¶. After David’s time, righteous and righteousness were often used in the same sense by other prophets\*\* : and the practice is followed even by the writers of the New-Testament††. A fair specimen of this phraseology may be seen in the two following passages: “God, [who, it is stated in the context, had bound himself by *promise*,] is not *unrighteous* to forget your work and labour of love.” “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and *just* to forgive us our sins.” In the same spirit Paul says; “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the *righteous* Judge, shall give me at that day.”

This explanation of the passage receives considerable support from its structure. It is common in Hebrew poetry for the latter line of a distich to echo the sense of the former, with a small variation in the

\* Judges 5. 11. 1 Sam. 12. 7.—† Ps. 5. 8. and 31. 1. & 35. 24, 28. & 36. 6. 10. & 40. 9, 10. & 51. 14. & 71. 2, 15, 16, 19. & 88. 12. & 89. 16. & 92. 15. & 103. 17. & 112. 4. & 116. 5. and 119. 40, 123, 142. and 143. 1, 11. and 145. 7.—‡ Ps. 4. 1. and 59. 10, 17.—§ Ps. 69. 27.—|| Ps. 71. 15, 16.—¶ Ps. 24. 5.—\*\* Ez. 9. 15. Is. 41. 10. and 42. 6. and 46. 13. and 56. 1. Dan. 9. 16. Mic. 7. 9.—†† John 7. 18. Rom. 3. 3—7. 2 Thes. 2. 10, 12. 2 Tim. 4. 8. Heb. 6. 10—20. 2 Pet. 1. 1. 1 John 1. 9.

But this is not the only figurative expression which has received a literal construction. Indeed the practice of confounding the figurative with the literal meaning is so fruitful a source of mistake that it deserves a particular consideration.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### MISTAKES ARISING FROM DRAWING LITERAL CONCLUSIONS FROM FIGURATIVE PREMISES.

THERE are certain figurative expressions in common use in the Church, partly derived from the Scriptures and partly of human invention, which are calculated to present to the imagination in a summary and striking manner, without the process of reasoning, the general influence of Christ's mediation. This advantage gives them, (at least a part of them,) a claim to be retained in our prayers and popular discourses. But the difficulty is that they have been introduced into logical discussions with a literal meaning, and as premises from which literal conclusions are drawn. This has been one of the most prolific sources of mistake.

The expressions are such as these; that Christ *purchased* the Church, that he *paid their debt*, that he is *one* with them, that their sins were *imputed* to him, that he bore the *curse of the law* in their stead, that he *satisfied divine justice* for them, that his righteousness

words or their order for the sake of euphony. On this principle *righteousness* in the latter line is of the same import with *truth* in the former, and exactly answers to the term *faithfulness*. "Mercy and truth are met together; *faithfulness* and peace have kissed each other."

is *imputed* to them, and that they are *considered* righteous.

It is said in Scripture, "Ye are bought with a price;" and hence, as if *ransom* was used but in a single sense, it is inferred, "As is the ransom must be the release.—Were redemption universal, salvation would and must be of equal extent\*." And as if the whole was a commercial transaction, it is alleged that just enough was paid in a way of atonement to redeem a certain number, and that this number can claim a release of justice itself. "If Christ fully paid the price of redemption for all and each, then all and each ought to be saved, and none ought to perish†."}

Because Christ answered the purpose of our punishment, men have chosen to say that he *paid our debt*: and from that expression, manifestly figurative and of human invention, they have gone on to infer, as though the whole transaction was of a pecuniary nature, that he became the Bondsman of a certain number, and brought himself under obligations to law and justice to discharge their debt, and actually paid it in kind; and that they, as exonerated debtors, have a claim on justice to a release. "He paid the full debt of all for whom he was Surety, and he secures the eternal redemption of every one for whom he made the payment." "He did not undertaké to see their debt paid and satisfaction made by some means or other, as bondsmen commonly bind themselves for their friends in joint securities in order to strengthen their credit,

\* See a popular little book entitled *Gethsemane*, published first in London, and republished in Philadelphia, with high recommendations, in 1817, (containing extracts from many writers,) p. 21.

† The delegates from Zealand in the Synod of Dort. *Acts of Synod*, Part III. p. 156.

always presuming that these bonds will be discharged in whole or in the greatest part by the debtors themselves : no, he took the whole debt and the whole guilt of his lost sheep upon himself alone.” “ He that undertaketh for another man’s debt maketh it his own, and standeth chargeable with it as if it were his own personal debt : so Christ, becoming Surety for our sins, made them his own, and so was punishable for them as if they had been his own personal sin.” He “ was held in the same obligation which we were under ; he paid the same debt that we did owe : the curse or punishment which we deserved was inflicted upon him.” “ The grand question here is, for whom was Christ Surety ? whose debt did he pay ? whose freedom did he procure ? Let the event declare this ; for certainly Christ did not die in vain, or purchase deliverance and yet lose the price he paid, or any part of the purchase he made ; for this would be contrary to all the rules of justice and righteousness.” “ His death had had no relation to us had not our sin been juridically adjudged to be his ; nor can we challenge an acquittance at the hand of God for our debts, if they were not our debts that he paid on the cross\*.”

It is said in Scripture, “ They two shall be one flesh : this is a great mystery ; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church †.” And hence it is inferred “ that there is such an intercommunity of relation between the Saviour and his redeemed, as forms a just reason for regarding them as *one* in a federal and *legal* sense.” “ Another’s act cannot be mine, either in profit or loss, if there be not a *legal oneness* between us ‡.”

It is said in Scripture, “ He hath made him to be sin

\* Gethsemane p. 42, 55, 73, 91, 152.—† Eph. 5. 31, 32.—

‡ Geth. p. 66, 80.

for us." "Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree." "And unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." And hence it is inferred that in the eye of law and justice he was actually a sinner by imputation, bearing upon him by a *legal* transfer all the sins of the elect, and no more; that he "took upon him their *persons*," "sustained our *persons*\*;" in short, that sin and its guilt were *legally* imputed, transferred, or transmitted to him, and not merely the effects of sin laid upon him. "Jehovah laid or caused to meet upon Christ the Surety, not the punishment only, but the iniquity of them all." "Had no guilt lain on him he might have suffered, but could not have been punished.—What is this being made sin? Is it Christ's being a sacrifice for sin? Yes; but that is not all; it notes also his being under the guilt of sin." "It is not the guilt of sin, (as guilt means only our obnoxiousness to punishment,) that was imputed to Jesus Christ. It seems not proper to speak so. But sin was imputed; and the result of that imputation was, guiltiness in the eye of the law and vindictive justice." "Persons who are hostile to this doctrine tell us that it was not sin itself which was imputed to Christ, but the effects of sin. But—the apostle—is not speaking of the effects of sin, but of sin itself." "The transferring our iniquities upon him must in some way precede his being bruised for them, which could not be any other way than by imputation, whereby he was constituted by God a Debtor in our stead to bear the punishment of our sin. He being made sin for us, our sin was in a sort made his." "Unto them that look for him, he shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation.—If the words have any meaning, surely there must

\* Geth. p. 49, 80.

have been a sense in which when on earth he was not without sin.—If these and similar expressions do not convey the idea of Christ's dying under a charge of imputed sin, and of his suffering the penalty connected with it, they have no meaning at all." He sustained "that curse or debt of suffering which attached to those on whose account he became a Surety, whose sins were imputed to him, and with which he became, by his infinitely gracious and voluntary consent, legally chargeable." "Their iniquity itself was laid upon him by God the Judge of all, and he was regarded by his holy Father as justly chargeable with all their iniquity, and transgression, and sin.—These were set to his account in law-reckoning, and laid upon him as their Representative\*."

It is said in Scripture, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;" and hence it is inferred that he suffered a legal punishment, and was adjudged to it by law and justice; a punishment the same both in kind and degree that was due to all the sins of the elect; that had he atoned for another sin he must have suffered more; and that his death is not sufficient for the pardon of one of the non-elect. "The way in which Christ was to justify many was by bearing their iniquities; but if he did not endure by way of punishment all that these iniquities deserved, with what propriety can his bearing them be assigned as a ground of justification? Sin is sin wherever it is found, whether on the sinner himself or on his Substitute. Its being transmitted to the Substitute does not lessen its malignity, nor render punishment less necessary. The sanction of the divine law is irreversible; it will have its course. Punishment in either case is not an act of sovereignty, but of jus-

\* Geth. p. 19, 20, 55, 73, 109, 156, 157, 159, 160.



tice." "That the death of Christ was a death of unexampled sufferings cannot be doubted; but they were sufferings to which he became liable as a Surety, and to which, in virtue of his own voluntary engagement, he was righteously judged by the law and justice of God." "The sufferings of our blessed Lord were, in consequence of his own voluntary engagement, a debt due to divine justice." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; which he could not have been without the imputation of sin, and his enduring whatever was included in that curse." "If the sufferings of our Lord were not penal, there can be no salvation for apostate man.—What will these sufferings avail if there was nothing penal in them? Mere suffering gives a right to nothing: suffering to be expiatory, must be voluntary, and endured as the desert of imputed sin." "Christ is said to be made a curse, not simply because he suffered, but because he was adjudged to his sufferings, that thereby satisfaction might be made to the justice of God. But if sin were not imputed to Christ, he could not be the object of punitive justice; for that is strange justice that can be satisfied by the sufferings of a person no way guilty in the eye of justice." "Either Christ suffered the wrath of God, *i. e.* the punishment due to the sins of the elect, or else God is untrue in that commination, *He that sins shall die.*" "To imagine that sin can escape punishment, is highly dishonourable to the moral government of God. For as moral precepts are a transcript of the holiness and rectitude of the divine nature, it is impossible that the sanction by which infinite justice has guarded these precepts, should either be annulled or relaxed." "To me it appears self-evident, either that Christ must have sustained the punishment due to the sinner, or the law have relaxed

in its demands." "If the curse of the divine law has not been borne by Christ, we are still in our sins, and the weight of that curse will sink us into endless perdition." "This satisfaction is however by some persons boldly denied; and in perfect consistency with this denial, it is said that our blessed Lord was not punished: for it is easy to see that if the doctrine of satisfaction be allowed, punishment must of course follow; for without punishment there can be no satisfaction either to the law or to the justice of God." "The chastisement of our peace was upon him. How else could his heavenly Father [have] been pleased to bruise him, for whom it is no more good to punish the just than to clear the guilty?" "If our iniquities were not laid upon Christ, his sufferings could not be punishment, and therefore not satisfactory: for where there is no sin, either actual, inherent, or imputed, there can be no punishment, and of course no expiation of guilt. It was no more possible for God to inflict penal sufferings on Christ while considered in every respect as perfectly innocent, than it was for him to deny himself." "It has been asked, may not God punish an innocent creature as so considered?—God cannot but approve and justify an innocent creature as so considered; because the innocent creature is what God wills him to be according to his law, and therefore it is impossible he should, under this consideration, be the object of his disapprobation.—Hence it necessarily follows that an innocent creature, as so considered, cannot be impressed with a piercing sense of divine vengeance against sin. A perception the guiltless creature may have of the evil of sin, and of the wrath of God which sin demerits;—but this is not attended with any anguish or pain of mind; for it is only a sense of sin as charged or imputed, and of ob-

noxiousness to divine displeasure on that account, which can give the soul uneasiness and torture.— Each of these things enter into the very nature of, and are essential to, divine punishment. Surely it is not to be thought that God approves of any whom he punishes, that is to say, as they are the subjects of his act of punishing; and it is impossible that a creature under the same consideration should be the object of divine condemnation and justification; for these are certainly inconsistent ideas if any such there be. Nor can God impress the mind of a creature with a painful sense of his wrath, who is not, under any consideration, the object of his displeasure.” “What God hates in man he cannot do himself. Nothing is the object of God’s displeasure but what is contrary to the divine nature. To punish the innocent is disapproved of God, because it is a dreadful violation of right and justice, and is therefore contrary to the essential righteousness and justice of God. It being so, he cannot condemn and punish without a righteous charge and imputation of the offence.” “Unless the guilt of our iniquities, or the law obligation to punishment for them, had been judicially charged upon him, it seems to me that he could not by any rule of justice have borne their punishment; for in the order of justice our sins must first be supposed to be placed to his account, to answer for them, before he could undergo the proper punishment due to them; since divine justice can no more punish the entirely and in all respects guiltless, than clear the guilty.” “Our Lord’s death was penal, and the vindictive cause of it was the judicial hand of God: the same hand avenges sin that imputes it; the imputation of sin and the punishment of it always following one another, as do the non-imputation of it and an exemption from guilt and penalty.” “How

could Christ die if he were not a reputed sinner? Had he not first had a relation to our sin, he could not in justice have undergone our punishment. He must in the order of justice be supposed a sinner really or by imputation.—'Tis as much against divine justice to inflict punishment where there is no sin, as it is to spare the offender.—Though the first designation of the Redeemer to a surety-ship or sacrifice for us was an act of God's sovereignty; yet the inflicting punishment after that designation and our Saviour's acceptance of it, was an act of God's justice.—Had that been justice or injustice to Christ, to lay his wrath upon the Son of his love, one whose Person was always dear to him, always pleased him, had he not stood as a sinner juridically in our stead?" "If Christ hath been made a curse for us,—he must then have the violation of the law imputed to him; otherwise the curse of it could not in justice have been inflicted upon him. To inflict the curse or penalty of the law upon one no ways chargeable with the violation of it, is contrary to the justice both of God and man." "What is punishment but the infliction of the curse of the law for the violation of its precepts? And if the law could righteously inflict on the person of Manasseh a degree of punishment proportioned to his guilt, (for without a proportion between the guilt and the punishment justice is not satisfied,) the Substitute of Manasseh must bear the same punishment, or how could he be said to suffer in his stead?" "They are in some degree guilty of this, [depreciating the sufferings of Christ,] who will by no means allow that Christ bore the *idem*, the same death, the same curse, that was threatened in the law as due to sin.—What was that part of the sentence of the law that was gone out against sin, which he did not submit to?—Has the law any thing

more dreadful in all its stores than the wrath of God? And who ever bore this if the blessed Jesus did not?" "I believe that Jesus Christ—has—suffered all that I was condemned to sustain." "It appears past contradiction that the Redeemer put himself in the very place where the redeemed stood, and took upon him that very curse which they were bound under." "Did we deserve one punishment and Christ undergo another? Was it the sentence of the law that was executed on him, or was it some other thing that he was obnoxious to?" "Mention is every where made of a commutation of persons, the just suffering for the unjust, the Sponsor for the offender, (his name as a Surety being taken into the obligation, and the whole debt required of him;) but of a change of punishment there is no mention at all." "Surely whatever could have been justly inflicted on the sinner himself, must be borne by him who shall pay the price of his release." "It is reasonable to suppose that the redemption price paid should bear an exact proportion to the number of persons redeemed, and to the guilt and punishment from which they are redeemed; or else it cannot be considered as a legal redemption." "If therefore a thousand delinquents, involved in different degrees of guilt, are justly liable to suffer in their own persons the punishment due to their various enormities; surely it must be self-evident that if the guilt of these enormities be laid upon Christ as their Substitute, and he suffer in their stead, he must bear the same punishment. If this be denied, and it be allowed that the Lord laid on him the iniquity of those delinquents, the law of God must have relaxed in the infliction of its curse, which as a moral institute was impossible." "I am convinced that the sufferings of Christ were in exact proportion to the guilt of the many sinners he

had undertaken to redeem, and that had the unworthy objects of his merciful regard been more numerous, these sufferings would have likewise been augmented.” “If our blessed Lord would not have suffered more had the number to be saved been much greater than it eventually will be, why should he have suffered so much as he actually did suffer?—Infinite justice will never inflict the least degree of undeserved punishment.” “To say therefore that the compassionate Redeemer suffered less than the delinquents who are redeemed would themselves have suffered, is not to magnify the riches of his dying love, nor to honour his atonement. And to say that these sufferings are sufficient for ten times the number, is to confound all our ideas of distributive justice.” “The greater the sin of the elect was, the more Christ suffered; the greater their debt was, the more he paid.” “If, as you suppose, our blessed Lord have suffered enough for the salvation of all men, how happens it that all are not saved?” “The more I reflect on this highly interesting and important subject, the more I am convinced that the sufferings of our blessed Lord were in every respect commensurate to the requirements of justice;—that the divine law to which he voluntarily became amenable, did not relax in any of its demands; that he did not endure a single pang more than it could have righteously inflicted on the sinners themselves; and that in effecting their redemption he did not suffer one less.” “The punishment he suffered was in value and measure answerable to all the sins of all the elect, past, present, and to come; the Godhead supporting the manhood that it might be able to bear and overcome the whole burden of the wrath of God.” “These sufferings were absolutely necessary for the salvation of the elect, or they were not. If indispensably necessary, a greater degree of suffering could not right-

cously be inflicted than was requisite for that end, or in other words, than was needful to answer the claims of justice. And if these sufferings, as to duration and intenseness, were absolutely requisite for the deliverance of the elect from final ruin, how is the benefit of these sufferings to extend to those who make no part of that number? For if our blessed Lord endured more than the least possible degree of suffering, that suffering could not be the result of mere sovereignty in him who will minister judgment to the people in righteousness, but the apportioned desert of imputed sin. It is repugnant to every principle of justice to suppose that these sufferings exceeded the demerit for which they were inflicted, and not less so to imagine that the merit of those sufferings extended to sin that it never expiated." "If therefore Christ suffered for those that perish, he must have effected their redemption; but if he did not suffer for them, he must, unless a part be equal to the whole, have suffered less than he would have done had the weight of their sufferings been added to what he endured." "If his precious blood as the price was sufficient to make expiation for the sins and transgressions of all men, and all are not saved, how is impetration and application of the same latitude?" "Such, it has been said, was the preciousness of the blood of Christ, that one drop would have been sufficient for the redemption of the world. But for this notion there is no scriptural warrant. It is incompatible with the honour of divine justice in the infliction of punishment on Christ." "To contend that because infinite merit attached to the sufferings of Christ, these sufferings must of necessity be sufficient for the salvation of all men, is to limit the Holy One of Israel." "I know it has been said that though our blessed Lord died intentionally for the elect only, there

is nevertheless a redundancy of merit in his death sufficient for the redemption of all men. This I considered as a mistake." "So far from there being a redundancy of merit connected with the atonement of Christ sufficient for the redemption of all men, that the want of it renders the condemnation of the non-elect indispensably requisite." "That our divine Jesus could have redeemed ten thousand worlds if in the everlasting covenant he had been constituted the federal Head and had become the Surety of these worlds, is cheerfully granted." "Yet we cannot perceive any solid reason to conclude that his propitiatory sufferings are sufficient for the expiation of sins which he did not bear." "For had our blessed Lord suffered ten thousand deaths without federal relation to mankind, the blood he shed would have been equally precious, yet it would not have been available for the redemption of a single individual." "As therefore the sufferings of our blessed Lord were, in consequence of his own voluntary engagement, a debt due to divine justice, the degree of suffering could not righteously exceed the demerit for which it was inflicted: nor could the merit of that suffering extend to those whose sins he never bore, whom he never intended to save, and for whom therefore he could not justly suffer." "If the sufferings of our blessed Lord were not regulated by the number to be saved, I think particular redemption, and the doctrines connected with it, cannot be successfully defended\*.

From these principles, and because it is said, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," it

\* Geth. p. 8, 9, 28, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, 40, 41, 42, 43, 48, 51, 52, 53, 54, 57, 59, 60, 67, 68, 71, 82, 83, 84, 90, 106, 107, 111, 140, 144, 145, 149, 150, 151, 153, 154, 155, 156, 160, 161, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 182, 183.



is inferred that the law was literally executed upon Christ, and that justice was literally satisfied "in" his death; so that those for whom he died cannot justly be punished again, but may claim a release of justice itself. And because he is said to have been made sin for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," it is inferred that the righteousness of Christ is *legally* imputed to the elect, and that they are considered righteous in the eye both of law and justice, and that too, (if I understand the writers,) not as believers. but as mere elect. "Christ and the elect are so united, that what he did for them was reckoned by justice itself accountable to the behoof and concernment of each elected person, as much as if every one of them had completely satisfied justice in their own persons:—and—the fact of this union, when reduced to practical and personal application, secures the existence of genuine holiness and virtue." "Faith and repentance are bestowed upon and wrought in these persons, not as conditions, but as blessings of that covenant." "If divine justice be perfectly satisfied by the sufferings of Christ; if it could ever say, It is enough; it could not stand with the same justice still to inflict punishment." "He who as the Judge of heaven and earth must always do right, is said to justify the ungodly,—and that out of justice, so that he is just in forgiving sin. Mercy erects her throne upon the basis of justice, and both equally preside at the tribunal of the Judge when he pronounces the sentence of absolution." "Redemption is either valid or invalid. If it be valid, then it will answer for the persons redeemed by it to their deliverance from curse and condemnation; or else divine justice might be charged with injustice in exacting a debt first from the Surety and then from the prin-

cipal." "If Christ was punished in his sufferings, he bore either a part of that punishment to which we were obnoxious, or the whole.—If he bore the whole, let such who conceive that God punishes those for whom he died, vindicate and clear his justice in so doing if they are able." "The justice of God renders their salvation absolutely certain; because it would be incompatible with the first principles of equity to punish in their own persons those for whose sins Christ hath made ample satisfaction.—A price being paid, it is unjust to detain that for which it is paid." "They for whose sins complete satisfaction has once been made to the justice of God by the Mediator, cannot be arrested by the justice of God and bound over to an ulterior satisfaction for the same sins." And therefore the doctrine of a general atonement is inconsistent with the "justice" of God; as on that supposition "he received full satisfaction from the Son, and yet does not admit all to favour." "Almighty God in the justification of a believing sinner is not only gracious and merciful, but just and righteous in the most exalted degree. The design and end of God in exacting satisfaction from Christ, was to declare his righteousness in the remission of sin. But the apostle would have us take notice that our justification is an act of justice as well as mercy; and that God, as he is a just God, cannot condemn the believer, since Christ has satisfied for his sins." "The righteousness by which we are justified before God must in a certain sense be our own in a way of right, as Adam's sin also was, though performed in the person of another. Christ and Adam being parallels in their head-ship, the imputation of the one's guiltiness and the other's righteousness are righteously applied to their respective seeds. And this was the main end of the Lord's putting those he would jus-

tify into Christ, that he being made sin and a curse for them, they might be made the righteousness of God in him, and so God might be just in justifying them. If the elect had not been in Christ, the satisfaction he undertook for sinners could not have availed them. As Adam's sin would not have been ours if not in him, so neither the righteousness of Christ if not in him. Divine justice could not have punished him for us nor absolved us through him." "The doctrine of general redemption—seems to tax God of injustice, as not discharging those whose transgressions are answered for by their Surety; or else, that the sufferings of Christ were not sufficient to make a discharge due to them." "The Socinians expressly oppose the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, and plead for a participation of its effects or benefits only. But to say that the righteousness of Christ, that is, his obedience and sufferings, are imputed to us only as to their effects, is to say that we have the benefit of them and no more, but imputation itself is denied." Christ "did not die as a Sponsor in the place of the reprobate:—for otherwise they cannot justly be punished; since God cannot punish one sin twice, once in Christ and once in them that perish, of whom he exacts his due even to the uttermost farthing." "Christ was not an Undertaker for a people under any general notions or qualifications, (such as them that should believe on him, or the like,) not knowing definitely who the persons were; but he was Surety and Undertaker only for the elect." "He died not at uncertainties, nor laid down his life at a venture, that some might be saved if they would; but his intention is fixed: he laid down his life for his sheep, for his Church, for his people." "He bore the guilt of no others than those to whom he is a Head, who are his body, and for whom

he became a Surety. For that was the foundation on which sin was imputed to him: and therefore the sins of such persons only were imputed to him who are related to him as members." Thus the elect, not under the aspect of believers, but as mere elect, were his body, his members, one in law with him, and *made so before he suffered for them*; and it would have been unjust for him to have suffered for others\*.

What bearing these sentiments have on the limitation of the atonement, will still more distinctly appear by the following quotations. "That there is as truly a federal relation between Christ and the members of his mystical body, the Church, [the elect antecedent to their faith,] as there was between Adam and his natural descendants, the Scriptures abundantly manifest: and it is this federal relation which *laid the foundation* for the imputation of their sins to Christ.—But according to the sentiments opposed,—no such relation ever existed; there was no real imputation of sin to Christ, nor any proper punishment inflicted on him for it: consequently the penal sanction of the law, with reference to those who are saved, has never been endured. For were these important facts admitted, it is easy to perceive that redemption must of necessity be limited; because no one could righteously perish for whose sins plenary satisfaction had been made to divine justice." "They insist that what Christ paid for our redemption was not the same with what is in the obligation, and that therefore his dolorous sufferings were not a proper payment of our debt; and consequently a proper and full satisfaction for our sins

\* Geth. p. 13, 14, 37, 65, 66, 79, 80, 81, 83, 97, 101, 110, 113, 115, 116, 117, 166, 173. Also the delegates from Gelders and Emden, and the Dutch Professors, in the Synod of Dort. Acts of Synod. Part II. p. 154, 155. Part III. p. 123, 131.

could not arise from his death to the law and justice of God. For were this satisfaction conceded, they see at once that the delinquents for whom it was made must inevitably be saved\*.”

This whole system goes upon the principle that the atonement was a *legal* transaction, partaking of a commercial nature, as if money had been paid for the redemption of so many captives and no more, or for the discharge of the debt of so many imprisoned bankrupts and no more; in which case, as all can see, the ransomed captives or exonerated debtors would have a legal claim to a discharge. To make out a parallel case in a transaction where no money was paid, it is necessary to establish a *personal identity*, (for I can call it by no other name,) between the Representative and the represented, which they denominate a *legal oneness*, (the justice of which depended on his previous consent,) and to make him *legally* guilty by imputation, and *legally* and *justly* adjudged to punishment in the room of those whom he represented, and to make him suffer a *literal* and *legal* punishment, the same in kind and degree that the law had threatened to that particular number. In this way law and justice were *literally* satisfied and could demand no more; and those whose debt was thus discharged can claim of *law* and *justice* a release, and cannot *legally* or *justly* be punished again, but have a righteousness *legally* their own by imputation, and which *legally* and *justly* entitles them to justification; and yet not a legal claim to justification *in their own persons*, but in their *Surety*; they virtually possessing *two persons*, one demanding of the law condemnation, the other demanding of the *law* justification: and all this not depending on their faith; for one of the blessings to which, (though un-

\* Geth. p. 10, 11, 20, 21.

conscious of it,) they have this legal claim, is the gift of faith. The result is, that Christ was a Surety, Sponsor, or Representative for none but those who will be saved, and could not justly suffer for any whose sins were not thus finally taken from them and laid upon him.

Had a legal oneness between Christ and *believers*, (as relates to justification, not to the amount of his sufferings,) been asserted, it would not have limited the atonement; for it would still have left to all a chance to come into this relation to him by believing; and that would have been an atonement for all as moral agents. It was necessary to extend the oneness so far as to limit the sufferings: for had they been sufficient for all, it must be acknowledged, since the benefit is offered to all, that they changed the relations of all, so that they can be pardoned if they will believe; which again makes out an atonement for all as moral agents. And if the oneness must be so extended as to affect the amount of sufferings, it cannot lie between Christ and those indiscriminately who would believe, but between him and a certain number of designated individuals, whose sins could be exactly weighed. And the oneness must have been established before he suffered, as his sufferings were to be their legal punishment. In every point of view the system must take this precise shape in order to bear upon a limited atonement, which, as the author of Gethsemane conclusively pleads, can be supported on no other ground. The oneness must be legal to limit the sufferings; and when their limit is to be fixed, the number and individuals for whom they are to be endured must be known; and since the infliction is to be legal, it cannot take place till the union is first formed. It is of course a vital principle of the system

that a legal oneness was established in the covenant of redemption between Christ and the elect, which exists of course before they believe, and existed before he died, and was the ground of the imputation of their sins to him; that the elect as elect were regarded in the covenant as his body, his members, his Church, his spiritual seed, standing in the same relation to him that the posterity of Adam do to their federal head; in short, that antecedent to all faith, a complete legal oneness existed between the elect and Christ. He was legally bound to suffer their punishment both in measure and kind; and bonds being given to that effect, they had, though unknown to themselves, a legal claim to a discharge.

There are, I conceive, two errors in this system. The first is, that it makes the union, which really subsists between Christ and *believers*, to lie between Christ and the *elect*. The second is, that it supposes a *legal* oneness, a *legal* imputation, a *legal* obligation to suffer, a *legal* punishment, a *legal* satisfaction, and a *legal* claim on the part of the redeemed. We admit a very intimate union between Christ and *believers*, and that kind of imputation both of sin and righteousness which consists in *treatment*, and a bond on him to suffer imposed by a *divine command*, and the infliction of that which answered *every purpose* of a legal punishment, and a full satisfaction yielded to the *Protector of the law*, and the claim of believers on the *promise* of God. But we deny that either of these is *legal*. The mistake of supposing them such has wholly arisen from drawing literal conclusions from figurative premises. Because Christ is said to be one with believers, or his Church, he is legally one with the elect. Because he is said to have been made sin for us, (by which is meant that he was *treated* as a sinner,) he became le-

gally guilty by imputation. Because the *Lawgiver* demanded satisfaction of him by commanding him to die, *law* and *justice* made the demand. Because the iniquity of all is said to have been laid on him, he sustained the *literal* and *legal* punishment of sin. Because he was dragged to execution like a criminal, and fell under the stroke of him who was wont to act as the legal *Executioner*, law and justice were literally executed upon him. Because he rendered full satisfaction to the *Protector of the law*, by securing its authority as fully as though it had been literally executed, he satisfied both *law* and *justice*. Because by a *covenant claim* he bound the arm of the *Lawgiver* and *Executioner* not to strike *believers*, he bound the *law* itself not to strike the *elect*. Because we are said to be made the righteousness of God in him, (by which is meant that we are *treated* as righteous, or have the complete *use* of a righteousness, or possess a gracious title to justification through the righteousness of the Redeemer,) we are *considered* in the eye of the *law* as righteous. Because by his obedience he fulfilled all the demands of the law against himself, and answered all the purposes of our perfect obedience, and by his death accomplished all the ends of a literal execution of the penalty, and thus became the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, he wrought out a legal righteousness for the elect. And because God, having thus secured the authority of the law, can be just to himself, to his government, and to every interest, while yet he is the justifier of him that believeth, the justification of the elect is an act of distributive justice to them. Thus by pressing, in some instances, the figurative language of Scripture into a literal meaning, and by twisting the truth a very little



in others, they arrive at all the conclusions which have been enumerated.

In proceeding to detect the mistakes of this system, I must begin by remarking that the atonement had none of the attributes of a commercial transaction. Christ paid no money for us, he only suffered. There are two figures of a commercial nature which are commonly applied to the subject. The first represents Christ as paying a ransom for the redemption of captives, or purchasing his Church; the second exhibits him as discharging the debts of imprisoned bankrupts. The former is derived from the Scriptures. I have already admitted that the higher ransom, which involved the service of his *obedience* "unto death," was limited to the elect. Their salvation was promised him as the reward of that service. When he had fulfilled his part of the contract, he became justly entitled to the recompense, as a man is to an article which he has purchased. In this sense he may be said to have purchased the elect. And though the price is represented to be his blood, yet it was the merit of obedience in laying down that blood which really earned the reward. But this is altogether different from the atonement. When the atonement is spoken of as a ransom, it is only a price laid down to enable captives to come out *if they will*. If this distinction is kept in mind, all the appeals to our sense of commercial justice respecting the ransom, will come to nothing.

The other figure, so far as I recollect, is purely of human invention. The Scriptures, I believe, no where speak of Christ's paying the debt even of believers, much less of the elect as such. They speak of the debt as still remaining, and as being after repentance and faith gratuitously *forgiven*. They teach us to pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debt-

ors." They illustrate our discharge by the case of a servant who owed his lord ten thousand talents and had nothing to pay, to whom in answer to his entreaties his lord forgave the whole. Nor can it be overlooked that this notion of paying our debt, stands diametrically opposed to every idea of *pardon*, and to all those representations of a *free* and *gracious* justification with which the Scriptures abound. What remission or grace can there be in discharging a bankrupt when his debts are paid? You say there was grace in providing the Bondsman. Granted. But when the Bondsman has discharged the whole score, there is no grace in letting the debtor go. At least there is nothing which answers to the scriptural idea of *pardon*.

All the popular arguments then which are drawn from the figure of paying debts, are not only unscriptural and of human invention, but directly opposed to the word of God. There was nothing in the atonement of such a commercial nature. And yet the whole system which we are considering is built on the assumption that this august measure had all the attributes of a money transaction. There is only one way in which the resemblance can be at all maintained; and that is by establishing a personal identity between the Representative and the represented. If this could be done, I admit that all the principles of a pecuniary payment would apply to the case. Whether therefore any of the arguments founded on commercial figures are at all applicable, depends on the single question of that personal identity.

In proceeding to examine this alleged oneness in law, we must keep in mind between what parties it is supposed to exist. Were it placed between Christ and believers, it would not fix the exact amount of his sufferings, and of course would have no influence to

limit the atonement. It is vital to the system to fix it between Christ and the elect, and to establish it before he suffered, and at the time he gave bonds to die. The theory then labours under two distinct and powerful objections : first, that a literal legal oneness in regard to guilt and righteousness is established between two parties ; secondly, that such a oneness subsists between Christ and the elect before they believe, and even before they are born. I will reverse the order and consider the latter first.

Whatever oneness subsists between Christ and believers, there appear to be insurmountable difficulties in the way of making it lie between him and the unborn or unregenerate elect.

First, no such oneness, I think, is spoken of in the Scriptures. I read indeed that Christ and *believers* are in some respects one, that Christ and his *members* are one ; that Christ and his *Church* are one ; but where do we read that Christ and the *unborn* or *unregenerate* elect are one ? I know of but one passage which has the semblance of favouring such an opinion\*, and that only speaks of a union between Christ and his *Church* ; but then by *Church* here is thought to be meant the whole body of the elect, because Christ is said to have loved and given himself for it, that he might *sanctify* it. The question then is, what is the meaning of *Church* in the passage referred to ? It is admitted on all hands that in almost every instance in which the word is used in a general sense either in the Old Testament or New, it means the “ visible Church,” comprehending all those who “ profess the true religion †.” Then the invisible or real Church ought to comprehend all those who *possess* the true re-

\* Eph. 5. 23—32.

† The Christian's Magazine, reputed to be edited by the Rev. Dr. Mason of New-York. Vol. I. p. 56, 57, 64, 65.

ligion. This is certainly the antithesis between a visible and real Christian, and between visibility and reality in every thing. Again, it is admitted that when either of the Hebrew words which stand for *Church* “occurs in the Old Testament,” or the Greek word “in the New, you are sure of an *assembly*, but of nothing more\*.” But the elect are not an *assembly* before they exist, nor before they are *gathered together in Christ*. This gathering, as a *distinct thing from election*, is set in a strong light in the first chapter of Ephesians. “Who hath blessed us, [believers,] with all spiritual blessings—in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.—Having made known unto us the mystery of his will,—that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him.” The gathering of the elect into an assembly or Church, then, takes place in time, and as fast as they are made true believers. Accordingly all the notices which we have of the real or invisible Church, apply to the general assembly of actual believers. The description of that body is in these words, “The general assembly and Church of the *first-born*, [sons and heirs of God by regeneration and adoption,] which are written in heaven†,” in the register of the city of God: not those who were *destined* to citizenship, but those who are actual citizens. “Unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end‡.” And in the very place under consideration, “Therefore as the Church is *subject unto Christ*, so let the wives be to

\* Christian’s Magazine, vol. i. p. 55.

† Heb. 12. 23. ——— ‡ Eph. 3. 21.

their own husbands in every thing. Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, —that he might present it to himself *a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.*—So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. —For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but *nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church.* For *we*, [believers,] are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” Now the unborn or unregenerate elect are not subject to Christ, are not nourished and cherished by him, are not living members of him, are not married to him. The real Church is “the bride, the Lamb’s wife\*.” As it is the marriage covenant which makes the wife, so it is the covenant of grace between Christ and believers which makes the Church. The covenant between the Sacred Persons *about* the elect, was like the *espousal* of infants to each other by the act of their parents; but *marriage* is effected by nothing but a mutual covenant between the parties. None belong to the real invisible Church till they have given themselves away to Christ in an everlasting covenant, and till such a mutual affection is formed as subsists between husband and wife. The Church, both visible and real, is the *body* of Christ, and its members are members of him. This is true of the visible Church. “He is the Head of the body, the Church.—For his body’s sake which is the Church, *whereof I am made a minister*†.” The visible Church seems to be respected, if not chiefly, in the following passage: “And gave him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all‡.” This is true also of the invisible Church; as appears from the very

\* Rev. 21. 9.—† Col. 1. 18, 24, 25.—‡ Eph. 1. 22, 23.

passage under consideration. "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church; and he is the Saviour of the body.—No man ever yet hated *his own flesh*, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be *one flesh*. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." Now, are the unborn and unregenerate elect thus one flesh with Christ, and members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones? Is there that *nourishment* derived from him while they are without life? Is there that *mutual sympathy* between him and them while they remain his enemies? Has he so many dead and putrid members hanging to his body? Very different is the view of his body as given by the inspired apostle. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ; from whom the *whole body*, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love\*." It is a part of the system that the elect were "put into Christ" before the foundation of the world. But the Scriptures know of no such union antecedent to faith. "If any man be *in Christ* he is a new creature." "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us—sanctification." "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." "Who also were in Christ before me." "The churches in Judea which were in Christ." "We are in him that is true, even

\* Eph. 4. 15, 16.

in his Son Jesus Christ.” “God—hath quickened us,—and—raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” “Ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” “We being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another\*.” The idea of being in Christ, is that we are so united to him as to draw present life from him, as the branches from the vine; and the bond of this union is faith. “Abide in me and I in you: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.—If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered†.” It is a part of the system that the unborn and unregenerate elect are the spiritual seed of Christ, made so by their federal relation to him. But if it is so, there is no analogy between the headships of the two Adams. The posterity of the first Adam possess his temper as soon as they exist his seed; but according to this theory, men are the seed of Christ for many years without bearing his image, and while remaining strangers and enemies. A seed are not constituted such by covenant, but are made such by birth. The seed of the first Adám become such by generation, and share by covenant only his sin and condemnation. If there is any analogy, men become the seed of Christ by a new birth, and instantly begin to partake of his holiness and justification. They are never the seed of Christ till they are the sons of God and heirs of glory. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his‡.” Accordingly the seed

\* Rom. 12. 5. and 16. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 30. and 3. 1. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Gal. 1. 22. and 3. 28. Eph. 2. 4—6. 1 John 5. 20.—† John 15.—‡ Rom. 8. 9.

that were promised Christ as a reward, were not a body of unregenerate elect, but a glorious company of believers. When this "general assembly and Church of the first born" are contemplated in relation to their *Shepherd*, they are the *flock*, the sheep who "know his voice," and know him, and "follow him," and will not follow a stranger\*. The Church, the body, the members, the flock, the sheep, the seed, of Christ, are all terms of equal import, and denote, in their proper and primary sense, not the elect as such, but believers, the first born, the sons of God and heirs of glory; but are applied to those who are visibly, as well as to those who are really such. Yet in one instance the unregenerate and unborn elect are, *figuratively* and *by way of anticipation*, called the sheep: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold.—Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep†:" and once, by the same form of speech, they are called the children of God: "He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad‡." On the other hand, in two places those who were already the Church, or believers, are spoken of under that denomination, but with reference to their previous elect character. One of these instances is in the passage under consideration. "Christ also loved the Church, [that body of men who when developed are presented as the Church, the bride, the Lamb's wife, married to him by covenant, united to him in mutual affection, "subject unto Christ," "one flesh" with him, his "body," "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,"] and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and

\* John 10. 4, 5, 8, 14, 27.——† John 10. 16, 26.——‡ John 11. 51, 52.



cleanse it with the washing of water by the word ; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." That is, he gave himself that by his *obedience* "unto death" he might ransom the elect from the dominion of sin, and have a covenant right to sanctify them as his *reward*. In this sense he effectually *purchased* them. Now whether the term *Church* is applied to them viewed as the unregenerate elect, or as the body of developed elect under the character of believers, will appear from the other instance referred to in which the same form of expression is used. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the *flock*, [the *sheep*, the accredited believers of Ephesus,] over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the *Church* of God which he hath *purchased* with his own blood\*." Here the Church which Christ loved and gave himself for, that he might sanctify it, is found to be the body of believers, contemplated with reference to their former character of elect. But it is only in the character of believers that the denomination of Church is applied to them. When therefore it is said in the fifth of Ephesians, that Christ and the Church are "one flesh," we are not to understand that such a union exists between him and the unborn or unregenerate elect, but only between him and the body of believers.

And when this passage is disposed of, I know of no other which has the semblance of favouring such an opinion. And to build so stupendous a structure on a single passage, which at best is of doubtful import, seems not to be wise or warrantable. The other texts which occur to me undenia-

\* Acts 20, 29.

bly speak of believers. Take for instance that in the 17th of John: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall *believe* on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:—I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."

Secondly, if Christ is one in law with the unborn and unregenerate elect, then the latter were justified from eternity. It is alleged that by the covenant of redemption they were put into Christ, and made federally one with him, as the posterity of Adam are with their federal head, and were constituted his spiritual seed, his members, his body, his invisible Church; and that this was the ground of the legal transfer of their sins to him, by which they obtained a claim on law and justice to a discharge. Then certainly they were justified from eternity. Adam's posterity are condemned with him as soon as they become his seed; and the elect must be justified with Christ as soon as they sustain the relation of seed to him. How could they be federally his seed and yet remain under condemnation? If they were put *into* Christ, in any sense in which that phraseology is used in Scripture, they were certainly justified. "There is—now no condemnation to them which are *in* Christ Jesus\*." If they were one in law with Christ, and their guilt was literally taken from them and put upon him, then they were clear. Take the favourite case of a bondsman assuming the whole debt: certainly where this is done the original debtor is discharged. I know there is an inconsistency in the very supposition of eternal justification, because justification respects the treatment and relations of moral agents in actual exist-

\* Rom. 8. 1.

ence. But if men could so far exist in the purpose and view of God, as to have their guilt literally and substantially transferred to Christ from eternity, they could be eternally justified. Unless then we are prepared, in the face of the entire Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, to maintain the doctrine of eternal justification, we must abandon this idea of eternal oneness between Christ and the elect. Will you say then that they are one with him as soon as they exist? Then they are justified in a state of unregeneracy. It is manifest that none but the justified can in any sense be one in law with Christ. The man who lies under condemnation at the same moment that Christ is justified, is neither considered nor treated as one in law with him. If then the unregenerate elect are one in law with Christ, and have a claim on justice to a discharge, they are already justified, not "*by faith,*" but *without faith.* But this is certainly not the fact. They are "*by nature the children of wrath even as others\*.*" And thus they remain, until by a new birth they become the seed of Christ, and are united to him in holiness and justification. And when they begin to draw life from him, then are they the members of his body, branches of the living Vine, parts of the real invisible Church. Till then they were only *destined* to such a union.

But this legal oneness, whether with believers or unbelievers, is a thing impossible. There is such a thing as a legal oneness between two parties in certain respects, and to a certain extent. The following instances may be selected.

(1.) A oneness in commercial concerns. Such an identity subsists to a certain extent between husband and wife, and between partners in trade. The rea-

\* Eph. 2. 3.

son is, that two persons may have a common right in the same property, and according to the laws of society one may bind the whole concern. One person may also identify himself with another by bond. This is founded in the fact that property is not inseparable from the person, but is alienable at one's own discretion. Any man has a right to give his property to another, or which is the same thing, to assume his obligations.

(2.) Such an identity that one may act for another, and lay the other under moral obligations. Thus parents may bind their children out to an earthly master, and lay them under moral obligations to serve him. Thus they may bind them out to a heavenly Master in the ordinance of baptism, and lay upon them new obligations to serve him. This is founded on the fact that parents have received from God, and in the former instance from the laws of society, a right thus to dispose of their children.

(3.) A political oneness. All the inhabitants of a country are treated as enemies whenever the government sees fit to declare war. This is because they are understood to be so under the control of their government as to be transformed by its authority into actual and voluntary enemies; or because they are considered so much the interest and care of the government as to be the proper medium through which revenge can be executed upon it.

(4.) A oneness between a man and his representative, where the latter is only the organ to execute the will or to indicate the heart of his principal. Such is the identity between a king and his envoy who is governed by royal instructions. Such I understand to be the identity between Adam and us. A oneness of moral character was first established between Adam

and his posterity, so that if he was holy we should be holy, if he was sinful we should be sinful. This done, his *outward* act, (for we are no where said to be condemned for the sin of Adam's *heart*,) was as much the index of our heart as of his own, and was made the *public* ground of our condemnation, in the same sense that our *outward* act would have been the ground had we eaten the apple ourselves\*.

\* Because Adam and his posterity are supposed to present an instance of such a legal oneness as we deny, it is necessary to dwell on this subject a little. The only passage in the Bible which plainly asserts that we are condemned to more than *temporal* calamities and death for Adam's sin, or which draws a complete parallel between Adam and Christ, is found in the 5th of Romans. The extent of the parallel is of course to be learned from the parallel itself, and nothing appears in it to limit its universality. Our surest way then to learn the connexion between the first Adam and his posterity, is from the known connexion between the Second Adam and his seed.

(1) By a covenant transaction between the Father and Son, those who were to be the seed of Christ were from eternity elected or appointed to a state of justification. To comport with this, the posterity of Adam, in consequence of a covenant transaction between God and him, were, before their existence, appointed to a state of condemnation.

(2) The elect are not justified before they become the seed of Christ by a new birth. To comport with this, the condemnation pronounced on the race does not apply to the individuals of Adam's posterity before they actually exist, and therefore not until they are shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin.

(3) The first holy bias which is given to the seed of Christ in regeneration, is not the *effect* but the *antecedent* of their justification, and is produced according to the constitution established in the covenant of redemption. It is however a part of his personal reward. To comport with this, the first evil bias to which the posterity of Adam are left, is not the *effect* but the *antecedent* of their condemnation, and is the consequence of a constitution established in the covenant with Adam *before the fall*, by which the union of moral character between him and his posterity was fixed. It resulted however from his *personal* condemnation.

(4) The seed of Christ are justified as fully and extensively as Christ himself, being entitled to a deliverance from the power of a three-fold death. To comport with this, the posterity of Adam are condemned as

But that legal oneness which can make a holy Person chargeable in law and justice with the guilt of a

fully and extensively as he himself was to a three-fold death. But he was not condemned to the *first* sin.

(5) The essential condition on which the seed of Christ share in his justification, is that they resemble him in the temper of their hearts. To comport with this, the essential condition on which the posterity of Adam share in his condemnation, is that they partake of his depravity.

(6) The righteousness of Christ is the *sole ground* of the justification of his seed, and they are justified for his righteousness as fully as though it was their own. To comport with this, as far as the nature of things will admit, the offence of Adam is the *sole ground* on which the *public* sentence against his posterity rests, and they are condemned for his *outward* act as fully as though it had been their own. I say, as far as the nature of things will admit; for there is this difference in the two cases as all must allow; the personal depravity and transgressions of Adam's race are a meritorious ground of condemnation, but the personal holiness of Christ's seed is no part of the meritorious ground of their justification.

On this account, and because it is abhorrent to all our ideas of justice to condemn a race, *viewed as personally innocent*, on account of the sin of another, I take the parallel to import no more than that Adam's *outward* act, as being the index of the hearts of all his posterity, was the *public* ground of condemning his infant race to a three-fold death; and I think the Scriptures support this idea.

First, the sin of Adam for which his posterity are condemned, was a single offence. The other sins of his life had no such influence on them. And the reason is, that the one offence by which he himself fell under condemnation, *fixed*, and by fixing *discovered*, the character of all his race.

Secondly, the offence for which Adam himself was condemned, and for which his race are condemned, was an outward and visible act. Not a hint either in the prohibition or sentence about the sin of his heart.

Thirdly, it must always be kept in mind that the sentence of condemnation which came on Adam and his race was a *public* judgment, pronounced in the hearing of three worlds, and intended to affect the whole human race *in a state of infancy*. Now it would not have comported with God's manner of dealing with his creatures, to have founded such a public sentence on any thing but visible conduct; and as it was to spend itself on a race of infants, who, though worthy to be condemned for their own depravity, would be incapable of any visible conduct on which the public sentence could rest, the manifest act

sinner, and render his sufferings a literal and legal punishment of the sins of the latter, and cancel the sinner's

of their federal head, which at once fixed and discovered their character, was made the public ground of their condemnation. They were condemned for his act just as though it had been their own, and in the same sense in which men are publicly condemned for any *outward* action. There are two things necessary to give complete existence to sin, so as to make it the proper ground of public condemnation; the consent of the heart, and the outward act. Now Adam for himself had both of these parts of a complete transgression; but his infant seed had but one. To supply this defect, his outward act was put for their outward act, as being, no less than their own, a faithful index of their hearts: and thus a complete foundation was laid for their public condemnation, and just such a foundation as was laid for the public condemnation of Adam himself. He was publicly condemned, not for a wicked heart, but for an outward transgression. But he would not have been condemned for that outward transgression had it not been the index of his heart. So they are publicly condemned, not for the depravity of their hearts, but for a visible act; but they would not have been condemned for that act of their federal head, had it not been an index of their hearts. As an organ to express the tempers of all men, it answered the identical purpose of an external act dictated by the universal consent and performed by the united hands of the whole human race.

Fourthly, the phraseology of the parallel, if understood according to this interpretation, is according to the established language of the world. We say a man was condemned for murdering his neighbour: we name only the outward action; and yet we distinctly understand that he would not have been condemned for that act had it not been viewed as an expression of malice prepense; for instance, had it been done by accident or in a paroxysm of madness. This is the universal language of mankind, as it is also of the Scriptures. In the form of expression we always found the condemnation on the outward action alone, but our meaning is that it rests on the action *as the index of the heart*. So the apostle, in the form of his expression, founds our condemnation on Adam's act alone, but his meaning is, that it rests on that act *as the index of our hearts*. At least if he is thus understood, he is understood according to the general language of the Bible, and the established language of the world.

Fifthly, none can ever *prove* that the apostle means more; for this is the only passage in the Bible in which we are said to be condemned for Adam's sin to more than temporal calamity and death; and neither in this nor in any other place is it hinted that we are condemned for the sin of Adam's heart.

law obligation to suffer, and give him a claim on justice for a discharge, is a thing impossible, unless two moral agents can be absolutely and indivisibly one, with an intercommunion of moral qualities and sensations, which at once destroys the idea of one's being personally holy and the other personally a sinner. There must upon this plan have been an absolute personal identity between Christ and the elect, even while the latter were dead in trespasses and sins and under condemnation; and then he must have been personally a sinner, and could not have conveyed to them even a figurative righteousness. This talk about a legal oneness seems to us about as cabalistic as the alleged identity between Christ and the bread and wine; and it manifestly sprung from the same origin, the confounding of the figurative and literal meaning of texts. Because Christ says, "This is my body," and "This is my blood," the Romish Church will have it that it is literally true:

The true reason then why we were condemned for Adam's sin, is that we were depraved, and in the sight of God were fit subjects for condemnation ourselves. And this has been the opinion of some of the best divines of the Genevan School. We then are treated no worse than we might *justly* have been treated had there been no federal head. If it was just to withhold divine influence from Adam and the angels before they had sinned, and immediately after a course of faithful service, it would not have been unjust to have withheld that influence from an infant race without a federal head. And when they had thus become depraved, and fit subjects for condemnation in the sight of God, *justice* would not have required that their *visible* condemnation should rest on a *visible* ground. They might, so far as *justice* was concerned, have been condemned for their own depravity without the public act of a federal head. Adam's sin is not imputed except as being the visible act by which their hearts were revealed. And to talk of their *double guilt*, (their own and Adam's united,) is like talking of the double guilt of a murderer, because he did the act and had a wicked heart.

According to this representation there was no such legal oneness between Adam and his posterity as is pleaded for in the system under consideration.



and because Christ and *believers* are said to be "one flesh," like husband and wife, such a oneness must be supposed between him and *the unregenerate elect* as never existed between husband and wife, nor ever, so far as we are taught, between the Divine Persons. Certainly in the *offices* in which the Sacred Three are exhibited, there is no such confusion of Persons as is here made between the holy Son of God and unsanctified sinners. Substitution does not constitute personal identity. All that is true in the case, when figures are laid aside, is, that the parties are *treated* as one. Christ was treated as a sinner on our account, and believers, (not the unregenerate elect,) are treated as righteous for his sake.

This we understand to be the only proper idea of *imputation*, either of sin or of righteousness. Imputation in neither case implies personal identity, nor does it consist in *considering* the parties as one, (for God considers things as they are,) but in *treating* them as one. I am far from denying the doctrine of imputation, or wishing to lay aside the use of the word, and regret that some have thought it necessary to do this. Imputation is a Gospel term and ought to be employed. But in almost every instance in which it is used in the Bible, it signifies a *practical* reckoning of a thing to a man\*: only in two instances have I found it used for an opinion of the mind†, and never for any thing which implies a legal oneness between two persons. Calvin also explains the term by saying, Christ "was made a Substitute and Surety for transgressors, and was *treated* as a criminal himself‡." I plead for a *practical* imputation, and deny only a *legal* one. Nor

\* Lev. 7. 18. & 17. 4. 2 Sam. 19. 19. Ps. 32. 2. with ver. 1. Rom. 4. 3—10, 22—24. & 5. 13. 2 Cor. 5. 19. Gal. 3. 6. James 2. 23.

† 1 Sam. 22. 15. Hab. 1. 11.—‡ Gethsemane p. 157.

do I make it to consist in the imputation of the *effects* of sin and righteousness. I fully admit the imputation of sin and righteousness themselves, as to every *practical* purpose. But such an imputation as made Christ guilty *in the eye of the law*, and makes the elect, or even believers, righteous *in the eye of the law*, I do not understand. In particular, how the sins of the elect could be so imputed to Christ that he should be *legally* adjudged to suffer for them, while the law continued to demand punishment of the elect themselves, and held them still under condemnation, I cannot comprehend. Here are the two condemnations for the same offence which are so much complained of. To avoid this difficulty we must run again into eternal justification. And even here we are not safe; for the law still condemns those whom grace has justified.

It is said that God could not justly inflict sufferings on Christ without first legally imputing to him our sins, and thus attaching to him a just liability to punishment. But what is gained by this resort? How did God legally impute to him our sins? Why, by commanding him to die, they say. It comes out then at last, that it would not have been just for God to strike had he not first commanded him to receive the blow. But this seems a strange way of rendering a stroke just which otherwise would have been unjust.

The *mediatorial* law did indeed require Christ to suffer. In other words, God, for reasons already assigned, commanded him to lay down his life. But that the *moral* law which man had broken, the moral law which was the exact measure of justice, required an innocent Person to suffer for the guilty, is manifestly not the fact. We have the law before us, and know from the letter of it what it required. "The soul that sinneth *IT* shall die;" not, *it or a Substitute*. That ad-

dition is supplied by the imaginations of men. The law knew no substitute. It demanded the death of the identical person who had sinned, and not the death of another. And unless another could become the same person by an intercommunion of consciousness and sensation, so that the punishment would attach to the identical agent who had sinned, the law could not demand his death. There could be no commutation of persons here as in a money transaction. Another may assume my pecuniary obligation, because he can give me so much of his property; but another cannot "take upon himself my *person*," and "sustain my *person*," so as to render him the "IT" which the law declared should die. This is what no power could accomplish.

Christ therefore could not sustain our legal punishment, or the literal penalty of the law. If the law had said that we *or a Substitute* should die, this might have been the case; but it said no such thing. The law is before us, and we see with our eyes that it contains no such clause. The plain truth is, that the sufferings of Christ were not our punishment, but only came in its room. They were not the death of the identical "IT" that had sinned. They answered indeed the *same purpose* as related to the *honour* of the law, but they were not the same thing, and could not be the same thing without an absolute personal identity. So far from enduring our punishment, the plain fact is, he died to *prevent* our punishment.

But it is still urged with a surprising degree of tenacity, that the honour of God and the eternal principles of right bound him to punish sin. But he did *not* punish sin; for the sinner escaped and the Innocent suffered. It is said that *truth* required him to punish. Then truth failed; for certainly he did not punish Paul, and Christ was not a sinner. But it is not so that a law-

giver pledges his *truth* for the uniform execution of every sanction. The penalty is not of the nature of a prediction or promise, but merely states what transgression deserves and may ordinarily expect. Otherwise every act of mercy in human governments is a departure from verity\*.

It is a part of the system that Christ suffered *in kind* precisely what was denounced against the elect. What, was he given up to unholy and tormenting passions? for we have seen that such an abandonment was the spiritual death included in the sentence of the law. And what can be meant by his being the object of God's "disapprobation," and one whom he could not "approve and justify," unless the words are used in a highly figurative sense, to denote the *treatment* which it was proper for him to receive? That God should in his heart regard with holy complacency in one view, and with infinite indignation in another, the same identical Person, with an unmixed character, was manifestly as impossible as for the bread and wine to be the real presence. That he regarded him as an object standing to receive the *treatment* due to sinners, (so far as was necessary to answer the purpose,) while yet in every view he regarded his Person with unmingled love, is the whole truth when figures are laid aside. Through all the incarnation the Father purposely showed that he was not angry but well pleased with the Son, that he was not punishing him as an enemy who had a separate interest from his own, that he felt for him through the whole scene, and that what he laid on him was a sacrifice of the parental as well as of the filial feelings. This appeared in his causing the ele-

\* That expression in the 85th Psalm, "Mercy and truth are met together," refers, I suppose, to God's faithfulness in executing his promises. See a note near the conclusion of the 6th chapter.

ments, diseases, and demons to obey him, in the answer of his prayer at the grave of Lazarus and in the very scene of his sufferings, in the repeated declaration from heaven, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," and in the mission of angels to support him in the wilderness and in the garden. Indeed the moment you lose sight of the unabated love of the Father, the death of Christ no longer appears that wonderful expression of God's determination to execute wrath on future transgressors. In *figurative* language, I have no objection to saying, with our catechism, that he endured the wrath of God. But if this is construed to mean that he verily believed the Father was angry with *him*, or to mean any thing more than the withdrawment of the divine presence, and the imposition of amazing sufferings of body and soul, I must denur.

The life-blood of the system lies in the assumption that Christ bore the exact punishment of such a number of sins, *in measure* as well as kind; and men have talked with great precision about the necessity of punishing "each and every sin," and of laying "each and every sin" of the elect upon a substitute\*. The meaning is not that he bore as much as all the elect deserved for an hour or a day; (for why should he suffer exactly what was due to them for a season, and not what was due to them unlimitedly?) but the whole amount of what they deserved to eternity. This is manifestly the meaning. He endured "all that these iniquities deserved," "the punishment due to the sins of the elect," "the idem," "all that [they were] condemned to sustain," "whatsoever was due to the elect for their sin," nothing "less than the delinquents—

\* Delegates from Drent in the Synod of Dort. Acts of Synod, Part III. p. 209.

would themselves have suffered," that which was "in exact proportion to the guilt of the many sinners he had undertaken to redeem," that which was "in every respect commensurate to the requirements of justice," "not a single pang more or less than the law could have righteously inflicted on the sinners themselves," "the apportioned desert of imputed sin." "The whole debt [was] required of him." "The redemption price [bore] an exact proportion to the number of persons redeemed, and to the guilt and punishment from which they are redeemed:" "for without a proportion between the guilt and the punishment justice is not satisfied." "The sanction of the divine law is irreversible," and cannot "be annulled or relaxed\*."

Now if it was so, it is difficult to see what was gained to the universe by the death of Christ. We have been accustomed to regard his substitution as a glorious expedient to *prevent* misery; but upon this plan every scintilla of wretchedness which Satan ever plotted against the creation of God. was endured. But there is a stronger difficulty still. A single sin deserves an endless, which is in fact an infinite punishment. The sufferings of Christ then must have been infinite for a single sin: and of course for a single sin his Godhead must have suffered; for to talk of a finite nature's sustaining infinite misery in a day, however supported by divinity, is, to say the least, using words without a meaning. His Godhead then must have suffered infinite misery, and yet but a single sin was atoned for. How then was all the guilt of all the elect to be expiated? Could he endure more, infinitely more, than infinite misery? misery as many times infinite, if I may so say, as the number of sins to be par-

\* Gethsemane.

done? This is probably the most extravagant opinion that was ever broached in the Christian Church. And for it there is not a particle of countenance in the word of God. Where is the intensity of our Saviour's sufferings measured? What saith the Scripture? "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." But how a curse for us? by suffering the infinite pains of damnation? No such thing: "for it is written, Cursed is every one that *hangeth on a tree\**." For a Person of such infinite dignity to die on a tree, a death which had been pronounced in Israel accursed†, was as strong an expression of every thing which punishment could express, (except the literal and legal imputation of personal guilt,) as could have been made by the eternal destruction of men. This was enough, and the endurance of the same misery in measure and kind was by no means necessary. If to the purpose of supporting the divine law, the sufferings of Christ, considering his infinite interest in the Father's love, were equivalent to the eternal misery of those for whom he died, it was sufficient: and if to such a purpose they were equivalent to the eternal misery of all Adam's race, they were sufficient, if expressly endured for so many, to make atonement "for the sins of the whole world." Certain it is that he must have died to atone for a single sin, for without the shedding of blood there was no remission‡. It is therefore fruitless to attempt to decide the number for whom he expiated by the severity of his sufferings§.

\* Gal. 3. 13.—† Deut. 21. 23.—‡ Heb. 9. 22.

§ A writer of much greater general consistency allows himself still to reason thus: "As all sins are particular, there can be no such thing as a general atonement unless it has respect to all the individual acts.—If justice required that any one of these sins should be punished in the sinner if he endures the punishment himself, it must equally require

It follows from the foregoing reasonings, that the sufferings of Christ were not a literal satisfaction of law and justice, even in behalf of believers, much less in behalf of the unregenerate elect. The law is before us, and if we can read it we can see for ourselves what would have been a literal satisfaction of its claims. It never demanded the death of the innocent for the guilty, but the death of the identical persons who had sinned: and till this is yielded the law is not literally satisfied, and justice, (for the law is the exact measure of justice,) is not satisfied. Justice did not take its course, for the Innocent suffered and the guilty escaped. But the authority of the law is supported, even in the event of the pardon of believers, (not in the event of the pardon of the unregenerate elect, for that would ruin the law, and none the less for their being

that every one of them should be imputed to any Surety who undertakes to satisfy in his place. An atonement therefore cannot be, as some suppose, a general expression of God's disapprobation of sin without regard to particular sins.—All the arguments which demonstrate the necessity of an atonement, prove that its nature must be a satisfaction to divine justice for particular offences; and if general, it is a satisfaction for all the particular sins ever committed.—His death was therefore a real expiation, a full satisfaction for all the sins which were imputed to him. If he died for all men, then he did make satisfaction for all and every sin ever committed in the world, for the unpardonable sin and for final impenitence as well as others.—If Christ died for all men, then he died for all the sins of men. Therefore he atoned for those sins which are never pardoned. But what sort of an atonement is that for a sin which does not even render it possible for the punishment of it to be removed? The sin against the Holy Ghost, and final impenitence and unbelief, never can be pardoned; and to suppose them atoned for is absurd.”

The Scripture declares two things; that Christ suffered for our sins, and that he rendered it consistent with the honour of the law for *all* the sins of believers to be pardoned. But that he bore each and every sin even of the elect, it no where says. Such a particularization is unknown to the Scriptures, and is a mere human inference from the assumption that sin was literally and legally *punished* in him. But what



elect;) and this was enough to satisfy *the Protector of the law*. This was the satisfaction really made. The Protector of the law was satisfied: and men in expressing this truth in figurative language, said that *the law* was satisfied. At length, when a system was to be supported, the figurative origin of the phrase was forgotten, and the literal meaning was transmuted to marble and erected in the Church as a standard of orthodoxy.

If law and justice were not literally satisfied even in regard to believers, then law and justice do not adjudge to believers a discharge, much less to the unregenerate elect. Law and justice eternally demand the death of the persons who have once sinned; and the security of believers is, that they “*are not under the law but under grace\**.” They really deserve to suffer

does the writer mean by Christ's bearing each and every sin? Does he mean that he suffered more for a thousand sins than for a hundred? This is not his meaning, for he plainly tells us, “We do not entertain the opinion that the Redeemer suffered just so much for the sins of A, and so much for B, &c. and if more had been intended to be saved, that he must have suffered so much more.” What then does he mean? If Christ did not suffer more for a thousand sins than for a hundred, how were a thousand sins rather than a hundred “imputed to him”? and how did he satisfy for “all the individual acts” of the thousand? If nothing more is meant by his bearing a million of Paul's sins rather than a thousand, but that he suffered for Paul's sins *in general*, that they *all* might be pardoned when he should believe, then the argument founded on this particularization is certainly fallacious. Then he did not bear a precise number of sins; and then the only question is, did his general suffering for sin render it consistent with the honour of the law for the elect only to be pardoned upon their believing, or for all men to be pardoned if they would believe? If the latter, then his death had sufficient respect to the sins of all men to constitute it a real atonement for all. But this dividing up of the atonement between particular sins, (inferring that it was not for this and that unrenounced transgression,) as though it was for *sin in the abstract*, and not for *the sinner*, is what the word of God knows nothing about.

\* Rom. 6. 14.

as much as though Christ had never died. To them eternal punishment, though it would be a breach of promise, would not be unjust. It would indeed be unjust to *Christ* thus to deprive him of his stipulated reward; but it would not be unjust to them, because they personally deserve it. They do not merit what he merits. They cannot claim from justice what he claims from justice. They have the *use* of his righteousness, or a gracious title to justification on his account; but his righteousness is not literally their righteousness, but only comes in its room. Otherwise there is neither grace nor pardon in their acquittal. If you say that to *them* it is grace and pardon, though to *Christ* it is an act of justice, this is precisely what we mean; and then we ought to hear no more of *their* claim on justice. All that a Substitute could do for them was to reconcile their pardon with the *honour* of the law; but he could not lay an *obligation* on the *law* to justify them, as if they had a literal righteousness. By his *obedience* "unto death" he could create an obligation on the *Father* to fulfil his covenant, but he could not bind the *law* to repeal its sentence, "The soul that sinneth it shall die," and to declare transgressors justified: for that after all would have been a justification *by law*. It is said that the justification of believers is an act both of mercy and justice. If it is meant that it is an act of mercy to *them* and of justice to *Christ*, I agree. But if it is meant that it is both mercy and justice to *them*, it is like saying that a man delivers his neighbour a sum of money as a gratuitous gift, and at the same time to pay a debt of that amount. No proposition can be more contradictory than that the justification of a transgressor is a legal transaction, or that a sinner is literally righteous, or that a man is justly entitled to pardon.

But you say that though the believer is undeserving in himself, the Redeemer has made over to him his own claim, and given him a right to plead that at the bar of eternal justice; just as a man makes over to another a pecuniary claim against a third person. This notion of a commercial transfer has occasioned all the mistake. The creditor, it is said, only demands his money; and if the debt is paid by a third person, justice can ask no more. This would be a fair illustration if Christ had actually paid our debt; but he only prepared the way, as we have seen, for the debt to be freely forgiven. The case adduced therefore is really no illustration. In an affair of debt, the creditor has indeed no just claim for any thing but his money. He has no right to prevent a third person from making a present to the debtor. When that third person comes forward and pays the debt, he really makes a present to the debtor of the whole amount. He actually increases the debtor's property; and the creditor's claim is as really cancelled as though the money had passed through the debtor's own hands. It is easy thus to transfer property by gift, but not thus easy to transfer personal merit, with which moral or distributive justice is concerned. In this difference lies the fault of the illustration. A man may make over his property and render a pauper rich; but a holy person cannot make over his moral character and render a sinner personally righteous, nor transfer the benefit of his sufferings so as to render a transgressor personally undeserving of punishment. By suffering for him he may render it unnecessary to the public good for him to suffer; and the ruler, finding the *necessities* of the law answered, though not one of its *demands*, may graciously forgive: yea he may have *promised* to forgive, and may be bound to pardon by *truth* and *wisdom*, and even by

justice to the *substitute*, but not by justice to the sinner himself, so long as it remains true that he personally deserves punishment.

But let us examine this subject to the bottom. A man personally deserving to die, it is said, may demand from justice, in other words from law, an acquittal, under the claim of another who has suffered for him. But how came the substitute by such a claim? He may indeed have a demand on the *ruler*, founded on a *promise*, for the *pardon* of the offender; but who gave him a claim on the *law* for a sentence that the transgressor has never broken it? or a demand binding the law to pardon? (the *law* pardon!) or binding the law to accept an innocent victim for the guilty? The law, which, (to make the case a parallel one,) is the exact and unchanging measure of justice, said that the sinner, not an innocent substitute, should die. That then, and nothing but that, is the claim of justice,—the unchangeable, indestructible claim of justice. How came a substitute possessed of a demand which annihilates this, and renders the immutable claim of justice unjust? Even the *administrator* of the law cannot be bound by justice, (other than that justice to the substitute which arises out of a *promise* of reward,) to accept the sufferings of an innocent person in the room of the guilty. How can he be? If the brother of a murderer comes forward to-day and offers to die in the criminal's stead, are the rulers of the land bound by justice to accept the substitution and to let the murderer escape? But how came they bound? Their law, which, (to make it a parallel case,) is the exact measure of justice, said nothing about a substitute, but merely that the murderer should die. That then, and nothing but that, is justice, or can become justice; and nothing else can annihilate justice, and take its place, its name,

and its nature. On what principle then can the substitute force himself upon them, and in the name of justice demand the release of one whom their law and justice condemn?

But suppose the rulers have stipulated with the innocent brother to accept his substitution, and have thus allured him on to death, nay, have inflicted the stroke with their own hand, are they, (but *they* are still not their *law*,)—are they not now bound by justice to release the criminal? I answer frankly, not by justice to the *criminal*, but certainly by both truth and justice to the *substitute*. Here is a claim of justice to be satisfied. By what? By the fulfilment of a contract on the part of the rulers. But we have been speaking of a claim of justice supposed to have been satisfied by the death of the innocent brother. By this insensible transition from one claim to another the confusion is introduced\*. No one doubts that it is an act of justice to *Christ* to do to those for whom he died according to all the antecedent stipulations, and therefore to regenerate the elect and to justify and save believers. But we are not speaking of a claim of justice to be satisfied by an act of the Father, but a claim supposed to have been satisfied by the death of the Son; not of a debt of reward due from the Father to the Son, but of a debt of suffering due from sinners to the divine law. It is admitted that Christ by his *obedience* “unto death” rendered a stipulated service which justly entitled him

\* Thus Dr. Owen: “He who without the consideration of the oblation of Christ could no but punish sin, that oblation being made, cannot punish those sins for which Christ offered himself. Yea he is more bound in strict right and in justice, *in respect of Jesus Christ*, to confer grace and glory on all those for whom he died\*.” We ought to settle once for all whether God owes the acquittal to *Christ* or to the *sinner*, and keep to one point.

\* Gethsemane, p. 83.

to the promised reward ; but this is not saying that by his *expiation* he paid to eternal and immutable justice, whose rights are not conventional, all that was due from believing sinners. He created a debt in favour of himself, but did not pay what sinners owed. He made out a claim on justice by his obedience, but did not satisfy one by his expiation. After the Father had constituted him the Saviour of the world, and had publicly promised to accept his sufferings in behalf of believers, and had secretly covenanted to communicate faith to the elect, he owed it to him to do as he had said. This was a claim against the Father. But the question is whether the atonement satisfied a claim which the divine law had against sinners. This was a claim for the death of the transgressor in person, and not of an innocent substitute. This claim was certainly not enforced ; but instead of that enforcement the death of Christ was accepted as an equal honour to the divine law. This is the plain matter of fact in whatever language it may be wrapped up.

But it is asked, if one person has a just claim on another for *kind treatment*, can he not transfer that claim no less than a pecuniary one to a third person ? This question cannot refer to the claim of Christ to be himself the object of the Father's love, (for that of course he cannot transfer,) but to his claim to the salvation of believers. Can this claim be transferred to them ? If a child, you say, visits one whom his father has befriended, he feels himself invested with a personal claim to a kind reception, and if otherwise treated, resents it as a personal injury, and not merely as an act of injustice to his father. Granted. But who gave him that claim ? Not his father, but his God. The fifth commandment has invested every man with a right to be treated according to the relations which he sustains.

The son of a king is entitled to more respect than the child of a beggar, and the son of a benefactor stands in a different relation from the son of an enemy. The child of your friend has a claim of that general sort which is possessed by your *neighbour*, and approaching to that which *your own* child possesses. Your own child has a peculiar personal claim upon you; but did *you* give him that claim against yourself? No, it was given him by God. But who or what gave the Mediator a claim to the pardon of a sinner, but the promise of God? That promise fastens the claim immoveably in himself, and created no such relation for the sinner as gave him a right by any law to urge the claim in his own person. It cannot possibly be in him unless he has actually performed the same service, or is absolutely identified with the Person of Christ. The claim of the Redeemer to the salvation of believers has never been transferred or alienated, but remains in himself. He has not put it into their hands as though about to leave them, and sent them into the world endowed and alone. No, he abides with them, and is himself at once their Guardian and their title to life. It is for his own mere sake, from direct regard to him, and to satisfy a claim which his obedience created, and which must be unalienably his own so long as it remains true that the obedience was his and not another's, that they receive their mercies from hour to hour.

This love of independence which grasps the thought of having the claim in our own possession, is much like the wish of the heir to get the inheritance out of the hands of the parent; or that propensity in men, which, though not opposed to receiving existence from God, cleaves to the idea of having been set forward with a self-moving power. We have indeed a claim,

but it is of a far different sort; not on justice, but on a promise dictated by free, rich, and amazing grace.

On the whole, if God should refuse to regenerate the elect or to save believers, in other words, should treat any of Adam's race less favourably than was stipulated in his public or private promises, it might be a breach of faith, it might be a dereliction of the principles of wisdom and general goodness, it might be injustice to the Mediator, but it would not be injustice to men: that is, it would not be treating them worse than they personally deserve, or worse than they must continue to deserve, though omnipotence were exhausted in transferring guilt and righteousness, so long as it shall remain true that they have ever sinned.

And this accords with the consciousness of every true believer, whatever systematic phrases he may be accustomed to use. When he is humbled in the dust at the feet of his Maker, it is farthest from his thoughts to make demands on justice. His language then is, "God be merciful to me a sinner." And when he obtains a sense of pardoning love, he is the more confounded, and opens not his mouth for shame, because a holy God is pacified towards him for all that he has done. Every day of his life he confesses that it would still be just in God to send him to perdition. And if it would be just, justice still demands his death. And if justice demands his death, justice is not satisfied.

The literal truth is, that Christ answered all the purposes to the divine law which could have been accomplished by the actual satisfaction of its demands against believers, and the actual satisfaction of justice upon them. And this being done, it may be said by an easy figure, that law and justice are satisfied. And though these expressions are not scriptural but of hu-



man invention, I do not object to their use in prayer and popular discourses. But every divine and every Christian ought to know that they are figurative expressions, and not attempt to draw from them literal conclusions.

The foregoing remarks apply to believers. But in order to bring this notion of a literal satisfaction to bear upon the limitation of the atonement, it is necessary to make out a satisfaction for the elect as elect. Then from the time it was made, and even from the time that bonds were given to make it, they were more than justified in our sense of the word; they were acquitted by law and justice, in other words, could demand of law and justice a sentence that they were as free from sin as the angels in heaven. And then during all the days of their unregeneracy, law and justice had no demands against them. No condemnation or even censure could reach them. Amidst all their rebellions and blasphemies, they stood as perfectly acquitted as Gabriel; law and justice both bending over them with their protecting shield, and constantly pronouncing them as spotless as heaven.

This is not Scripture. Christ never in any sense made over his claim to the unregenerate elect. They had no claim but to perdition, lying at full length under the undiminished pressure of the curse,—“children of wrath even as others.” Peter himself had no righteousness till he believed. “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness” only “to every one that believeth;” and it is constantly called “the righteousness *of faith*,” “the righteousness which is *of faith*,” “the righteousness which is *by faith*,” “the righteousness which is of God *by faith*,” “the righteousness of God which is *by faith*,” and the righteousness to which man

believeth with the heart.\* Christ could not be the end of the law for righteousness to unbelievers. He could not answer the purpose to the law of a literal fulfilment of its demands on them, so as to reconcile with its honour the pardon of those who continue to trample its authority in the dust. We see at a glance that this was impossible. He could in no degree relieve the elect as elect, as unbelieving sinners, from the pressure of condemnation. He could not therefore, (in the language so much approved,) discharge or assume the debts of the unregenerate elect. He could not then stand the absolute Surety or Sponsor of such.

No, you say, but he stood the absolute Surety and Sponsor of the elect *viewed as believers*. If you mean that he covenanted with the Father about the gift of faith to them as the *reward* of his *obedience* "unto death," I agree. But when you speak of suretiship and sponsorship, you refer to his assumption of their *debts* and *obligations*, and plainly have your eye on his *atonement*. But the atonement did not obtain for them the gift of faith. The suretiship and sponsorship therefore did not secure to them the character of believers. That was done by an influence lying wholly without these offices. The virtue of these offices must be spent, and the reward for executing them bestowed, before the elect would be believers. In other words, the atonement must be finished, and the reward for making it conferred, before they could receive the gift of faith; for that gift was Christ's reward for making atonement. Or to resort to the favourite phraseology, their debts must be assumed and

\* Rom. 3. 22. and 4. 11, 13. and 9. 30. and 10. 4, 6, 10. Phil. 3, 9. Heb. 11. 7.

discharged by their Surety, and he must be recompensed for having finished the work, before they would believe. Did he then pay the debts of believers or unbelievers? They must be freed from debt, and the reward of their liberation must be bestowed, before they will believe. Do they go out believers or unbelievers? Plainly if Christ was an absolute Surety or Sponsor for so many elect sinners by name, he sustained this relation to them not as believers but as unbelievers.

This lays open at once the fallacy of that dream about an absolute *suretiship*, and *sponsorship*, and *representation* for the elect, which has been bred in the imaginations of good men. These terms, especially the first two, belong to the legal system, and plainly glance at a money transaction and a legal commutation of persons. And let it be remembered that they are purely of human invention. But if in any sense it is proper to say that Christ was a Surety, Sponsor, or Representative, he was so, not to men as passively appointed to receive sanctifying impressions, but only to moral agents and believers; for to none but agents do those relations belong which such an office was capable of affecting. I am willing to consider him in the light of a Representative, but he was so only in the *public* transactions, and not in the secret covenant. In a conditional sense he may be considered the Representative of a whole world of moral agents: but if you speak of a higher suretiship or representation, indissolubly connected with saving effects, it respected only believers. Those for whom such a suretiship is undertaken, must from its commencement be entitled to a discharge, exonerated from obligation to suffer, acquitted. Every analogy testifies that believers only are represented in this higher sense. Adam re-

presented a posterity whose temper was like his own, and would not have been their representative without that essential circumstance: and if any analogy exists between the two headships, Christ must represent, in this higher sense, only a seed who resemble him in character. The very idea of Adam's representation was, that it involved his posterity in his own condemnation as fast as they become his posterity by actual existence: to comport with this, Christ's higher representation must involve men in his own justification as fast as they become thus represented. Are the Representative and the represented treated as one? none are treated like Christ but the justified, "the bride, the Lamb's wife." Whom should the Head represent but the body, the members? But in the higher sense he is the Head of believers only. No others are invested with his righteousness and owned in the presence of his Father; no others are accepted through his intercession. They are "his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all\*."

\* To this latter idea of representation the view is confined in the *Body of Christ*, written by the Rev. James M'Chord<sup>r</sup> of Lexington, Kentucky, a man of no ordinary powers of mind. He overlooks the representation of men as *moral agents*, or he would be in agreement with us at almost every point. Mr. M'C.'s system is as follows. The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the Head of the body, the Church; which, whatever numbers it contains, constitutes, together with the Head, in all periods of time, one moral unit. Christ represented, not the elect as such, not the world at large, but the Church as a body, and every individual which belonged to it at the time of his death; and every one, though unknown to the covenant before, becomes represented as soon as he believes. As the atonement was sufficient for all, and the covenant was restricted to no number, Christ is capable of becoming a Representative of one as well as another, provided they believe. Thus the privilege of an atonement is open to all alike, though no expiation is actually made for any but believers. A possible salvation is thus provided for all. The covenant which secured the salvation of the elect was quite a different thing, being made, not

The foregoing remarks give a different view to the whole transaction. In this representation you find not that legal oneness between Christ and the elect, that legal imputation of a precise number of sins to him, that legal punishment and literal satisfaction of law and justice for a given number, and that legal acquittal of all for whom satisfaction was made, which involve the consequence that all for whom it was made must in justice to *them* be pardoned. Nor do you find that legal identification from which it can be inferred that all for whom it was made must in justice to *Christ* be pardoned. Whether all for whom as moral agents he atoned, (and none but agents sustained those relations which an atonement could affect.) must in justice to *him* be brought to repentance and pardon, depends on the nature of that *secret* covenant *by which his claims were regulated*. That which could give to his death such a bearing upon public law and the legal relations of men as to constitute an atonement, let it be distinctly remarked, was not a *secret* compact between the Sacred Persons, but the *public avowal of the design of his death*. The secret covenant related simply to his *reward for making atonement*. Whether

between God and the Messiah, but between the First and Second Persons of the Trinity, with a view to the latter's becoming the Messiah. In short he excludes from the atonement every thing which discriminates the elect, and holds out a provision which is capable of becoming an actual atonement for every man if he will but accept it. Here then is a *conditional* atonement for all *us moral agents*; and this is exactly what those eastern brethren mean with whom Mr. M'C. is considerably displeased. The key which he wanted to unlock every ward which he failed to open, is to be found in the existence and attributes of *moral agents*. When he has familiarized his mind to this subject, his controversy with those who maintain a general atonement will cease. But insulated as Mr. M'C. was, and embarrassed in various ways as he seems to have been, it is not so great a wonder that he saw some things obscurely, as that he discovered so much.

therefore any for whom he atoned, (that is, any whose legal relations he so changed that they could be pardoned if they would believe,) could in justice to *him*, (in justice to *themse'ves* they certainly might,) be left unsanctified and perish, depends on the nature of the secret covenant which regulated his claim to a reward. If it was the mutual understanding of the Sacred Persons in that covenant, that the *public annunciation* should be so shaped as to give the atonement a bearing on a whole world of moral agents, *in a way honourable and gratifying to Christ*, while only a part should be sanctified and given him for a seed; then no injustice is done to Christ if a part of those for whom he atoned are left unsanctified and perish. If it shall appear that besides the secret covenant, in which the elect were distinguished only as *passive receivers* of sanctifying impressions, there was a sort of open and visible compact between the Father and Son, (the *public annunciation* before referred to,) according to which the atonement was publicly offered and accepted for a whole world of *moral agents*, to have this precise operation, "that *whosoever* believeth should not perish;" then all injustice is wiped from the transaction, and every thing is made out for which we plead.

#### THE WHOLE DIFFERENCE AT ONE VIEW.

The point of separation between the parties, so far as the *nature* of the atonement is concerned, plainly lies here. It is agreed on all hands that *expiation* and *satisfaction* stand together as cause and effect; but our brethren make both of these commensurate with the higher *λυτρον* or ransom by which the higher *λυτρωσις* or redemption was accomplished, and then

raise a question about *particular redemption*. Particular redemption, (meaning by redemption the effect of that ransom which included both expiation and merit,) they can prove; and if this was all they attempted, the dispute would be at an end. But by uniting the two distinct influences of expiation and merit in what they call the atonement, they make the atonement accomplish the whole redemption from sin and death, and constantly speak of the higher ransom as having no other influence than to expiate and satisfy. The inference is, that no expiation or satisfaction was made for those who do not feel all the influence of the higher ransom, in other words, are not redeemed from the power of sin. And when they have put into satisfaction the whole influence of merit with all its claim to reward, *satisfaction itself has a claim*. And when they find satisfaction with a claim, forgetting that they put into that satisfaction a claim to a reward, they know not how to make out the claim without making the satisfaction *a literal satisfaction of law and justice*. And to get at this there must be a literal legal oneness between Christ and the elect. This is manifestly the process by which the whole scheme has come into existence.

## PART II.



### EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT.



#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE CURSE OF ABANDONMENT REMOVED FROM ALL.

ACCORDING to the foregoing pages, the only effects which the atonement had on Peter were these two: it removed the curse of abandonment, and thus took away the *penal* bar to his sanctification, and it rendered his pardon consistent with the honour of the law on the supposition of his believing. Had it these two effects on all? If so, it was in fact a general atonement, whether intentionally or otherwise. The main question then may be resolved into these two: did the atonement remove the curse of abandonment from all? and did it render the pardon of all consistent with the honour of the law in case they should hear the Gospel and believe? The former question will be disposed of in this chapter, the latter will then claim our undivided attention.

After such a death in our world to support the penalty of the law given to men, no favour shown to the human race could weaken the influence of the penalty, unless it spread a shield over irreclaimable wickedness. No power exerted *to turn men from wickedness*, could weaken it, be they who they might. So far then



as the influence of the penalty was concerned, it had become consistent with the honour of the law to grant the Spirit to all men. And this is what I mean by removing the curse of abandonment.

If it shall appear that the atonement rendered the *pardon* of all men consistent with the honour of the law, on condition, not that they should *receive* faith, but that they as agents should *believe*, then it left no legal bar to their full discharge from every part of the curse but their own evil agency, and therefore no restriction, imposed by the *curse*, on the sanctifying agency of God.

In the public explanation accompanying the atonement, it was not to be expected that any notice would be taken of its influence on the grant of *regenerating* grace; for that explanation, as we shall see hereafter, referred only to agents, but this grace is bestowed on passive receivers. All that could be expected, in relation to the Spirit, from an explanation thus limited, was a general notice that a way was opened to bestow this blessing on all who *as agents would believe*. That notice was given. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life;" implying that they should eternally be sanctified. "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive." "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost\*." It will appear hereafter that nothing is promised on the condition of faith which it would injure the law to grant, allowing the fact to take place

\* John 3. 16. and 7. 38, 39. Acts 2. 38.

that all respected in the promise should of their own accord believe. If then the Spirit was promised to Simon Magus on the condition of his faith, the law would not have been injured had he actually believed and received the Spirit as a gracious and eternal reward. And if the Spirit was communicable to him on the condition of his faith, the curse of abandonment was removed; for that was involved in a judicial sentence which declared that Simon Magus should never on any conditions receive the sanctifying Spirit to eternity.

But it was not mere atonement which produced this whole effect. The merit of Christ, as we have seen, was requisite to complete the opening for the mission of the Spirit; for it was necessary to the highest honour of the law that all positive good should be granted as the reward of a perfect righteousness. Atonement removed the penal bar which sin had raised; merit gave opportunity for the blessing to come as the recompense of a full homage to the law.

But when we introduce the merit of Christ, it must be acknowledged that this was not employed to make provision for the *regeneration* of Simon Magus. That is, the covenant of redemption did not provide for his regeneration as a part of Christ's reward. In this respect complete provision was not made for his regeneration in consistency with the highest honour of the law. This however was no defect of the atonement, (for it remained after sin was covered and the penal bar removed,) but lay in the single fact that the regeneration of Simon was not promised to Christ. And this was a matter which respected Simon, not as a moral agent, but as a mere passive receiver of divine impressions. As a moral agent the very obedience of Christ made provision for his sanctification. That is,

it provided for his continued sanctification if he would once believe. For though in that secret covenant which respected passive receivers, his regeneration was not connected with Christ's reward, yet the public explanation accompanying the death of the Mediator, which related to moral agents, and was a sort of visible compact between him and the Father, gave him an open right to claim as his reward the continued sanctification of the whole world if they as agents would once believe. Thus by the merit as well as the atonement of Christ provision was made for a whole world of moral agents in reference to their sanctification, that is, a provision which they might enjoy by doing their duty.

In every view but one the atonement was a mere provision for moral agents. As it bore on *regeneration*, it barely removed a penal bar to sanctifying impressions on passive receivers: but even this was accomplished by an operation on the *relations* of moral agents; for it was the removal of a curse which moral agents had incurred. In every other point of view the atonement was purely a *provision* for moral agents. As it opened the way for the Spirit to be given them *as the gracious reward of their faithful seeking*, it was such. As it bore on *pardon* it was such altogether. The way is now prepared to consider it in the latter light alone. And here the question is, did it reconcile with the honour of the law the pardon of Simon Magus in case he of his own accord would believe? If it did, it was a complete provision for him as a moral agent, and as full an atonement for him as for Peter, whether intentionally so or otherwise.

## CHAPTER II.

## GRAND POINT OF DIVISION BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

“WHEN the Remonstrants,” says Dr. Watts, “assert that Christ died for all mankind, merely to purchase conditional salvation for them; and when those who profess to be the strictest Calvinists assert [that] Christ died only—to procure absolute and effectual—salvation for the elect; it is not because the whole Scripture—asserts the particular sentiments of either of these sects with an exclusion of the other. But the reason of these different assertions of men is this, that the holy writers in different texts *pursuing different subjects*, and speaking to different persons, sometimes seem to favour each of these two opinions; and men being at a loss to reconcile them by any *medium*, run into different extremes, and entirely follow one of these tracks of thought and neglect the other. But surely if there can be a way found to reconcile these two doctrines, of the absolute salvation of the elect,—and—the conditional salvation provided for all mankind;—this will be the most fair, natural, and easy way of reconciling these different texts of Scripture, without any strain or torture put upon any of them\*.”

This “medium” of reconciliation, this hidden cause of the diversity of language in the sacred writers while “pursuing different subjects,” the same distinguished writer sought and found. The clue which he discovered lay among the relations of *moral agents*, where we shall seek it in the following pages.

As that class of Calvinists who advocate a general atonement are among the firmest supporters of abso-

\* Watts' Works, Vol. VI. p. 296, 297.

lute personal election, and as those who sustain the opposite side generally admit that all are bound to live by the atonement, I have often asked myself, where can this difference lie? To what radical principle can it be traced? Where is the angle of separation? As both parties are agreed in their cardinal positions, by what means do they arrive at such opposite conclusions? The following is thought to be the solution of the mystery.

One party contemplate men as *passive receivers* of sanctifying impressions; and their question is, how many did God intend by regenerating influence to make partakers of the benefit of the atonement? The answer is, the elect. And so say we. The other party contemplate men as *moral agents*; and their question is, how many did God intend to furnish with a means of pardon which they should be *under obligations* to improve for their everlasting good? The answer is, all who hear the Gospel. And so say our brethren. Thus the dispute turns out to be chiefly about words. Whose *language* is the most correct, depends on the question whether the atonement in its own proper influence was adapted to affect men as moral agents or as passive subjects of divine impressions. If it spent all its force on agents, then in deciding for how many it was provided, we must see on how many it left those traces which belong to agents. If on the other hand it exhausted itself on passive subjects of sanctifying impressions, we have only to ask, how many in consequence are sanctified?

I am inclined to think that this is the original angle of separation, and that the dispute about the nature of the atonement is rather consequential. The mistake of our brethren, as we view it, has arisen from not keeping these two characters of man distinct. They have confounded

the two, and by confounding have buried up the agent under the passive receiver; and what was intended for the agent they would not allow was intended for the man unless he was to be sanctified. The two characters, I shall have occasion to show hereafter, are about as distinct as body and soul; and on their marked separation the solution of almost every difficulty in metaphysical theology depends. And had our brethren kept the distinction plainly before them, they would have seen that the atonement was for agents and agents alone; and then they would have had nothing to do with the question how many were to be passively regenerated. And then they could not have reasoned about the *nature* of the atonement as they have done. The mistake lies in not perceiving that an atonement intended merely for agents, is completely for them without reference to the question whether the same creatures are to be regenerated.

The question which continually lies before our brethren is, how many did the Sacred Persons intend to save by an influence on them as *passive*. Hence they tell us, "When a question arises concerning any transaction, for whom it was done, it is decided by ascertaining the *intention* of the principal agent." Christ "may be said to have died for all whom he *designed to bring to salvation*, and for none else." "It will be pretended that Christ died for all, but suspended the benefit of his death upon a condition. Be it so. Then when Christ died he knew whether that condition would ever take place; or rather he knew that it never would *in those to whom he had determined not to give faith*. And to say that a person does a thing to take effect on a certain condition which he is sure will never occur, is the same as to say that he does a thing without any view to that effect." Our question has

nothing to do with any of these matters, but is merely this; whose relations to the divine law did the Sacred Persons intend so to change that they could be pardoned if they would believe?

Our question always is, for whom did Christ *atone*? The question of our brethren is, for whom did he *die*? meaning, for whom did he offer the double influence of expiation and merit, which met in his death and constituted the higher ransom? And what they maintain is not so much a limited atonement as particular redemption. But they do not distinguish between the two; and in the midst of an argument to disprove a general atonement, you will find them urging the influence of Christ's merit on the gift of faith. The Scriptures "require indeed faith as an instrument of receiving the benefits of Christ's death; but this very faith is the effect of Christ's meritorious death and prevalent intercession; *and is of course bestowed on all those for whom he shed his precious blood.*" "The death of Christ, considered in unison with his obedience, is the meritorious cause of all spiritual blessings. It is therefore the cause of the gift of faith." It certainly is; but this has nothing to do with the extent of the atonement.

But notwithstanding these discrepancies, when our brethren come to speak of the real effects of the atonement on moral agents, they admit all that we plead for. This they do as often as they allow that the non-elect lose the benefit *by their own fault*; a point fully settled by the general consent of the Calvinistic world. The following is the testimony of the Synod of Dort, a body which for two centuries has been quoted as the oracle on the other side. "That many who are called by the Gospel do not repent or believe in Christ, but perish in unbelief, does not arise from the *want* of

the sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross, nor from its insufficiency, but *from their own fault*\*." Now if the non-elect have an atonement so within their reach that they are bound to use it for their benefit, and perish, not for want of an atonement, but by their own criminal rejection of it, then an atonement was provided for them as much as it could be for moral agents. The difference therefore is still about words.

The two questions, for whom did Christ *atone*? and for whom did he *die*? (meaning by the latter, whom did he intend to *save* by an operation on them as *passive*?) require directly opposite answers: and from the different answers which they have received, men have appeared to each other to be contending for opposite systems, when in fact they were in the main only supporting different truths. The former question has been largely discussed by the divines of New-England; the latter was agitated by the Synod of Dort. I will first take up the question in the shape in which it was handled by the Synod.



### CHAPTER III.

#### VIEW OF THE SUBJECT AS TAKEN BY THE SYNOD OF DORT.

THIS Synod was convened at Dort in Holland, under the auspices of prince Maurice the stadtholder, by an order of the states-general dated Nov. 11, 1617; and consisted of delegates from the different provinces of Holland, from Great-Britain, the Reformed Churches of France and the French Netherlands, Switzer-

\* Acts of the Synod of Dort. Part I. p. 290.



land, Geneva, the Palatinate, the Wetteraw, Hesse, Bremen, and Emden.

For near twenty years the United Provinces had been agitated by the new doctrines broached by James Arminius, the celebrated founder of the sect which still bears his name\*. After his death the ministers who adhered to his cause formally seceded, and by an instrument which they called a *remonstrance*, and from which the party took the name of Remonstrants, put themselves under the protection of the states of the province of Holland and West-Friesland. This occurred in June 1610. In the following August and September, several students in divinity being about to be examined before different classes, the Remonstrants drew up five articles, (in opposition to predestination, limited atonement, total depravity, special grace, and the perseverance of the saints,) and obtained an order from the states to the classes to require in the examination no other declaration on these subjects than a subscription to the articles. Thus arose into form and notice the celebrated *Five Points*.

After years of grievous contention this national Synod was convened, for the purpose of settling all ques-

\* This extraordinary man was born in Holland in 1560, and was ordained pastor of a church in Amsterdam in 1588. In 1603 he was appointed to the divinity chair in the university of Leyden. From this time his opinions began to excite public attention, but they were not openly avowed till the year before his death, which occurred Oct. 19, 1609. His eulogium was written in verse by the celebrated Grotius, who, together with Vossius and many other learned men, took a distinguished part in supporting the Arminian cause. The principal opponent was Francis Gomarus, from whom the orthodox party were sometimes called Gomarists. After the fall of the Arminian sect, Grotius was arrested by the order of prince Maurice and sentenced to imprisonment for life; but he escaped by the ingenuity of his wife, who had him conveyed from the fortress in a chest pretended to be filled with books.

tions in dispute ; with a particular order to discuss first of all the Five Points, and to refer all their decisions to the states-general for confirmation. The Synod was opened on the thirteenth of November 1618, and continued its sessions till the ninth of the following May\*. They proceeded immediately to cite thirteen of the Remonstrants to appear and defend their doctrines. The cited obeyed the summons on the 6th of December, and were dismissed on the 21st of January. On the 24th of April the Synod deposed the thirteen pastors with some others, and enjoined it on the provincial synods, and the different classes and presbyteries, to proceed against the whole sect without delay, and not to suffer one of them to remain in office or in the communion of the Church. All this was confirmed by the states-general in July following, by an order forbidding any doctrine contrary to the expositions of the Synod to be taught in any of the churches, and enjoining it on all ecclesiastical bodies, governours of colleges, professors, ministers, magistrates, and civil officers, to see the law carried into rigorous execution. The event was the imprisonment and banishment of the Arminian ministers, and the violent prostration of the whole party, agreeably to the intolerant principles common to all Europe in that day.

This is the Synod, which, uniting in one voice the Calvinistic world, just one century after the commencement of the Reformation, has been appealed to ever since as the grand authority next to the Bible for deciding all questions in Calvinistic divinity.

The question respecting the design of Christ's death was brought before the Synod in the following shape. The Arminians maintained that the mission of Christ

\* The president was John Bogerman, pastor of a church in Leuwarden, in West-Friesland, the residence of the prince of Orange.

placed all men in all respects on an equal footing, and left the rest to be done by the self-determining power of the will; that his death reconciled God to the whole human race, and by restoring their lapsed powers and the freedom of their will, placed them in a condition, with the aid of common grace, to work out their own salvation without any supernatural influence; that there was no decree or intention of God to apply the atonement to one more than another, and for aught he would do the whole race might have perished after all. In short the main question turned on predestination and the dependance of the human will\*.

This the Synod perceived, and shaped their answer accordingly. They say in the outset: "The Remonstrants in this article do not treat of a new subject. For formerly the Semi-Pelagians of Marseilles and Syracuse maintained the same in these words: *Our Lord Jesus Christ died for the universal human race, and no man is wholly excepted from the redemption of his blood, though he goes through this whole life with a mind most alienated from him: because the sacrament of mercy belongs to all men; by which very many are not renewed, for this reason, because they are foreknown to hold that it is useless to be renewed. As far therefore as belongs to God, eternal life is provided for all; but as far as appertains to the freedom of the will, it is obtained by those who of their own accord believe in God, and receive the aid of grace through the merit of believing.* In which article, although in appearance they amplified the grace of God and the redemption of Christ, they in truth diminished both, ascribing to God indiscriminate grace, to Christ the merit of redemption, to free will the efficacy of both: and while they would overturn the doctrine of predestination, which the apostolic

\* Acts of Synod, Part I. p. 129, 130, 246, 247. Part II. p. 129.

Austin defended, they in truth tore up the foundation of the whole Gospel, attributing the cause of faith and perseverance, and therefore of human salvation, to God and Christ indiscriminately, to the humour and will of man determinately.—

In like manner these, while in this article about the obtaining of reconciliation with God for all men through the death of Christ, they in appearance amplify the grace of Christ's death, do in truth the same thing that those did; and while they think to tear up from its foundation the apostolic predestination of God, (which discriminates those who are to be saved from those who are not to be saved,) to introduce in opposition to it their own eventual predestination, of those who of their own accord believe and persevere, or determine themselves to faith and perseverance, a predestination posterior to faith and perseverance, (which in truth ought to be called *postdestination* instead of *predestination*,) they do, by making the human will the governour of resistible grace, and subjecting reconciliation through the death of Christ to the will of men, completely deprive faith of all grace, and weaken the consolation to be derived from the death of Christ\*.”

The Synod then proceed to consider at large the purpose of the Sacred Persons; and while they admit that Christ died and *willed* to die for all in respect to the sufficiency of his ransom, they deny that it was his purpose or the purpose of the Father actually to save the whole race†.

When they oppose the unqualified assertion of the Remonstrants that Christ died for all, they explain their meaning, and plainly tell us that it is the intention as to the final result that they deny. “To die for any one,” say they, “is properly to free him from

\* Part I. p. 246, 247.—† p. 248.

death by one's own death, or to die in his place that he may live; as appears from 2 Sam. 18, 33. *Would God I had died for thee!* that is, in thy place that thou mightest have lived\*.”

They object also to the assertion of the Remonstrants, that Christ *reconciled* God to the whole world, and *obtained* remission of sins for all and each†. This *obtaining by request*, (for such is the meaning of the word *impetratio* which the Remonstrants had used,) cannot, say the delegates from South-Holland, be separated from the application: “for an obtaining by request, (as lawyers, the best interpreters of the meaning of words, confess,) includes and presupposes a concession of the thing solicited. Thus with them *an obtained rescript* is when the prince has granted and the supplicant has gained. And in our common language, when we say an office or benefit has been obtained by request for any one, we mean not only that the right to that benefit has been obtained, but the actual possession and concession of it‡.”

“This whole thing,” say the delegates from West-Friesland, “which they have endeavoured to hide and bring in under the fringe of this article, lurks in this, that not content with the received doctrine of the sufficiency of Christ's death, they have invented such an *obtaining* of remission of sins for all and each as is separated from all participation of remission; where we must particularly note, that when they propose to treat of the death and satisfaction of Christ, of its fruits and efficacy, and the blessings obtained by it, they do not explain the manner of the satisfaction, nor make any mention of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, for instance, of faith, perseverance, and the restoration of the divine image within us, or of the renovation of our nature; by

\* Part I. p. 247.—† p. 248, 249.—‡ Part III. p. 145.

which they suggest, what elsewhere they plainly bring out, that Christ obtained salvation that there might be a possibility of the remission of sins and of the reconciliation of men to God, but that all participation of that good is suspended on their performing, of their own accord, the prescribed conditions, that is, on man and his free will\*.”

“ Here it is to be noted,” say the delegates from the synod of Groningen and Omlands, “ that the question is not about the sufficiency of Christ’s death : for we affirm without hesitation that the sacrifice of Christ possesses so great power and value that it is abundantly sufficient to atone for the sins of all men, as well actual as original ; and that no one of the reprobate perishes *for want of the death of Christ*, or through its insufficiency : but the question is, whether, according to the intention of God the Father and Son, remission of sins and reconciliation with God were actually obtained for more than the elect.†.”

From these extracts it appears what the chief points of dispute between the Synod and the Remonstrants were. The question was by no means the same that is agitated at the present day, but turned chiefly on the intention of the divine mind as to the *application* of the atonement, and the strange notions brought forward to disprove special grace ; in other words, on predestination and the dependance of the human will. And though those venerable fathers, from the kind of opponents they had to deal with, were more cautious than we are in the use of universal terms, and on the nature of the atonement sometimes lost themselves in figurative language, chiefly from not distinguishing between atonement and the higher ransom ; yet on the whole they can scarcely be said to be contending with

\* Part III. p. 173.—† p. 193.

us ; for I shall show in another place, by copious extracts from their reasonings, that they fully admitted all the great principles which support our conclusion.

And now in return I will acknowledge and vindicate all that they defended against the inroads of the Arminians. This I will do under the following heads.

(1.) A part of the human race were elected *in Christ*, and chosen to salvation *by his death*, before the foundation of the world. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, *according as* he hath chosen us *in him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love ; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will.” “Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us *in Christ Jesus* before the world began.” “Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” The non-elect are those “whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb slain\*.”

(2.) This number were promised and given to Christ as the reward of his obedience “unto death.” Their salvation was promised him. “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect,—in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began.” Promised to whom ? no man was there to receive the pledge : promised undoubtedly to Christ. They were given to him. “All that the Father giveth me shall

\* Eph. 1. 3—5. 2 Tim. 1. 9. 1 Pet. 1. 2. Rev. 13. 8. and 17. 8.

come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.—And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me.—I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me.—Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.—Those that thou gavest me I have kept\*." They were given to him as a reward of his obedience "unto death." This has been proved in a former chapter, and will be still further established in the Appendix. They were given him to be through sanctification the co-partners of his inheritance. It was fore-ordained in the decree of election that he should be "the First-born among many brethren," and share with them the inheritance of the universe. "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the First-born among many brethren." And among the reasons for conferring on him, in reward of his obedience, the dominion of the universe, a leading one was, that he might complete the salvation of his elect. "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." "Him hath God exalted—to be a Prince and a Saviour, *for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins*†."

(3.) The salvation of the elect was that part of Christ's personal reward which had a principal influence in inducing him to die. It was an important

\* John 6. 37, 39. and 17. 6—12. Tit. 1. 1, 2.—† John 17. 2. Aets 5. 31. Rom. 8. 29.



part of "the joy that was set before him," in view of which he "endured the cross, despising the shame\*." This prospect, which so much influenced his own mind through his whole course, it was natural for him to allude to while seated in the bosom of his family. With his eye on Calvary, and with the joy of millions rising before him, he unbosomed to his disciples this great motive which urged him to the cross. "I lay down my life for the sheep.—And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring." Then turning to the Jews, "But ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep†." It has been already remarked that by sheep is primarily meant, not the unregenerate elect, but believers. The fold is that which is enclosed by the pale of the Church, and the flock are the Church considered as an assembly of believers gathered together in Christ. And here the sheep "hear" the porter's "voice," and "know his voice," and "follow him," "and a stranger will they not follow." The elect Gentiles are therefore called sheep plainly by way of anticipation. But still as there is an evident allusion to the *election* of the sheep, I cannot but think that Christ intended to express, not that the sins of the elect would be atoned for more than others, but that in the motive which prompted him to the sacrifice, he had a special reference to the salvation of the elect as a part of his promised reward. By a similar anticipation the unregenerate elect appear to be called the children of God, and a similar reference to them seems to be expressed, in the following passage: "This spoke he, [Caiaphas,] not of himself, [not at his own suggestion,] but being high-priest that year, [and in honour of his office being visited with a temporary inspiration,] he prophe-

\* Heb. 12. 2.—† John 10. 3—29.

sied that Jesus should die for that nation ; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad\*.” By running back the contrary way, believers, under the name of the Church, appear to be spoken of with reference to their previous elect character in the following passage: “Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish†.” Some suppose that the sanctified and the children are spoken of under the character of elect in the following place: “Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren [and children.]—Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might—deliver them‡.” And in the following: “For their sakes, [they were believers at the time, but it is supposed to refer to them as elect,] I sanctify myself, [devote myself to die,] that they also might be sanctified through the truth§.” There are other passages which plainly declare that Christ by the *merit* of his *obedience* “unto death” obtained the gift of the Spirit as his reward, and thus became our “sanctification and redemption,” and saved “his people from their sins,” and accomplished the double purpose of purging our “conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” “Who gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil world.” “Who gave him-

\* John 11 51, 52.—† Eph. 5. 25—27.—‡ Heb. 2. 11—15.  
—§ John 17. 19.

self for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation,—but with the precious blood of Christ;—who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times *for you who by him do believe in God.*" "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and, (having made peace through the blood of his cross,) by him to reconcile all things unto himself.—And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblamable, and unprovable in his sight\*."

Indeed nothing is more evident than that the merit of Christ in actively giving himself to die, obtained the sanctification of the elect as his reward, and that the prospect of this reward, so gratifying to his benevolence from the direct love which he bore them, constituted one of the leading motives which urged him to the cross; that he died to secure this interest, so peculiarly his own as one of the contracting Parties, much in the same sense as a man performs a prescribed task for a stipulated recompense. But this has nothing to do with the extent of the atonement, nor with any question relative to its *equal* bearing on moral agents.

This distinction between expiation and the claim of merit to a reward, appears not to have been made by either party in the days of Dort. The Remonstrants in particular were totally blind to all that influence of Christ which went in to constitute the higher ransom.

\* Mat. 1. 21. Luke 1. 71—75. 1 Cor. 1. 30. Gal. 1. 4. Col. 1. 19—22. Tit. 2. 14. Heb. 9. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 18—21.

So far from saying with them, that his *only* influence and end was to render God able and willing to establish with men a covenant of grace\*, I say and insist, that so far as services could earn a stipulated reward, he actually "purchased" the salvation of every individual of his elect, and had a right to claim it at the hands of justice. They who overlook or fail to dwell largely on this glorious truth, will be in danger of crowding Christ too much out of their religion. To turn the eye of the mind full upon it, to admit the whole view, and to dwell upon it with devout and grateful transport, will, as every one can testify who has tried the experiment, open more fully and affectingly to view, that which all must see is the great subject matter of the Bible, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God, to the salvation of men.



## CHAPTER IV.

### ATONEMENT FOR MORAL AGENTS ONLY.

NONE but moral agents bear any relation to law, obligation, guilt, pardon, rewards, or punishments; and none else can bear any relation to an atonement which was intended to support law, to expiate guilt, and to lay a foundation for pardon. The passive had not sinned; the passive needed no pardon. The only way in which passive receivers of sanctifying impressions could be affected by an atonement, was indirectly, by its removing the curse of abandonment which sinning *agents* had incurred. But even this was accomplished by a mere operation on the relations of

\* Acts of the Synod of Dort, Part II. p. 139.

agents. The whole force of the atonement was spent on those relations.

This is what we mean when we say that the atonement was a measure of *moral government*. A moral government is only the treatment which God renders to moral agents. As he stands related to creatures in this character, he is the Moral Governour. Now the atonement was plainly an expedient of the Moral Governour to support the moral law, (the constitution of a moral government,) and thus to open a way for the pardon of sinning agents. The satisfaction was demanded by the Protector of the law, and was rendered to him who holds the rights of justice, (as all acknowledge who talk of satisfying justice,) and was accepted by him who otherwise was determined to punish sin. In every point of view it was a measure adopted by God in the character in which he stands related to moral agents.

Thus the atonement spent its force on the relations of agents, and except by way of consequence, had no effect on men in any other character.

But it was for agents in another respect; it was a *provision* for them. By a provision for moral agents is always meant a means of instruction, holiness, usefulness, or happiness, which they may improve, and are under obligations to improve, and on the improvement of which as a *sine qua non* the benefit depends. Here I must introduce a principle which I shall have occasion to display more at large hereafter. A moral agent must be contemplated as a whole, as possessing that entire assemblage of attributes which constitute him such, and not as one maimed of half his qualities. His essential properties cannot be divided. Now one of the things which essentially belong to him is, that he must *act*, and *on his action his happiness depends*. One cannot be a moral agent without falling under this law.

You cannot therefore contemplate a man as *needing* an atonement, without contemplating him as one, who, if he has opportunity, is to *act* towards the atonement, and is to enjoy or lose the benefit according as he receives or rejects it. If you keep up the idea of a moral agent, you cannot separate these things. Any thing therefore which is done for a moral agent, is done for his *use* after the manner in which things are for the use of *free moral* agents, or creatures governed by motives and choice, and bound to act. That is, it is done that he may use it if he pleases, and that he may be under obligation to use it. Unless the effect is thus suspended on his agency, the thing is not prepared for him *as an agent*. No matter what other provision which respects the same creature as passive, has secured the action of the agent; yet the provision for the agent necessarily suspends a good on his own conduct. Now as an agent must not be divided, whatever is done for him in a way to *affect his relations*, makes a *provision* for him as an agent, that is, a provision for him to improve. And all that is gained by changing his relations, (so far as the pure agent is contemplated,) is to bring a good so within his reach that he may enjoy it if he will accept it, and must accept it to enjoy it. It cannot be for an *agent* in a higher sense. In a higher sense it may be for the *man*, for under that name both the active and passive characters are included. The atonement could not be a provision for a guilty agent, without having changed his relations as a transgressor; it could not change his relations as a transgressor, without being, (besides removing the penal bar to regeneration,) a provision for a moral agent to improve; provided men are ever in a holy manner to seek *sanc-tification* of God and to receive it as a gracious reward, and provided the consistency of their *pardon* always depends on their turning from sin.

Thus the atonement was for moral agents in two inseparable respects : it affected their relations, and was a provision for them to improve. And it was for men in no other character, except by way of consequence,



## CHAPTER V.

### THE TWO CHARACTERS OF MAN DISTINCT AND INDEPENDENT OF EACH OTHER.

THE moment we have found that the atonement was for none but moral agents, we refuse to take any further notice of mere passive receivers of sanctifying impressions ; that is, we refuse to take into account, in settling for whom as agents atonement was made, whether the same persons as passive were predestined to be regenerated : and the reason is, that these two characters are altogether distinct and independent of each other, and what is true of the one is none the less true for any thing which concerns the other. This is the corner stone of the whole system, and requires to be laid with firmness and care.

The foundation of the whole divine administration towards the human race, lies in this, that men sustain two relations to God. As creatures they are necessarily dependant on him for holiness, as they are for existence, and as such they passively receive his sanctifying impressions ; and they are moral agents. Now the great truth to be proved is, that these two characters of men, (passive receivers and moral agents,) are altogether distinct and independent of each other. And the proof is found in the single fact, that their moral agency is in no degree impaired or affected by their

dependance and passiveness, nor their passiveness and dependance by their moral agency. That is to say, they are none the less dependant, (as Arminians would make us believe,) for being moral agents; and on the other hand, (and this is the main point to be proved,) they are none the less moral agents, (as Antinomians seem to suppose,) that is, are none the less susceptible of personal and complete obligations, for being dependant. For instance, they are none the less bound to believe because faith is "the gift of God," nor to love, because love is "the fruit of the Spirit." Their obligations rest on their capacity to *exercise*, not on their power to *originate*; on their being *rational*, not on their being *independent*. On the one hand, the action of the Spirit does not abate their freedom. The soul of man is that wonderful substance which is none the less active for being acted upon, none the less free for being controlled. It is a wheel within a wheel, which has complete motion in itself while moved by the machinery without. While *made* "WILLING," it is itself *voluntary* and of course free. On the other hand, the absence of the Spirit does not impair the capacity on which obligation is founded. The completeness of moral agency has no dependance on supernatural impressions, and on nothing but a rational existence combined with knowledge. The bad equally with the good are complete moral agents, the one being as deserving of blame as the other are of praise: otherwise, (which for ever settles the question,) the unsanctified are not to blame and cannot be punished. To deny that men are under obligations to be good without a divine influence, would plunge you into this trilemma: you must resort to the old Arminian dogma of the self-determining power, or you must prove that God answers unholy prayers, or you must boldly affirm that



totally depraved sinners are under no obligation to be holy. For how can they be under obligation to be holy *through a divine influence*, unless they can obtain that influence by an unholy prayer, or can originate a better spirit of supplication by the self-determining power? What, then, are men to be sent forth in their own strength? No, but they are bound to feel perfectly right at once, and with that temper to cast themselves on God for security against a future *abuse of their agency*, a future *violation of their obligations*. They are bound to feel perfectly right at once, and with that temper to acknowledge their absolute dependance: for on the one hand that would only be a confession of the truth, and on the other, we know from facts which fill the universe that their dependance is no abatement of their obligations.

This is the very point from which have proceeded one half of the disputes of the Christian Church. They have all arisen from the difficulty of familiarizing to the mind the consistency between dependance and obligation, passiveness and freedom. Illumine this *inch-square*, and the whole farrago of metaphysical litigation would vanish. Pelagians, Semi-Pelagians, Arminians, Semi-Arminians, and Semi-Calvinists, would no longer tremble at the idea of absolute dependance as destructive of freedom, nor would fatalists infer from that dependance that men are machines.

That these two characters are each perfect in itself and unaffected by the other, is no less evident than that creatures can deserve praise and blame. As creatures they must be dependant on the Spirit; and to be susceptible of praise and blame, is the very definition of a moral agent.

The character of agents as distinct from recipients is sufficiently entire in itself, and at the same time suf-

ficiently real and important, to be the basis of the whole fabric of a moral government. The whole structure is obviously founded in this truth, that men are complete moral agents without supernatural influence, and none the less for their dependance. God does not command or invite them to come on condition that they are *drawn*, but lays upon them the obligation without reference to the action of the Spirit. He does not threaten or punish them because they fail to *receive* his influence, but because they do not *act*. He makes experiments upon them, he presents instructions and motives, he charges them with privileges, just as though they were independent.

On this principle he proceeds in his commands. He requires all rational creatures to be holy, sanctified or unsanctified. He lays this command on angels: for what is their holiness but conformity to his will? He lays this command on good men; and without reference to any spiritual assistance, says, "Remember from whence thou art fallen and repent." He lays this command on the worst of hypocrites, and without the least abatement for their dependance, says, "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom:—wash ye, make you clean:—cease to do evil, learn to do well." He lays this command on a profligate world, on millions who will never be sanctified; for he "commandeth all men every where to repent." He lays this command on devils; or devils do not at present sin; "for sin is the transgression of the law," and "where no law is there is no transgression\*." Indeed if in any acts of authority God was limited by his dominion over the mind, he could never command further than

\* Rom. 4. 15. 1 John 3. 4.

he makes "willing," and of course could never have an opportunity to punish.

On this principle he proceeds in the dispensation of rewards and punishments. Without reference to any divine influence exerted or withheld, he will say at last, "Come ye blessed;—for I was a hungered and ye gave me meat.—Depart ye cursed;—for I was a hungered and ye gave me no meat." "Because I—called and ye refused,—I also will laugh at your calamity."

On this principle he proceeds in all his invitations, promises, threatenings, and expostulations. "He that believeth—shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured." "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" "O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries." "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!—I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me!"

On this principle he proceeds in all his experiments upon the human character. "Then said the lord of the vineyard, what shall I do? I will send my beloved son; it may be that they will reverence him." "Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this figtree and find none: cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." Not a hint of any

influence from without but simple cultivation; the issue was suspended on the intrinsic energy of the tree. These representations have been considered as made after the manner of men, but in truth they are the natural language of one agent making experiments upon other distinct and complete agents. Specimens of the same sort may be seen in the parables of the talents and the pounds.

On this principle he proceeds in estimating the opportunities and privileges of men, and in assigning the cause of their destruction. "My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein. And he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.—What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" "There was a certain householder which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen that they might receive the fruits of it.—Last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, they will reverence my son." "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?" "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reprov'd." "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." They "that were bidden to the wedding" "would not come." "His citizens hated him and sent a message after him, saying,

we will not have this man to reign over us.—Those my enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me.”

Thus Gabriel, and Paul, and Christians on earth, are complete moral agents, and are bound to act, irrespectively of the spiritual influence by which they are moved; and wicked men and devils are complete moral agents, and are bound to be holy, without the Spirit, and none the less for their dependance. Neither the dependance of men therefore, nor the gift or withholding of the Spirit, needs to be taken into account in any declaration concerning them as moral agents, or concerning the outward privileges which belong to them as such. Moral agents, so to speak, are complete entities in themselves, without respect to the passive character belonging to the same creatures.

These two characters of men are about as distinct as body and soul. Like body and soul they are united together in the same *person*; and this gives them a necessary relation to each other, (resembling that between body and soul,) in the three following respects.

(1.) The soul is stimulated to action by what is needed by the body, and by what is done for the body; and agents are excited to holy action by motives drawn from the dependance of creatures, and from the decrees and operations of God respecting them as passive. God himself draws motives from election and regeneration to move them to submission, adoration, gratitude, and praise.

(2.) The soul is bound to act in view of the wants of the body, and in view of what is done for the body; to ask God for blessings on the body, and to thank him for those blessings when conferred: and men are bound to act in view of their dependance, and towards

God as related to passive subjects of decrees and impressions. They are bound to acknowledge their dependance, to pray for the Spirit on themselves and others, to be thankful for influences already received, to believe and acquiesce in the decree of election, to thank God for their own election as far as it is known, and to submit the fate of the wicked to his sovereign disposal. God himself commands these things.

(3.) The soul is rewarded and punished by what is done to the body; and the dependance of men constitutes a sort of capacity for rewards and punishments. God promises them his influence as a gracious recompense, and bestows it in answer to prayer, in fulfilment of a covenant, or as a general token of favour; in all which you may trace the idea of reward. The whole process of sanctification after the first act of faith, seems to be of this nature; for however sovereign it may be in point of time, manner, and degree, it was in general promised to the first act of faith, and is certainly a token of favour. On the other hand, God withholds from men his influence, and abandons them to judicial blindness and tormenting passions, by way of punishment.

Regeneration can never be the reward of the person regenerated, for before the change he had nothing worthy of recompense. But the regeneration of one person may be the reward of another. It may be a recompense to Christ, a token of favour to a parent or minister, a fulfilment of a covenant with the Church, or an answer to prayer. On the other hand, regenerating influence may be withheld from one as the punishment of another. So, to keep up the comparison already begun, the soul of one may be rewarded or punished by what is done to the body of another.

In these three respects the two characters stand related to each other. These then may be considered as *exceptions*; and to save repetition I shall hereafter refer to them as such. But with these three exceptions, the two characters are as disconnected and independent of each other as though they belonged to two separate persons. A provision for one is as distinct from every thing relating to the other, as a provision for the soul is distinct from a garment for the body. Accordingly, with the above exceptions, God, in his whole treatment of moral agents, proceeds without the least apparent reference to the dependance of the same creatures on the Spirit, and shapes all his measures, to all appearance, as though he had no control over the mind but by motives. This he does even in regard to good men. He lays upon them obligations irrespective of the influence which he has covenanted to bestow. But as the influence in this case is really a reward to holy agents, I shall take no further notice of it, but shall confine myself to the regenerating power. This, as it relates to the subject of the change, is certainly no part of the treatment of moral agents. To him it is not a reward, and has no respect to any thing he has ever done. This then, and the decree concerning it, are clearly without the pale of a moral government, and may be set in distinct contrast with the whole treatment of agents\*. These are the two points of opposition which I wish to set up;—election and regeneration on the one hand, and a moral government on the other. And what I assert is, that in all the treatment

\* The decree of election was a reward to *Christ*, and a part of a moral government in relation to *him*; and the regeneration of a child may be the reward of a parent, and so a part of a moral government to him. But the child is not treated as an agent in the process, but as mere passive receiver.

of moral agents, and in all the provisions for them, God acts, with the exceptions already made, without the least apparent reference to election or regeneration.

I have shown you two independent characters on earth. If God acts towards these *according to truth*, there will be a counterpart of them in the heavens: he himself will sustain two characters, (with the exceptions already made,) altogether independent of each other. As he stands related to the moral agent, he is the Moral Governour; as he stands related to the mere passive receiver, he is the Sovereign Efficient Cause. I say then, if he acts towards these two independent characters of man *according to truth*, the Moral Governour will appear in his operations independent of the Sovereign Efficient Cause. And so it is. No one can open his Bible without seeing these two independent and seemingly opposite characters in every page. In one place you hear God speaking as one who has absolute control over the mind and cannot be disappointed: "My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure." "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will;" in another, you see him a supplicant at the doors of men, earnestly striving to reform them, with no power or instrument in his hand but motives; and you see him, after exhausting his means, retiring from the field apparently disappointed and grieved. "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 that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!" "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." "O



that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" This is not the language of figure, nor any thing after the manner of men in such a sense as to prevent it from being the plainest and simplest dialect of a moral government. These two characters, which appear every where as distinct as though they belonged to two separate beings, will account for all that diversity of language in the sacred Scriptures which has given rise to so many opposite systems. Out of these different exhibitions of God most of the metaphysical disputes have arisen. One class of men, fastening their eyes on one of these characters, have in different degrees excluded election and special grace; while another class, too much confining their attention to the other character, have proportionably overlooked a moral government. But the grand key to unlock every difficulty is found in this, that one of these characters stands related to men as moral agents, and the other to men as passive receivers of sanctifying impressions; and the latter two being distinct and independent of each other, the former two, to accord with truth, must be equally so.

These two characters of God are not only distinct, but in some respects are opposite to each other. In one character God wills to suffer men to sin, when his influence could easily prevent; in the other he earnestly forbids them to sin, and urges all the motives in the universe to dissuade them. In one character he wills to suffer men to perish, when his influence could easily prevent; in the other he swears by his life that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that they turn and live; and then presses them to return as though his own existence was at stake. In one cha-

acter he determined before the non-elect were made that they should be left to destruction ; in the other he would have us to understand that he made them from the purest benevolence ; and to confirm this, he has spread an ocean of atoning blood between them and perdition, and follows them with his entreaties even to the gates of hell. Nothing but the confounding of these two characters, or rather the annihilation of that of Moral Governour, prevents men from seeing that God could provide an atonement for the non-elect : and that character annihilated, there is no avoiding the broad and unqualified assertion that he made them to be damned. Contemplate God in a single character, and there is no vindicating the sincerity of his invitations to the non-elect : for then the whole that can be said is, that he presses those to live whom he has unchangeably doomed to destruction. Not a word of explanation can be offered ; and it is as though a *man*, sustaining a single character, should pursue the same contradictory course. But view God in this double character, founded on the double relations of men, and admit that their capacity is a sufficient ground of treating them as distinct and independent agents, and all is plain. In short this distinction between the active and passive characters of man, and between the corresponding characters of God, will clear up very many difficulties which are otherwise insolvable\*. To blend

\* I am so convinced that this distinction will clear up most of the solvable difficulties in metaphysical theology, that I could wish to see some abler pen pursue the subject through all its ramifications. I have only time to drop the following hints as a specimen.

(1.) The seemingly contradictory language which runs through the Bible is thus explained. In one form God speaks as related to agents, with nothing but motives to employ ; in the other, as related to passive subjects of sanctifying impressions, over whom he has absolute control.

(2.) It reveals the consistency between dependance and freedom.

them would introduce endless confusion into every part of the divine administration. And to fill the eye with one to the exclusion of the other, and to build on that a system of religion, would lead to the most destructive heresies. Cover man's dependance on the Spirit, and we are Pelagians: take away his moral

Freedom is the unrestrained exertion of our own agency. Dependance leaves our agency entire, and of course unshackled.

(3.) The consistency between decrees and free agency. Decrees do not touch us until they are executed upon us by the power of motives, or by an influence to mould our disposition. If we follow motives we are voluntary and free: if our hearts are moulded by a divine influence, we are only dependant. As men have all the attributes of agents none the less for what befalls them as passive, God may make and execute a decree concerning the passive and leave agents free.

(4.) The consistency between election and the fact that all may come. Election only respects the passive, coming is the act of an agent. Election only touches the question whether we shall be disposed to come; it does not interfere with the fact that if we come we shall be received.

(5.) The consistency between election and a fair chance for all. Fair chance is predicable only of an agent, and is where a blessing is so put within his reach that he may enjoy it by doing his duty. Election only respects the question whether he shall be inclined to do his duty.

(6.) The difference between God's secret or decretive and his revealed or preceptive will. The former respects the passive, (except so far as it is to be executed by motives;) the latter, agents.

(7.) The propriety of exhorting sinners to repent and believe, and not merely to use means and do the best they can. Their moral agency and obligations are not impaired by their dependance, nor by the absence of the Spirit.

(8.) We see what it is which constitutes the difference in the tenour of different preachers. Some dwell more on the duties of agents, or morality, others more on the aid secured for the passive, calling on men to cast themselves on Christ and the covenant. And by keeping in view the two characters of man, we may see why and how far both methods ought to be pursued. As to the reason why, the whole man ought to be addressed: as to the proportion of bearing on the respective characters, not enough on the one hand to make legalists, not enough on the other to make Antinomians. To omit to notice, or to lay too much stress on either character, will lead to some error of head or heart.

agency, and the government of God degenerates into Stoical fate. The only difference between the Calvinistic doctrine of decrees and the Stoical doctrine of fate, is found in the distinct, complete, and free agency of man, by which he differs from a mere machine.

These operations of the Moral Governour and Sovereign Efficient Cause may be called the two great departments of the divine administration. And they are so distinct that when a man opens his eyes in one, he cannot, so to speak, see the other. If standing in one department, a Christian should ask why he obtained mercy, the question would be, why he was *regenerated*: and the answer would be, because God has "mercy on whom he will have mercy." If standing in the other, he asks the same question, the inquiry will be, why he was not punished with judicial blindness, and why he was not debarred when he applied for pardon: and the answer will be, on the one hand, because he had not committed the unpardonable sin, and on the other, because God wished to glorify his grace for the encouragement of others who should be disposed to apply. It was in the latter department that Paul stood when he contemplated the reasons of the mercy extended to him. "I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.—For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him." When the great preacher of election opened his mouth on such a subject, you might expect to hear, among the antecedent causes, something of that electing decree and of the gift of that soul to Christ. Not a hint or breath of any such thing. He seems never to have heard of election. The only reasons assigned why he himself was not actually left to go down to the pit, are these two;

that this knowledge had not been sufficient to render his sin unpardonable, and that God wished to make him a monument of mercy for the encouragement of other returning sinners. So perfectly distinct are the two departments, like two different worlds, and so impossible, when a man opens his eyes in one, even to see the other. And this is the difficulty with our brethren. Their eyes are so immoveably fixed in the department of the Sovereign Efficient Cause, that they never go out of it to contemplate a moral government in relation to the atonement. They ask, in the light of their favourite department, why Simon Magus perished; and they answer truly, because he was not elected. If they would go into the other department and ask the same question, the answer would be, because he rejected the remedy which was so brought within his reach that he could not lose it without enormous guilt; in other words, because he rejected an atonement which was prepared for him as a moral agent.

The Moral Governour, with the exceptions already made, proceeds in all his administration without the least apparent reference to election and regeneration, and constructs his measures just as though men were independent. The reason is, there is in man, regarded purely as an agent, (which he completely is when separated from the sovereign influences of the Spirit,) a full foundation for all the treatment and measures which are fitted to moral agents. A measure for a moral agent is complete without being so shaped as to have a manifest bearing on the same man in a character in which he is not an agent. Nor can it be so shaped without ceasing to be a simple measure for a moral agent. And the being who brings it forward, if he speaks according to truth, must simply declare it

intended for the moral agent, and must say no more. The measure may be expected, *by way of consequence*, to affect the man in another character; and the author of the measure may so declare: but in explaining the direct and proper influence of the measure itself, he cannot in truth allude to any but a moral agent. Accordingly the Moral Governour, with the exceptions already made, proceeds through the whole of his administration as though the other department did not exist. Particularly in contemplating the *privileges* of men, as we have seen, he appears to have no knowledge of election or regeneration whatever.

Now the atonement was certainly provided by the Moral Governour, because it was a provision for moral agents. It follows then that in making this provision he had no regard to the distinction of elect and non-elect. An atonement made for *agents*, could know nothing of *passive* regeneration or any decree concerning it.

When I say this of the *Moral Governour*, I do not apply it to the *Divine Mind* unlimitedly, but only to God in that character in which he stands related to moral agents. If it be asked respecting *God* unlimitedly, whether he would have provided an atonement if he had not determined to bestow the gift of faith and consequent salvation on the elect, I am willing to answer no. Not that it would have been inconsistent for him to have treated the whole race as mere agents, as he now treats a part, (allowing *wisdom* to have seen a reason for so doing;) but I suppose that he would not have entered on a system of mercy towards a world without intending to glorify himself in both characters, and to gratify his benevolence more fully than he could have done by the operations of the Moral Governour alone. But certainly the salvation of the elect was not all that he

intended to gain. He had a purpose to answer towards the non-elect as subjects of moral government, much the same that he accomplishes by giving them laws. He has ends to answer by a benignant government over agents, wholly distinct from any which he attains by sanctifying impressions on the heart. All this is said of *God* unlimitedly. But in the foregoing remarks respecting the Moral Governour, I referred not to the *secret* motives of the *Divine Mind*, much less to any purposes respecting the passive, but to the *avowed* designs of God in bringing forward a measure for the benefit of moral agents.

I admit also that God in his secret covenant, in which he treated about men as passive recipients of sanctifying impressions, had much to do with election, and that too in preparing the way for the atonement. He gave the elect to Christ as a reward for the merit of his obedience in making expiation. But that secret transaction, as I expect to show in the next chapter, did not *provide* the atonement, by giving to the death of Christ its expiating virtue. This was done by the *public* transactions, in all which God appeared as the Moral Governour. It was the Moral Governour who commanded the Son to die, and laid upon him the stroke; who thus as the Protector of the law demanded and received satisfaction; who accepted the offering, and pronounced it accepted by the resurrection of Christ. It was he who came forward with the atonement before the world, declared the purpose for which it was made, and offered it to men as a provision of his own. It was the Moral Governour then who appointed, provided, and produced the atonement. And what I mean is, that in all these public transactions he had no declared reference to elect or non-elect, but appeared as one bringing forward a measure

solely for moral agents, to be indiscriminately applied to all who as agents would believe.

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## CHAPTER VI.

NOTHING BELONGED TO THE ATONEMENT BUT WHAT  
WAS PUBLIC.

THE greatest mistake of all has lain in the supposition that the *secret* covenant between the Father and Son gave to the atonement its influence and power, like a contract between two merchants respecting the purchase of goods. This representation carries too much the appearance of something mercenary and selfish on the part of the Father, as though the thing demanded was merely to gratify his own personal feelings. All the statements about the pearl paid in secret, or by a secret understanding, for the redemption of a hundred of the thousand prisoners, are of this nature. Where the thing demanded is money or a precious stone, to gratify a private and personal feeling, the contract which gives it all its claim may be made in secret. But the Father had no such individual feeling to gratify. He had no desire or demand but for an operation upon *public law* for the benefit of the universe. Nothing could have the least influence to satisfy him but that operation upon public law. The arguments on the other side constantly assume that the atonement was offered and accepted secretly for a certain number. But it was not offered or accepted secretly. The offering was among the most public transactions of the universe; and the acceptance was no less notorious than the resurrection of Christ, the pro-



clamations of the Gospel, and the acquittal of the saints in glory. And had it been offered and accepted privately, as the pearl is represented to have been, it could have had no effect.

We are now upon a track which will lead to an easy decision of the question. The atonement was certainly a measure exclusively for moral agents, and therefore was provided by the Moral Governour. But in that secret covenant God was not the Moral Governour towards men, but the Sovereign Efficient Cause: in other words, he did not treat about men as moral agents, but about men as passive receivers of regenerating influence. He only promised that the elect should be made to believe, and thus be brought into that pale where remission would meet all indiscriminately who should enter. This covenant then was no part of the provision of the Moral Governour for moral agents.

Nor did this covenant give to the atonement any of its influence upon the relations of moral agents. So far as it was a contract for something which should have this effect, it was merely a stipulation that there should be an atonement; but the matter and influence of the atonement were the same as though such a stipulation had never been, except that without the consent of the Son his subjection and sufferings would neither have been possible nor just. That covenant was the mere yielding of consent on the part of the Son, and the fixing of his reward on the part of the Father. That might have been all, and the elect might have been pardoned as a reward or favour to Christ without his sufferings, had it not been necessary for the honour of the law to produce a change in their legal relations as agents. This was the proper and exclusive office of the atonement. The whole of this was done by

the public command to the Son to die, the public infliction of the stroke upon him, and the public explanation of the design. These public transactions were *the whole* which constituted an atonement for Peter. It was not a secret contract about him as passive, nor a secret stipulation that there should be an atonement, but a public offering for him as an agent, which rendered it consistent with the honour of the law for him to be pardoned when he should believe. And besides removing the curse of abandonment, this was all that atonement did for Peter: for it is not atonement which creates the fact that men *are* pardoned; that is done by the intervention of another influence which secures to them the gift of faith. It was the public transactions, and not a private treaty, which made it to be an atonement for him. The meaning of its being offered for him is, not that God designed it for the benefit of the *man* by an operation on him as passive, but that the public transactions gave it a bearing on him as an *agent*, that is, on his legal relations. In determining then for whom or how many it was offered, we have not to consult the secret covenant, but only to look on the face of the public transactions. It could not be for Peter further than it was made to be for him by the public transactions; and it was for as many as the public transactions made it to be. It was to exert its whole influence upon public law. That influence was wholly derived from the open and avowed bearing of the thing upon agents and their relations; that is, upon creatures who had *sinned* and who must *act*, and *on whose action the effect must depend*. And it was for as many agents as by that public bearing it rendered pardonable if they would believe. The public explanation which gave it that bearing, then, is the only instrument which contains the *express purpose*. The

whole that we mean therefore when we say that the atonement was for all, is, that it was stated in the public instrument to be for every man indiscriminately who would believe, and that it became a provision for all by the bearing it took from this public statement.

Let us look again at the case of the prince of Wales. The whole end to be accomplished by his atonement was, a public conviction that forgers should die. How could that conviction be wrought on the multitude by any *secret* purpose of the prince or his father, or by any secret agreement between them? Allowing the king to have power to change the hearts of the criminals, and to have made some private promise to the prince on that subject, what has this to do with public law, or with rendering it safe to pardon the men *after they are reclaimed*? The whole that was to accomplish this must be public. And if the death of the prince could do nothing without an *express purpose*, we see at once where that express purpose must be found, and in what form. It must not be found in the secret covenant between the parties, (it might as well be no where,) but in the public proclamation. And it must not be about *the formation of the character*, (allowing such a power to exist,) but about the *pardon* of the criminals. Admit now that the death of the prince could not convince the public that forgers would die if it shielded any who continued to transgress: then the proclamation must be, that he dies to obtain the pardon of the culprits *provided they reform*. This done, if the life of the prince is known to be as valuable in the eyes of the government as that of the ten, not a man in England will dread the authority of the law the less if all the ten reform and live. There is then a full atonement for the ten, though in the event but five accept the offer.

But still the mind cleaves to the idea of some secret sense in which the satisfaction was offered and accepted. Let us therefore pause a little longer on this thought. After Christ had openly and professedly died in the room of all in such a sense that all might be pardoned if they would believe, how by any secret understanding or compact could he atone in any higher or other sense for the elect? A thousand private purposes and agreements, and a thousand deaths for them in particular, could accomplish no more *by way of atonement* than was done for all by that public transaction. How then could he limit the expiation to a part? If it had been gold or a pearl that had made the satisfaction, it might by a secret understanding have been offered and accepted for a few. But how by any secret covenant could one *die* in the room of a given number, when his death, as publicly explained, actually cleared out of the way of all every impediment to pardon but unbelief; and that was a difficulty not to be removed by his dying in their stead, but by the meritorious influence of his obedience? What chance was there for any private transaction in things properly belonging to the atonement? What room was left for any thing to be done in secret analogous to the private offering of the pearl for one in ten? Who was there to witness such a covert and deceptive transaction? Who has been in the cabinet and brought back the report? Who knows that the satisfaction, after all these public appearances, was not offered and accepted in good faith for the whole?

Suppose for a moment that it was as we have represented; that the Redeemer by his sin-offering cleared every difficulty out of the way of the pardon of all but unbelief, and then by the merit of his obedience secured the gift of faith to the elect: and what more

could he have done for his chosen by any thing public or private? What need then of searching for a private transaction appertaining to the atonement itself?

Having thus found that the atonement was that public measure which was brought forward before the world by the Moral Governour, (or by God as he stood related to moral agents,) and that no part of it lay in the secret department of the Sovereign Efficient Cause, (or God as he stood related to mere passive receivers of sanctifying impressions;) we may now resume the train of thought which was suspended at the close of the last chapter, and see *why*, as analogous to all his other operations, and *why*, as growing out of truth itself, the Moral Governour, in providing and producing the atonement, should proceed just as though men were independent agents, and without the least apparent reference to election or regeneration.

I have seen a concession from an amiable and distinguished writer on the other side, which if steadily kept in view will set all right at last. In showing that the non-elect perish by their own fault notwithstanding that there is no atonement for them, he says, "*We must in all cases be careful not to confound the secret purposes of God with the rule of our duty. Between these two things there is often no coincidence.*" Now after "the rule of our duty," only add, *nor with any other measure of moral government*, and every thing is settled: for then we shall not confound any thing relating to election with the atonement. And why should not this be added? Is it not as wrong to confound God's secret purposes respecting the passive with any of the measures adapted to agents, as with that particular one which we call law? and wrong for the same reason, because the two are distinct? "We must" therefore "be careful not to confound the secret pur-

poses of God with the" *atonement*. "Between these two things there is often no coincidence."

This care we profess to exercise. We do as we understand from the Scriptures that God himself does. When we speak of a measure properly intended for moral agents, we know nothing about men as destined to be the subjects or not the subjects of passive regeneration. When we speak of the designs and acts of the Moral Governour, we know nothing about the Sovereign Efficient Cause, but speak of God as he appears in the public order of a moral government, and scruple not, because the Scriptures do not scruple, to ascribe to him all the aims which the measures of that government are calculated to accomplish. When we place ourselves in a moral government, we cannot see the other department, but speak of the glorious Being at the head of this as though he sustained no other character. In short we express ourselves in the pure dialect of a moral government. And when we turn to the atonement, we know nothing about men as elect and non-elect, but as capable agents, or if we look to their moral character, as believers and unbelievers. And then an atonement which was offered that "who-soever believeth" might "not perish," which placed, and was designed to place, remission so within the reach of all that they may enjoy it if they will do their duty, and are solemnly bound to make it their own, and cannot lose it without enormous guilt, we unhesitatingly pronounce an atonement for all.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### ATTRIBUTES OF MORAL AGENTS.

BUT of what avail to the non-elect for God to open the way for them to be pardoned upon their believing,

when he had determined never to impart to them the gift of faith? It was no atonement for them after all. This is the greatest difficulty that rises up in the mind. I must however remark, that in this question you speak of the same man in two distinct characters, as distinct as two different persons, and might as well ask, of what avail a privilege to Peter since Judas was never to be sanctified? When you speak of an atonement for a man, you speak of a privilege for a moral agent; but when you speak of his being regenerated, you change the scene in a moment, and refer to him only as passive, in which character privileges have no relation to him.

This objection goes further: it really overlooks all that in human agents which renders them the proper subjects of moral government, and on which the whole structure of a moral government is founded. Is there in a moral agent without the Spirit bottom enough to support such a privilege, so as to render the provision worthy of any account? If not, there is not bottom enough to support any other of the measures of a moral government, such as law, punishment, and the like.

The root of the difficulty lies in overlooking the *capacity* of unsanctified men. And without capacity they are no longer agents: and when they cease to be agents, they indeed cease to be susceptible of the privilege of an atonement. If the non-elect are as powerless in regard to faith as dead masses of matter, I admit that the atonement was not made for them in any sense; and then I must consider the appearances of such a provision as calculated to deceive. But if they possess the full capacity which is the proper ground of treating them as moral agents, then there is an atonement for them as agents none the less for their being unsanctified. If a feast is brought into a room

surrounded with statues, and it is determined to impart life only to half; there may be a ludicrous proclamation that it is for as many as will receive it, but after all it would be preposterous to say that it was provided for all. But if it is brought into a room surrounded with living men, and they are all to share it if they will, and are invited and urged to partake, then it may truly be said to be provided for all, though in the event a part refuse the invitation. The question then about *power* is really a vital one.

On this and some other accounts it becomes necessary to analyze a moral agent and to see exactly what he is, what attributes he possesses, what relations he sustains, and what effects an atonement made for moral agents ought to have on him.

It is important in the outset to gain precise ideas of a moral agent, and to carry the definition in our minds through the whole discussion. A moral agent then is a being *capable of deserving praise and blame*. But as there are no works of supererogation, and no moral goodness among creatures but what lies in conformity to the will of God, nothing is entitled to praise from him but the fulfilment of an *obligation*, or to blame from him but the violation of an obligation. A moral agent then, (to carry back the idea one step further,) is a creature *capable of fulfilling or violating obligations*. But as he cannot fulfil or violate an obligation of which he is not susceptible, the radical definition of a moral agent is, a creature *susceptible of obligations*. And as the bonds are actually imposed by divine authority on all who are capable of receiving them, the definition which accords with matter of fact is, a creature *under obligations*. When therefore we inquire what constitutes or is the basis of moral agency, we are only ask-



ing what that is in the creature which is the foundation of obligation.

That foundation is no other than the faculties of a rational soul, to which, in reference to the present subject at least, I am willing to add *light*. What is it which makes a man rather than a brute bound to love and serve God? His relations to God? But a brute has the relation of a creature, and a creature preserved and fed. A divine command? The question then returns, why is a man more fit to receive a divine command than a brute? There must be a basis to support the obligation distinct from the authority which imposes it, as a platform is distinct from the hand which lays a substance upon it. The command only imposes it from above, but does not support it from beneath. That thing in the creature which can sustain the obligation more than if the command was laid upon the air, or a block, or a brute, is the secret after which I am inquiring. What is that thing? You say it is a rational soul. Then the intellectual faculties are the basis of the obligation. The true doctrine on this subject is, that wherever a rational soul is found, there are talents which God has a right to command.

This basis is not at all affected by the state of the temper. With the same capacity and light, a bad man is as much bound to love and serve God as a good man. A depraved disposition does not destroy or weaken the basis, nor does a holy heart go in to constitute or complete it. If it did, a holy disposition would be that in the creature on which rests the obligation to be holy; and where the disposition is wanting there could be no obligation, and of course no sin. And until a thing can be the foundation of itself, there could be no holiness, because there could be no obligation to be holy. The disposition itself would not be

holy, for it would not be the fulfilment of a previous obligation, but the basis of one to follow. The previous obligation could not exist without holiness; but the previous obligation must exist and be *fulfilled* before holiness can exist. A holy disposition therefore would be impossible: and then an obligation to holiness could not exist: and then there could be no violation of an obligation, in other words, no sin. Try the principle in another light. If disinclination to duty destroys obligation, there is no stable landmark between right and wrong, but a moveable spectre which recedes before inclination; and so long as a man follows his inclination, (which he is sure to do as long as he is free,) he cannot sin. And as it is not sin to be forced against one's inclination, the possibility of sinning is excluded: God could not create a being capable of sinning: and then every law, human or divine, which attempts to control the inclination, or to impose an obligation in opposition to it, is tyrannical, and punishment in every form is oppression: no distinction remains between moral good and evil; every feeling of disapprobation or resentment against another is founded in a delusion; and instead of a kingdom of moral agents, the Governour of the world is left alone amidst the lumber of innumerable automata. To all this length you must go, or return back to the plain principle of common sense, that a rational soul, whatever its temper may be, is bound to submit to the government of God.

There is no need therefore of recurring to our original purity in Adam to find the foundation of obligation. Under the notion that sinners have no more power to believe than stocks, men have attempted to justify the universal command on the ground that the power was lost by our own fault. If a servant, say

they, has cut off his hands to avoid labour, his master may still require his daily task, and punish him for the neglect. But if a solid ground of obligation independent of Adam still remains in the soul, there is no need of resorting to this labouring principle to vindicate the command. We lost nothing in Adam, (so far as concerns the present subject,) but a right temper; and the want of that does not impair the basis of obligation which exists in ourselves. What else can you imagine we lost? Power? But what power distinct from a good heart? Have we not still power to love God if our heart is well disposed? Do you mean a power to make the heart good, or a self-determining power of the will? But did Adam himself possess that? What had he which we have not but a right temper? And that could not have been the ground of obligation had it continued. Besides, this resort to original holiness for the ground of obligation involves so many seeming absurdities, that it ought not to be made without the most urgent necessity. Take the case of the servant. His sin was one, the act of disabling himself. For this he might be punished as long and as much as that single act deserved. But to impute sin to him for not performing his task after it had become impossible, is contrary to all truth and justice. He was not to blame for that omission. With the best dispositions he could not have prevented it. If God looks at the heart, and accepts "a willing mind" where there is nothing else to give, he could not have seen that servant striving with the best desires to perform his task without hands, and blamed him for the failure. The sin was but one. And if this illustrates the case of Adam's posterity, there is but one sin to be charged against them all, and that was committed in Eden. The idea of different degrees of criminality is

a dream; and men would have been as guilty, and might have received the same punishment, had they been born without reason. No personal act of theirs is sin, and it is no matter what they do. These consequences must follow, or there must be in the present structure of the soul a foundation of obligation altogether independent of Adam's innocence or fall. And where do the Scriptures teach us that men have not in themselves a complete foundation of obligation without resorting to Adam? What text from Genesis to Revelation hints at such a thing? The notion is altogether a human inference. So far from supporting such a thought, the Scriptures pointedly charge sinners with faculties which render them without excuse, alleging that they have eyes but see not, ears but hear not, hearts but do not understand, talents but will not employ them, a price in their hands with no heart to improve it; and constantly treat them as moral agents in their own persons, and as fully so as if there had been no federal head.

This independent basis of obligation is what we mean, and all that we mean, by *natural ability*. We certainly do not mean by this phrase a power to *originate the disposition*, or a self-determining power of the will, but merely a power to love and serve God *if the heart is well disposed*. This power lies in the physical faculties of a rational soul, connected with light. Without the faculties a man could not love God even were it possible for him to have a good heart; but with the faculties and sufficient light he could. The faculties with the light therefore constitute exactly *a power to love and serve God if the heart is well disposed*. And when we ascribe this power to sinners, we only assert that they have the physical faculties of a rational soul; and our single object is to make

out a complete basis of obligation. It is so self-evident that a man cannot be bound to perform natural impossibilities, or to do what with the best dispositions he has no power to accomplish, (as for instance to make a world,) that we find it necessary to prove the existence of such a power in order to fasten upon the conscience a sense of obligation. But call it by whatever name you please, the whole that we mean is, that the physical faculties, accompanied with light, are a complete and *bona fide* basis of obligation, independent of the temper of the heart, or the action of the Spirit, or original righteousness or sin, and none the less for man's dependance. This is all that any Calvinist ever meant or can mean by natural ability\*.

About the existence of the *thing* therefore, which we call natural ability, there can be no dispute. None can doubt that the worst of men are rational beings, or that their natural faculties constitute *a power to love and serve God if their hearts are well disposed*. And few will doubt that it is on this account that they are capable of receiving obligations from a divine command. If any controversy remains it must be about the *name*: and the question will be, whether *a power to love and serve God if the heart is well disposed*, can properly be denominated an *ability*. For as to the term *natural*, long and venerated custom, as well as the necessity of having a word of such an import, has fastened to it a meaning opposite to *moral*. And if the thing in question is properly called an ability, it certainly is not a moral one, (is not *deserving of praise or*

\* Even those Calvinists who deny the existence of *disposition*, and place every thing in *exercise*, and of course see no sense in the appended clause, "if the heart is well disposed," mean nothing more by ability than the physical powers, and have no other end in asserting it than to make out a proper basis of obligation.

*blame.*) and therefore must be distinguished by the opposite epithet. In vindication of the term *ability* I submit the following remarks.

(1.) When the word is thus applied it expresses what is generally meant by power. When in the common affairs of life we say that a man has power to do a thing, we seldom refer to his willingness, and never to an ability to originate his disposition, but to a capacity to do the thing if he is so inclined. When we excuse him for not making or succeeding in an attempt, on the ground that he was not able, we never allude to his disinclination, nor to his incapacity to control his disposition, but to the want of natural strength even with the best desires. And when we affirm that he is not bound to perform impossibilities, we always mean that he is not obliged to do more than he can with a well disposed heart.

(2.) As the natural faculties constitute that capacity in which the obligation to serve God is founded, they bear the same relation to the obligation that the *muscular strength* of a slave does to the obligation to lift a weight when bidden by his master. Without the strength no command could fasten the obligation upon him; with the strength he is reasonably bound. In like manner without the faculties no command could lay the obligation upon us; with the faculties the bond is reasonably imposed. That muscular strength of the slave you call *power*, because it constitutes an ability to lift the weight *if he is so inclined*, and because it forms the proper ground of obligation: and why not for the same reasons call the physical faculties in question by the same name?

(3.) As the denial of every species of power presents the monstrous idea of a command to do impossibilities, it conveys a false and injurious idea of God,

and serves to relieve the conscience of a sense of blame. On the other hand, when the alleged ability is qualified and limited by the term *natural*, and is so explained as to exclude a self-determining power, the phrase has no tendency to hide our dependance, while it has all the advantage of justifying God and fastening upon the conscience a sense of obligation and guilt.

(4.) No impediment lies in the way of a sinner's loving God but a depraved temper, for which he is wholly to blame. If you are disposed to call this depraved temper an inability, there is no inability in the way but a blamable one. Now only admit that an inability which is blamable is properly called moral, and that the opposite of *moral* is *natural*, (barely these two things,) and there is no avoiding the phrase in question. If there is no inability but what is blamable or moral, there is none which is blameless or natural. And if there is no natural *inability*, there must be natural *power*.

Thus it appears that there exist in men physical faculties which constitute a natural ability to serve God, and which, independently of their present temper, or their original righteousness, or any divine influence, and none the less for their dependance, form the proper basis of obligation. This principle, on which is bottomed the whole structure of a moral government, is confirmed by all its measures and decisions.

Having thus laid open the foundation of moral agency, I will now proceed to exhibit the attributes of moral agents in their order. To moral agents belong,

(1.) Capacity. What they are capable of doing *if well disposed*, they may be said to have a capacity for doing, or a natural ability to perform. In particular,

all who hear the Gospel possess that kind of power to believe which is the foundation of obligation. This capacity or basis of obligation is altogether separate from every thing belonging to the passive character of men, and must be contemplated without reference to the action of the Spirit, or to any decree respecting that action.

(2.) Instruction. This is necessary to agents on two accounts. First, because knowledge, as needful to guide the understanding, is intimately associated with the capacity. Secondly, to furnish motives to influence the heart and will. This introduces an important circumstance in relation to agents, viz. that in all instances they are governed by motives. Take away the connexion between motives and volition, and mind would be extinct. Not merely *rational* action, but all action of mind would cease. The maniac is still governed by motives, though distorted by a dis-tempered fancy; and even that semblance of mind which exists in a brute, is governed by motives.

In both of these points of view instruction is addressed to men only as agents. Only as agents can knowledge guide them, only as agents can motives prompt them. Upon this principle it is that instructions are poured upon them without apparent reference to their passive character, or to any action or decree of God concerning it.

(3.) Law. This is necessary for agents both to impose obligations and to present motives. The commands, promises, and threatenings which go in to constitute law, are addressed to men only as agents. The passive have nothing to do with these things.

(4.) Obligation. This rests upon capacity or natural ability, in other words, upon the physical faculties accompanied with light. It is not diminished by



the dependance of man, nor by a bad temper, nor by the absence of the Spirit; nor is it increased by original holiness, nor by a good temper, nor by the influence of the Spirit, further than the latter presents light to the understanding, or is a mercy to be acknowledged. In contemplating men therefore as creatures under obligations, we have nothing to do with their dependance, or their temper, or the action of the Spirit, (further than is above expressed,) or with any decree concerning that action.

(5.) Moral character, good or bad. This is formed by the fulfilment or violation of obligations, by an agency as distinctly their own and as entire as though they were independent. As moral character is calculated from their obligations, it is as independent of every thing passive as the obligations themselves.

(6.) Deserts,—merit or demerit, a title to reward or a liability to punishment. These all result from their character, as grounded on their obligations and conduct, and are as independent of every thing passive as the character and obligations themselves. None but agents bear any relation to these things.

(7.) Condemnation. This is founded on their deserts, and is equally independent of every thing passive. None but agents bear any relation to condemnation.

(8.) Pardon and justification. These are merely the changing of the relations of agents, the freeing of them from punishment, and the entitling of them to reward. These acts respect only agents; the passive have nothing to do with them.

(9.) Provision for pardon and justification. This of course was made for agents alone, and therefore without visible reference to men as merely passive, or to the regenerating influence of the Spirit, or to any

decree concerning that influence. As it was made for agents, for beings who were to *act* towards it, and on whose action as a *sine qua non* the effect was to depend, its avowed end must have been to open the way for their pardon and justification *if they would believe*.

(10.) Subjection to a final examination of character. Men will appear before the tribunal only as agents: not as those who have received or failed to receive divine impressions, but as those who have acted right or wrong.

(11.) Rewards and punishments. These will be administered to men in the same character in which they appear before the tribunal.

#### ANOTHER SERIES.

(1.) Possibility of action. This grows out of their capacity, which without this would be no capacity. What is a capacity for action where the action is a natural impossibility? As the capacity from which the possibility of action is calculated, is not affected by the presence or absence of the Spirit, nor by any decree concerning his influence, nor yet by the certainty that the capacity will not be employed, they who speak and act in reference to agents have a right, without regard to any of these things, to assume that their action is possible, and to speak and act as though it was likely to happen. Even the omniscient God, as we shall see in another place, shapes his measures as though their action was probable, even when he foresees that it will never occur. On the same principle we have a right, whenever an argument requires it, to make the supposition of the return of the very devils to holiness. As agents they have a capacity to return; and all the language of the universe respecting the possibility of action refers of course to agents.

It has been said that for the non-elect to accept the atonement is naturally impossible, because it was determined not to dispose them to accept. Now this is wholly confounding the two characters of men, and burying their capacity and agency under their dependance. They have as agents no capacity to act, because as passive they are not acted upon! What more could you say if they were blocks? The issue, I know, will be the same as though the capacity did not exist, but still the capacity makes all the difference between the government of God and fate. If you choose to say that it is *morally* impossible for them to "come" on account of their wicked hearts, to this, though it applies to them as agents, we do not object.

(2.) Susceptibility of offers, invitations, and exhortations. These are all addressed to agents alone, without respect to any thing but their capacity. They constantly allude to the possibility of their action and to their obligations, and are founded on the assumption that these do indeed exist.

(3.) Probation or trial. This is only an opportunity afforded agents to act out their character and show to the universe what they will do in the circumstances in which they are placed, irrespectively of any influence to be exerted on the same creatures as passive. I add to the definition, that it is an opportunity to act in reference to a reward or punishment proposed. The placing of a creature on probation is the treating of him as a mere agent, without respect to his purely passive character, and therefore without reference to any aids of the Spirit except by way of reward. The difficulty which has been found in defining a state of probation, disappears when the subject is viewed in this light; and the objections which have been raised against the term, may perhaps be aban-

doned. These have arisen from overlooking the character of men as agents, and the fact that probation is for them only as such, and from filling the eye with absolute decrees and promises which relate to them as purely passive, or passive in reference to the promised influence, and from making too much account of foreknowledge. Probation is a term found only in the dialect of a moral government, and is with entire consistency excluded by those who speak only in the language of the other department. But if it is proper and according to truth for God to treat men as agents even under the economy of grace, it is proper for him still to put them on probation. When the term is thus explained, what objection to its use? Is election brought against it? But God treats agents, as we have seen, just as though there was no election. Is foreknowledge brought against it? But God treats agents, it will appear hereafter, just as though there was no foreknowledge. Are the absolute promises of the covenant brought against it? These are made to men as the reward of agents, but are fulfilled upon them as passive receivers. Now it will appear hereafter that while to men as passive receivers of stipulated impressions, the promises of God are absolute, to the same men as mere agents, his treatment is still conditional. While in the former character men have full evidence that they shall never be left to apostacy, in the character of mere agents, whose persevering holiness is both a duty and essential to salvation, their final acceptance is still suspended on their enduring to the end. Probation therefore, as the treatment of mere agents irrespective of divine influence to incline them to act, may exist after the full assurance of hope, and for the same reasons, after abandonment to judicial blindness. What objection then to the word? It im-

ports nothing uncertain in the divine mind, nothing unstable in the covenant of redemption or of grace, but merely the treatment of men as rational and accountable beings. It imports, in short, exactly what is set forth in the parables of the talents and the pounds\*, and in many other parts of Scripture†.

To agents also belong all individual experiments upon the moral character. None but agents have a moral character to develope. Such experiments are made of course without reference to any thing passive in men, and just as though they were independent.

(4.) Opportunity or a fair chance to obtain good. A fair chance actively to obtain, is where a blessing is so placed within the reach of an agent that he may enjoy it by doing his duty. The expression always alludes to his capacity and the possibility of his action. Opportunity is predicable only of agents, as it would be preposterous to say that a man has an opportunity to receive a divine impression which is to be made without respect to any thing he has ever done or will do. The term always refers to some action which may follow; and the thing, limited as it is to

\* Mat. 25. 14—30. Luke 19. 12—26.

† "I know," says Dr. Watts, "it has been the opinion of some persons that this life is not properly called a state of probation, or trial of men for eternity; because the final event is not uncertain, since it is known to God already, and partly determined by him. And yet these very persons will say that a season of affliction or temptation is a season of *trial* to the people of God; for it is so called in Scripture: 2 Cor. 8. 2. Heb. 11. 36. 1 Pet. 4. 12. and 1 Pet. 1. 7. it is called the trial of our faith, &c. Now I would fain know whether the event of every season of trial, of every kind of men,—be not known to God. And in this sense it is not uncertain. And yet Scripture with much propriety calls one a season of trial: and I see no reason to exclude the other from the same name; especially since the sacred writers use it for wicked men also Rev. 3. 10. 'I will keep thee from the hour of temptation,' or trial, 'which shall come upon all the world, to try them which dwell upon the earth.'" Watts' Works, Vol. 6. p. 285. Note.

agents, is entire without the Spirit or any decree concerning his influence\*.

(5.) Privileges. The radical definition of a privilege is, a means of happiness which a man has *a capacity*, (or *is able if well disposed*,) to improve for his good. It is always reckoned originally from his natural ability. But in a moral government a shorter course is taken, and it is reckoned immediately from his *obligations*, which are founded on his ability. Whatever he *ought* to improve, is accounted a price put into his hands. The definition of a privilege then in a moral government is this, a means of holiness or happiness which one is under *obligations* to improve for his good. The word never denotes a final blessing, but a means which will lead to a final blessing if rightly improved.

Privileges are predicable only of agents. We do not speak of the privilege of being acted upon, the privilege of being the passive subject of impressions. It may be a *favour* to be impressed. It is a *mercy* to be elected and regenerated, but not a privilege, except so far as it is capable of being improved by an agent. It is indeed a privilege to be permitted to pray for the Spirit, but this is the privilege of an agent. It is a privilege that the mission of the Spirit has been procured for men, for it is a blessing which they may improve by faith and prayer for their good. But nothing is a privilege but what belongs to an agent.

A privilege then is complete without any influence of the Spirit inclining the man to improve it. It is complete provided *his obligation to improve it is complete*. If he possesses that ability to use a blessing

\* *Chance*, like *possibility*, is not equally confined to the active sense. Thus we say that a man stands a chance to draw a prize, or to be regenerated. But *opportunity* excludes the passive sense altogether.

for his good which is the *bona fide* basis of obligation, it may be charged against him as a privilege with as much reason as though the enjoyment of it depended on his stretching out the hand. A benefit so placed within his reach that he ought to make it his own, is his own. It is a blessing in his hands till he throws it away; and the traces of it will still be found upon him as an accountable being. Otherwise *the abuse of privileges* is a phrase altogether without a meaning, and is no more applicable to men than to statues. It is only because it is difficult to realize the completeness of the obligations of the non-elect to believe, that we doubt whether the atonement is a complete privilege to them. We pore so much on their inability, and lay the ground of their obligation so much in Eden, that it becomes difficult to realize that they are under the same present, personal obligations to believe that they are to do any outward act. If remission was offered them on the simple condition of their stretching out the hand, it would be easy to see that the privilege was complete, because it would be obvious that their obligation was perfect. Only let it be realized that without reference to Adam they are under as entire obligations to believe as they would be to extend an arm at the divine command, and every difficulty vanishes.

Or to take the subject in another view, what more could be done for mere agents? If a foundation is laid in the atonement for them to be pardoned if they will believe, and the offer is made to them, accompanied with those instructions and commands which lay them under complete obligations to obtain remission, and which leave them no excuse for perishing, what more could be done for mere agents? If more is done it must be by regenerating influence on the passive;

but no power could make that any part of a privilege. When God has made those arrangements which *complete the obligations* of men to be saved, he can lift his hand to heaven, and without a figure, but merely in the character in which he stands related to agents, truly and literally say, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?"

And yet it is asked, what possible privilege could the atonement be to men dead in trespasses and sins, and on whom God was determined not to exert a life-giving power? What could the atonement prove to them but an aggravation of their torment? And these questions have been urged with as much confidence as it would have been asked, what privilege can light be to a man born blind? This mighty difficulty which struggles in so many minds, has arisen from overlooking the capacity of sinners, and from placing them before the eye as mere passive recipients, in an affair which concerns them only as moral agents. And when moral agents are put out of view, and men are regarded merely as passive subjects of absolute, immutable, efficient decrees, why then indeed you cannot find upon the non-elect any privilege, or any chance or possibility of obtaining life. These things were never affirmed of men, except by a confusion of terms, in any other character than that of moral agents. But to deny that a means of happiness which men are bound to use for their good is a privilege, unless they are acted upon by the Spirit, is to change the whole language of the Bible for a dialect befitting a course of action upon passive machines. It is to break up all the language of the world. And it is manifestly untrue; for the worst of men are still moral agents, and under reasonable obligations to live by the atonement; and the language of the Bible on this subject expresses



realities, or guilt is a name and punishment oppression. It is so or the capacity of creatures, separate from the action of the Spirit, is no adequate basis to support any of the measures of a moral government. Why then issue laws where men are not to be constrained to obey? or invitations and promises where a sovereign power is not to give them effect? In short, upon this principle the measures of a moral government, separated from the action of the Spirit, are as unsuitable for men as for stocks.

But to put the fact that the atonement is a privilege to the wicked beyond all doubt, I can bring the whole weight of the divine integrity to support it. That God does account to men as privileges whatever they ought to improve for their happiness, and holds them as responsible for abused privileges as for a violated law, we have already seen. And now to come to the very thing itself, the atonement, yes the atonement, as being exactly what it is, an expiation for sin, is charged against the wicked as a privilege; and the charge will be acted upon in proceedings most demanding the precision of justice and truth. It is not true merely in the shape of a nice and studied phraseology, but is a ponderous reality which will be recognised in the most solemn transactions of the universe. The just God, as I shall show hereafter by a large and luminous array of texts, not only pronounces with all his veracity that the wicked possess the privilege, but will judge them at the last day for throwing it out of their hands, and will found on that fact, stable enough to support the infinite weight, the retribution of eternal fire. Could God himself give testimony more decided than this? If then the moral government of God is not a delusive show, and considering the undeniable sensibilities of creatures, a system of palpable op-

pression, it never ought to have been doubted that the atonement is a privilege even to those who reject it.

But how can it be a privilege to them if it did not render their pardon possible even on the supposition of their faith? The pearl, it is said, would have been paid for the 900 prisoners had it been foreseen that they would accept the offered release; but it was not paid for them, and a natural impossibility lies in the way of their coming out. According to this representation the atonement *is not* a privilege to those who perish, but only *would have been* had it been foreseen that they would believe. It ought not then to have been charged against them as such.

These are all the attributes which it seems necessary to name. But before the chapter closes I will make a few general remarks.

All the attributes which have been mentioned are inseparably united in every moral agent, and can no more be divided than the essential properties of matter. For instance, there is no such thing as being a sinner, and needing an atonement, without a capacity to accept it. For without a capacity to believe there would not be a capacity to obey; and without a capacity to obey there would not be a capacity to sin. You must not split up and divide the essential attributes of a moral agent. You must not contemplate him as a sinner, without contemplating him as capable of faith. To say that he needs an atonement, and yet labours under a natural incapacity to believe, is the same sundering of essential properties, and the same contradiction, as to say that a mass of matter has shape but not impenetrability, or that a ball is not round. Further, if a man has a capacity to believe, then his faith is naturally possible, then he is susceptible of a fair offer of life, of a fair opportunity or chance to obtain

it, of the complete privilege of an atonement, and of a course of probation or trial. Such a possibility of action and susceptibility of privileges are inseparable from capacity, are inseparable of course from a sinner. A man cannot be one to whom an atonement is adapted, that is, a sinner, but in the character in which he is capable and susceptible of all these things. And to call him a sinner, and yet deny the natural possibility of his believing, or his fair chance to live by the atonement, or the completeness of his privilege, (allowing the Gospel to be in his hands,) is the same contradiction as is noticed above. Further, if the atonement was made for sinning agents, it was made for them as creatures who were to *act* towards it, who were to accept or reject it; otherwise the essential attributes of agents are divided. Now if the enjoyment of it depends on their accepting it, in other words, if they cannot enjoy it without accepting it, then it was made with a distinct understanding that it was not to be enjoyed by them without their fulfilling that condition. In this sense the provision was made for them conditionally. It must have been so made if made for sinning agents, or the essential attributes of agents are divided. No matter what influence on the same creatures as passive was to secure their faith; yet *the provision for agents*, which could not be enjoyed without their act in believing, was certainly conditional as to its application. Further, if the atonement so far affects any agent that he is susceptible of the offer of its benefits, it must affect all his other relations which are capable of being affected by such a measure; it must give him a fair opportunity or chance to live by it, must put him completely upon probation, and be to him a perfect privilege; otherwise the essential attributes of an agent are divided. If the

atonement so affected the relations of Simon Magus that he could receive the offer of pardon by it, then it gave him a fair chance for pardon, put him fully upon probation, and was to him the complete privilege of an atonement.

Keeping in mind that the atonement was made for none but moral agents, we can now see what kind of effects we must look for on men in deciding for how many it was made. We must search only for those effects which would result to agents, and not for any which belong to mere receivers of sanctifying impressions. These two characters of man are as distinct as body and soul. Now in examining whether a provision for the soul is complete, you have not to ask whether it involves a provision for the body. For the same reason, in deciding whether the atonement was a complete provision for Simon Magus as a moral agent, you have nothing to do with the question whether it stood connected with a design to regenerate him. If you find on him the offer of pardon by it, and a capacity to accept the offer if well disposed, or a natural possibility of believing, then you find on him a fair chance to live by it, and the complete privilege of an atonement, and find him fully placed by it in a state of probation. And then you find upon him all the effects which could result from the atonement to a mere moral agent. And then you may pronounce unhesitatingly that it was fully made for him as such.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### A MORAL GOVERNMENT.

BEFORE I proceed to other principles observed in the treatment of agents, I will stop here and exhibit

the outlines of a moral government. As this is nothing more than the treatment of moral agents, and a treatment according to truth, or according to the powers and attributes which they possess, the discussion will form a counterpart to the last chapter, and will go to confirm the principles there laid down. On this account I introduce it here. I have other reasons for presenting the subject. Were the mind familiarized to the principles and operations of a moral government, it could more easily contemplate men in the distinct character of moral agents, and see some meaning in a provision for them as such. It seems to have been thought that such a provision, when separated from regenerating power, is worthy of no account; in other words, that a mere measure of moral government is of no importance to men when separated from the acts of the Sovereign Efficient Cause. This would be true if men were stocks, but cannot be true if there is in them a foundation for treating them as rational and accountable beings. That treatment by itself forms an immensely important part of the divine administration; and it may serve to correct the mistake to see how much of the glory of God, even under the dispensation of grace, this department really comprehends.

In a limited sense a moral government is the mere administration of law; but in a more general and perfect sense it includes the whole treatment which God renders to moral agents. This treatment certainly constitutes a distinct and very important department of divine operations, and ought as a whole to be covered by a general name. And what name more proper than moral government, especially as the thing accords with the variety of particulars comprehended under the name of government in human affairs? The

government of Great Britain consists not merely in making and executing laws, but in all those operations in which the rulers as such come into contact with the subjects as such. If they establish churches for public worship, and sunday-schools for instruction, and saving banks as a motive to diligence and economy, and hospitals as a merciful provision; if they make experiments upon the temper of their subjects, or enter into contract with individuals; if they grant audiences, and receive petitions, and pardon criminals, and grant pensions and privileges; these are all the operations of the government of Great Britain. In like manner I comprehend in a moral government, not only the dispensation of law, but all the institutions of religion, all the instructions furnished, all the motives presented, all provisions made for moral agents, all experiments upon the human character, all covenants entered into, all audiences granted, all answers to prayer, all acts of pardon and justification, all privileges afforded, and whatever else belongs to creatures as capable of action and choice, as governable by motives, as susceptible of instruction and obligations, of praise and blame, of opportunities and privileges, or in a word, as subjects of moral discipline.

The whole fabric rests upon the principle that all this treatment is suited to rational creatures even without the Spirit, in other words, that they are complete moral agents without supernatural influence. The Moral Governour grounds his claims, not on their temper, nor on their original righteousness, nor on any spiritual aids afforded, but on their physical faculties accompanied with light, or their natural ability. By comparing their obligations with their conduct, and without reference to any thing else, he judges of their character and deserts. From their obligations he

estimates their privileges, reckoning to them as such whatever they ought to improve for their good. Where a blessing is so placed within their reach that they can enjoy it by doing their duty, he charges against them an opportunity or fair chance to obtain it. He makes experiments upon their temper just as though they were independent. In all his measures he assumes from their capacity that their holy action is possible. He presents instructions and motives fitted to influence rational beings as though he expected the effect from their own independent powers. He commands, invites, rewards, and punishes, as though there was no Spirit. With the exceptions mentioned in a former chapter, he never once alludes to the passive character of men throughout the whole administration of a moral government, but holds his way through the world with an eye apparently filled with agents alone. He sets before him a race of distinct and complete agents, and proceeds like an earthly prince who has no control over the minds of his subjects but by motives. This must be apparent to any one who opens his Bible, and has already been proved by quotations sufficiently numerous. In short a moral government is a world by itself, because moral agents, so to speak, are complete entities in themselves.

These principles of a moral government, which are every where conspicuous on the sacred page, are what Arminians have discovered, and set themselves to defend, in opposition to doctrines which they thought irreconcilable with these. As advocates for the fundamental laws of a moral government, they deserve real praise : but their error has lain in not perceiving that all the attributes of moral agency are perfectly consistent with absolute dependance. If ever this unhappy division in the Church is healed, it must be

on the ground here taken, by showing that respectable class of men that all the prerogatives of a moral government can be maintained in perfect consistency with absolute election and special grace.

Considered in relation to its dominion over the mind, a moral government may be called a government of *motives*; for these are the instruments by which it works. It is a course of acting, not upon the disposition by insensible influence, but upon the reason and conscience of a rational being by manifest motives. The only exception is where sanctifying power is exerted by way of reward, or out of gracious respect to something which an agent has done. But all *sovereign* influences of the sanctifying Spirit, as well as all decrees concerning them, belong to the other department\*.

\* In other respects sovereignty is not excluded from a moral government. It is largely exercised in the rewards and punishments of the present life, in respect of time, manner, and degree. It is exercised in the changes of dispensations, in the enactment of positive statutes, in the different degrees of light afforded to different nations and ages, in the *enlightening* influences of the Spirit on the unregenerate, (which are as really a part of the treatment of agents as any other instruction,) and in many other respects. The atonement itself was sovereignly appointed. Nothing limits sovereignty but law and covenant. If any thing more is included in a moral government than what is according to law or covenant, it must be sovereignly directed.

The whole process of sanctification after the regenerating act, seems to fall within this department: for though the same sovereignty attends it as to time, manner, and degree, that marks the other rewards of the present life, it is still of the nature of a reward, and was in general promised as such to the first act of faith. If however any part of it can be considered so purely sovereign as not to fall under the character of a reward, that part, I own, must be excluded from a moral government; for nothing entitles a motion of the Spirit to be brought into this department but its being either a reward or a mere act of illumination.

I have not dared with certainty to place any thing in the other department but election and regeneration. The formation of the natural disposition belongs to the *Creator*: the changes made in it by natural



Besides the purely sovereign impressions on the mind, (not meaning however those which barely illumine, nor those which are made by motives,) I know of nothing done in time among all the works and ways of God which ought to be excluded from a moral government, but the mere operations of the Creator and Preserver; nor these so far as they are a reward or punishment to any, or are primarily intended to instruct or furnish motives\*.

causes, except so far as they are a reward or punishment, seem to stand among the operations of the *Preserver*. If the convicting influences of the Spirit barely convey *light* to the mind, they are ascribable to the Moral Governour; for light is only for agents. The impressions, otherwise than sanctifying, which are made to incline men to particular actions, appear to be produced by *motives* addressed to an existing temper, and so far belong to the Moral Governour. If besides all these, there are direct impressions, purely sovereign, before or after regeneration, sanctifying or otherwise, they must be placed in the department of the Sovereign Efficient Cause.

\* Creatures must exist before they can be governed, and they must be sustained in existence in order to continue subjects of moral discipline. Their mere creation and support therefore do not belong to a moral government, except so far as these are a reward or punishment to some. The creation of Isaac and Samuel, though to themselves no part of a moral government, was a gracious recompense to their parents. Men may be sustained in life as a reward or punishment to themselves, (Exod. 20. 12. Rom. 9. 22.) or as a punishment or reward to others, or in answer to their prayers: (Judg. 2. 3. Mat. 9. 18, 25.) and they may be cut off as a punishment to themselves or others. (2 Sam. 12. 14. Ps. 55. 23.)

How far the whole visible universe and the operations of nature around us, *viewed in relation to creatures already existing*, stand connected with a moral government, is a more difficult question. So far as any of these things are a reward or punishment, or are primarily intended to instruct or furnish motives, they belong to this department. Thus fruitful seasons are either a reward, (Deut. 28. 12.) or a source of instruction and motives. (Acts 14. 17.) Thus the briars and thorns are a punishment, (Gen. 3. 18.) and the tokens of God in heaven and earth are a warning. (Ps. 65. 8.) But how far do the works of nature belong to a moral government *as mere sources of instruction and motives*? We must not include every thing in this department which was intended to instruct or move creatures to action, for then we must ex-

It is the Moral Governour alone who is approached by creatures ; and it is in this character that God is respected in almost all those efforts of creature agency which we call religion and virtue. It is almost solely in this character that he is the object of *love*, because it is almost exclusively in this that his moral perfections appear. *Faith* perhaps is still more limited. Besides election, and the first and second creation, and preservation, it has no other object than the Moral Governour with his provisions, acts, and declarations. That faith without which it is impossible to please God, is a belief “ that he is, and that he is a *Rewarder* of them that diligently seek him\*.” Instead of busy-ing itself with the question whether I am elected, its proper office is to believe that God will be to me “ a *Rewarder*” if I diligently seek him. All the exercises of *repentance* and *trust*, and most of those of *gratitude* and *submission*, respect God in the same character:

clude nothing. All that God has ever done was intended to enlighten creatures and to subserve a government by motives. But instructions and motives subservient to the government of a family, may be drawn from facts which constitute no part of family government. If a measure has no other end than to instruct or move, like some things contained in the Bible ; or in case it has another end, if that end applies exclusively to agents, (like the divine law, which, while it teaches and offers inducements, imposes obligations ;) then it properly belongs to a moral government. But if its primary end does not respect agents distinctively, but the whole man, (like the creation of him and a world for him to dwell in,) or other animals, or the general constitution of the universe, then, though like all other things it was intended to furnish instructions and motives, it cannot fall within this department. To allude again to domestic government, it is one thing to build a house for the family to dwell in and receive the proper discipline, and another to construct a house in miniature for the purpose of teaching them some mechanical principles. Now we dare not conclude that any of the works of nature are held up as a splendid show, a dead picture to exhibit the divine perfections, but rather that they display the wisdom and goodness of God *by* answering some important end. This end is to decide where they are to fall in the division of departments.

\* Heb. 11. 6.

*Obedience* has no other object, for none but the Moral Governour commands. With him our business lies through the whole course of our active virtue. In every part we proceed as though nothing was settled from eternity, and except a submission to the eternal purpose of God, set ourselves to raise others to happiness as though we never heard of an absolute decree. We transact with the Moral Governour in almost all our *worship*. *Prayer* has no other object. Its concern lies not with election, but with the present will of him who "is a *Rewarder* of them that diligently seek him." Its sole encouragement is drawn from the promise of the Moral Governour; and a long pondering on election, by turning the eye from him, is apt to damp the spirit and discourage the effort. When we pray for the regeneration of others, we do not ask the Elector to change his eternal decrees: we address ourselves to the Moral Governour alone, and hope to be rewarded by an act which to them will not be a recompense.

A moral government wields all the motives in the universe. It comprehends the entire system of instruction intended for creatures. The Bible lies wholly within its bounds. It comprehends the public dispensation both of law and Gospel, with the whole compages of precepts, invitations, promises and threatenings. It comprehends the atonement, and all the covenants made with men, and all the institutions of religion, with the whole train of means and privileges. It comprehends the whole doctrine and process of justification, with all spiritual influences which either enlighten or reward: It comprehends a throne of grace, with all the answers to prayer. It comprehends a day of probation, with all the experiments made upon the human character. It comprehends the entire system of grace, with the bare exception of election and

regeneration. It comprehends all the rewards and punishments of the present life. It comprehends the day of judgment, and all the retributions of eternity. It comprehends all the sensible communion between the Infinite and finite minds; all the perceptible intercourse between God and his rational offspring; all the treatment of intelligent creatures viewed otherwise than as passive receivers of sovereign impressions. In short it is the public government of God over the universe. And I may add, it forms the subject matter of nine-tenths, perhaps of ninety-nine-hundredths of the Bible. Almost all the language of the world refers to agents and belongs to the dialect of a moral government. Surely this is not a part of the divine operations to be buried up under the tapestry of secret decrees. Surely the language which befits this great system of administration, and which expresses its vital principles, is not to be frittered away into figures of speech, into idioms after the manner of men, or laid aside for a dialect supposed to be better adapted to the secret counsels of the Incomprehensible Mind.



## CHAPTER IX.

### MORAL AGENTS TREATED AS IF THERE WAS NO FOREKNOWLEDGE.

THE only part of a moral government which discovers prescience, is prophecy. All the other parts are framed together with the same consistency of relation as if there was no foreknowledge. Break up this principle, and plant the eye of prescience visibly in every part of a moral government, and you turn the

whole into confusion: the entreaties of God to the non-elect would appear like mockery, and many of his declarations false. God proceeds in his treatment of moral agents as though it was perfectly uncertain how they will act till they are tried. The reason is; that the capacity and obligations on which the treatment is founded, are in no degree affected by foreknowledge. This neither weakens an obligation, nor helps to create one which would not otherwise exist. It does not weaken an obligation, and therefore does not prevent the issuing of commands and invitations; for these only express the obligations of men with precision, without any thing prophetic as to their conduct or destiny. Nor yet does it help to create an obligation which would not otherwise exist. To this maxim I wish to draw particular attention. Were there no foreknowledge, neither the nature of things nor any command could impose on men an obligation to accept a privilege which in relation to them had no existence, (for that would be a natural impossibility,) nor, unless deceived, to believe the privilege to be for them in such a sense that they could enjoy it by doing their duty; for that would be an obligation to believe a lie. This would be common sense if there was no foreknowledge. Now what I assert is, that the foreknowledge of God that they would not accept the privilege if provided for them, did not render it proper for him, without providing it, to command them to receive it and to believe that it was provided for them. They could not be under obligation, nor could any command lay them under obligation, to accept a privilege which in relation to them had no existence, nor, unless deceived, to believe a lie. The inconsistency of attempting to impose such an obligation, will appear by making the supposition, (and of moral agents we have a right to make the supposition,) that

they should exert or try to exert their agency in this way. The moment they should make the attempt, they would find one part a natural impossibility, and in performing the other, unless deceived, they would actually do wrong. No power therefore could lay upon them an obligation to accept a privilege which, from the foreknowledge that they would reject it, had not been so provided for them that they could enjoy it by doing their duty. Accordingly the Moral Governour no more attempts to impose the obligation without providing the privilege, than would any fair and honourable man. He does not command impossibilities, secure in the foreknowledge that creatures will not obey, and then punish them for ever for not doing what no power with the best dispositions could have done. He does not thus take advantage of his superior knowledge to oppress. He does not thus practise upon the ignorance of creatures, sure at last to detect the imposition.

By this principle let us test the correctness of a fashionable similitude. A pearl, sufficient in value to redeem a thousand prisoners, is offered and accepted for a hundred. It being foreseen that none but the hundred will accept the offer of release, advantage is taken of the sufficiency of the price to tender liberty to the thousand and to command them to come out. This is the very simile chosen by some on the other side to exhibit the strength of their cause. I have nothing to do here with the propriety of the *offer*, my business is solely with the justice of the *command*. According to this representation, an attempt is made to fasten upon nine hundred prisoners for whom no ransom has been paid, an obligation to come out on the ground of a ransom really offered for others, but only in appear-

ance for them\*. Now in this case it is not true that they could come out if they would obey the command. The reverse is true. If they should obey they would be stopped. And when they are told that they can come out if they will obey, a downright falsehood is imposed upon them, under security that they will not detect the imposition by making the attempt. And on this falsehood an essay is made to found an obligation,—an obligation to do a natural impossibility,—which but for the deception practised upon them they would see to be as impracticable as to make a world. The sufficiency of the price in this case is only a cover to conceal the imposture, and cannot be a ground of obligation. It cannot even seem to them to bear the most distant relation to an obligation, but by a palpable delusion. This then cannot be a just representation of that provision on which God rests the general obligation of men to accept the atonement. It must be true, that, just as the provision now is, and not as it would have been had their faith been foreseen, they can be pardoned in consistency with the honour of the law if they will believe; a supposition which we have none the less right to make of agents on account of the foreknowledge that they would not believe.

Now if the atonement is for all in such a sense that, just as it now is, they may be pardoned by it if they will believe, it is an atonement for all in the highest sense in which it can be for moral agents.

\* The confusion here arises from not distinguishing between the higher ransom and the atonement. Because the former was not paid for all, (that is, Christ did not so purchase all by his merit that he could claim them as his *reward*,) *atonement* was not made for all.

## CHAPTER X.

## MORAL AGENTS TREATED CONDITIONALLY.

THE evidence of this fact is found in the conditions on which salvation is offered on every page of the Bible, and in all the promises and threatenings both of law and Gospel. Men have started at the idea of conditions under a dispensation of grace, as partaking too much of a legal character: but when the nature of a condition in a moral government is explained, it will be found to be an essential ingredient in all that treatment of moral agents which is accompanied with authority. Where the holy agency of creatures is a necessary antecedent to the enjoyment of any good, the Moral Governour states the fact. The statement of that fact, accompanied with the authority with which he cannot but require the holy action, is all that is meant by a condition in a moral government. A condition is only that fact stated with authority. You cannot therefore separate conditions from the authoritative treatment of agents, so long as their holiness is essential to their happiness, and so long as God in any way pronounces that fact. It is only because men are contemplated purely as passive that conditions are excluded; and in that view they are consistently excluded, for they belong only to the treatment of moral agents. Nor are conditions inconsistent with free grace, unless the requirement of holiness as essential to happiness is inconsistent with free grace. Nor yet do conditions imply any thing incompatible with absolute promises. They are used, we shall see, in the treatment of believers who are already embraced by an absolute covenant, and even after they have attain-



ed to the full assurance of hope, nay after they have reached their eternal home.

In those measures of a moral government which are accompanied with no authority, conditions of course do not appear; for instance, in those sovereign gifts which are suited to a state of probation. In these God appears not the Lawgiver, but the merciful and long suffering Saviour, who is willing to afford men the best opportunity to prepare for their last account, to grant them a state of tranquillity suited to reflection, and to encourage their faith with abundant tokens of his mercy.

The only case connected with authority in which consequences are not suspended on conditions, is where absolute good is secured as a reward for conditions already fulfilled. Thus all the absolute promises and irrevocable grants made to the Church and its individual members, in relation to themselves or their seed, are gracious rewards for acts already done, or a character already formed.

But the authoritative treatment of *pure agents*, (or agents considered without reference to the Spirit,) is never absolute. These irrevocable grants respect men in the double character of agents and passive receivers of sanctifying impressions. To the agents they are a reward, but they are to be executed by sanctifying impressions on the passive: and the very promise implies a security of spiritual aid, for no such grants are made to men viewed as apostates. In like manner the absolute promises respecting the seed imply that they shall be sanctified. But whatever promises are made to men, or to their parents concerning them, with a special reference to their passive character, yet when these same persons come to be directly dealt with as pure agents, the issue is still suspended on their own

conduct. Thus the promises to Abraham that his seed should possess the land of Canaan and all the blessings of the Church, were absolute\* ; and yet the whole issue was suspended on their own conduct†. And the way in which these two things are reconciled is, their holy character was secured‡. Thus also the promise to David that his seed should possess the throne of Israel, was absolute§ ; and yet the privilege was suspended on their obedience||. In like manner the promises to Christ respecting the elect were absolute, as are also the promises to believers as recipients of the Spirit ; and yet when the elect and even believers come to be treated as pure agents, the issue is still suspended on their own conduct. And this is sometimes done by lips which at the same moment are speaking of the covenant of grace, and the general consequences of Christ's death, and its express acceptance for our justification. Thus a moral government, in dealing with pure agents, is so regardless of the decrees, and promises, and influences which respect the passive, that it goes around them, and wanders over them, without appearing to see them. Take the following specimens. "It was not written for his sake alone that" faith "was imputed to him" for righteousness ; "but for us also, [certainly including millions of the elect and even of

\* Gen. 12. 7. & 13. 14—17. & 17. 7, 8. & 28. 4, 13—15. & 48. 4. & 50. 24. Exod. 2. 24. & 6. 3—8. & 12. 25. Deut. 4. 37. & 10. 15. & 12. 20. & 26. 18, 19. Josh. 21. 43—45. & 22. 4. & 23. 5, 10. Ps. 105. 6—45. —† Exod. 23. 20, 22. Lev. 20. 22. & 26. 41, 42. Num. 14. 30, 34. Deut. 1. 8. & 4. 1, 25—31, 40. & 5. 16, 33. & 6. 3, 15, 18. & 7. 7—15. & 8. 1. & 11. 9, 21. and 12. 28. and 13. 17. and 19. 8, 9. and 28. 11. and 30. 16, 20. and 32. 47. 2 Chron. 33. 8. Jer. 11. 4, 5. and 35. 15. Zech. 11. 10.—‡ Gen. 18. 18, 19.—§ 2 Sam. 7. 12—16. 2 Chron. 13. 5. Ps. 89. 3, 4, 28—37.—|| 1 Kin. 2. 3, 4. and 3. 14. and 8. 25, 26. and 9. 1—9. 1 Chron. 22. 9—13. and 28. 7. 2 Chron. 7. 17—22. Ps. 132. 12. Jer. 17. 25.

believers,] to whom it shall be imputed IF we believe in him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” “In whom we have redemption through his blood.—And he is the Head of the body, the Church.—For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and, (having made peace through the blood of his cross,) by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouable in his sight, IF YE CONTINUE in the faith.” “IF that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall CONTINUE in the Son and in the Father.” “It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, —if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.—But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love.—Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.—For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.—If any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul\*.”

Even after believers are assured that their present character is holy, and that as recipients they shall continue to receive effectual aid, as agents they are

\* Rom. 4. 23—25. Col. 1. 14—23. Heb. 6. 4—11. and 10. 23—39. 1 John 2. 24.

still treated conditionally. Paul himself, with all his confidence, was still taught to suspend his salvation on his own persevering holiness. "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be a cast-away\*." The principle of employing threats to stimulate agents to the attainment of a good already pronounced certain, is exemplified in an occurrence which took place in this same apostle's voyage to Rome. He had declared by revelation that there should "be no loss of any man's life." And yet when the sailors were about clandestinely to leave the ship, he disclosed their purpose and affirmed, "Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved†."

Though a distinct annunciation of threats is fitted only to a state of probation, yet an authoritative connecting of holiness and happiness must remain while creatures continue under government. Even the penalty of the law must continue to furnish motives. Christ did not die to support a penalty of transient importance, and which after a few years should cease to have any influence upon agents. He did not die to separate the penalty from the law after probation should end, and thus annihilate the vigour of a moral government to eternity. Paul is still under the empire of law, and a law of course which is supported by a penalty; a penalty which instead of being annihilated at Calvary, continually draws new strength from the tragedy there displayed. At the same time that as a recipient he hears the covenant say that his sanctification shall be perpetuated, as an agent he hears the law say, not only that he shall die for past transgressions, but that he shall die for every one which he may hereafter

\* 1-Cor. 9. 27.—† Acts 27. 22—31.

commit. And though he is not under law as a covenant of works, and would be pardoned by grace, (as after he was united to Christ on earth,) even should he commit many sins, yet the mediation of Christ never provided that a slave of sin should be taken out of the hands of law. Should Paul apostatize to complete and continued rebellion, (which as an agent he is capable of doing,) the law would still take its course upon him. And if his continued holiness is thus necessary to his continued happiness, and that fact is in any way pronounced by the same authority that requires his holiness, (and without that fact lurking more or less visibly behind the command there is no authority,) then he hears the divine authority, (the same that once spoke in the Gospel,) say, that if he returns to confirmed rebellion he shall be delivered over to the law, and be punished moreover as a Gospel despiser. But how, you ask, can such a motive influence Paul when he knows that he shall be kept from falling? A man is held from throwing himself from the top of a building, and knows he shall be held. He knows also that if he should throw himself down he would be dashed in pieces. The knowledge of the latter fact prevents him from being willing to take the leap. While Paul is held from falling by an influence on him as passive, and knows that he shall be held, he needs motives as an agent to make him willing to stand. He could not be willing without motives, whatever divine power should be exerted upon him. Why then, you ask, is not Paul still on probation, as much at least as after he had attained to the full assurance of hope on earth? Because he is openly confirmed in holiness and happiness by way of reward. When the *agent* is thus publicly rewarded by confirmation, the agent is no longer on probation. An assured *hope* of that reward was

not the *possession*. This it is, and not the absence of conditions, which distinguishes heaven from a state of probation\*.

This mode of treating pure agents, notwithstanding the absolute promises which respect the same creatures in the double character of agents and recipients, rests on the three following reasons.

(1.) There is nothing in their dependance nor in the promised influence to prevent them from being, in respect to the very thing to which they are to be inclined, complete agents, with all the obligations of agents, and with an unbroken relation to the authority and claims of the Moral Governour. Of course it is proper for him to treat them as agents, with no more reference to the promised influence than he has to election in his commands to the wicked; and to require their duty in the tone of a lawgiver, who as such must always appear with a penalty in his hand.

(2.) There is nothing in the promised influence to weaken the indissoluble connexion between their holy action and the salvation contemplated. The promise did not engage to dispense with that action, but to secure it. The connexion between the action and the salvation is as close as though the stipulation had not been made, and may be pointed out and insisted on without contradicting the promise. Two things are true of them: as passive they will receive effectual

\* This shows that the threats held out in the Bible against apostacy, are no evidence against the perseverance of the saints. They are rather the means by which the perseverance of holy agents is secured. It shows also that the conditional treatment of believers is not inconsistent with the completeness of their justification. The irrevocable title to life made over in their justification, comprehended, and secured to them as recipients, their continued sanctification; but still as pure agents they might continue to be treated conditionally. I will add, that the new relation is not the less real or complete for not being certainly known to the subject.

aid; as agents they must continue in holiness or die. The latter proposition authoritatively pronounced, amounts to all that is contained in a divine threat. The way then is open, as though the promise did not exist, for the Moral Governour to display the infrangible connexion between their holiness and happiness with all the authority and claim attached to his office.

(3.) While as recipients they stand related to an absolute promise, as agents they must still be carried along by motives. Moral agents cannot act without motives whatever exertion of sanctifying power is made. This exercise of authority furnishes the very motives required. While probation lasts, a form of more distinct menace is used, as better calculated to influence the Church at large. It proclaims the necessity of persevering holiness in tones of awful majesty and terrour; and these, coming to the ears of multitudes who are still in doubt about their salvation, are calculated to stimulate them to exertion as the only means of making their calling and election sure. Nor is this form lost upon those who at present possess the full assurance of hope, for it stands ready to rouse them to action whenever their graces languish and their hopes of course decline.

Thus it appears that neither the covenant with Christ nor the absolute promises to believers prevent their salvation from still being suspended on their own conduct; that neither election nor oaths break up that conditionality which pervades every part of the treatment of pure agents. It ought not therefore to seem strange if notwithstanding all the absolute decrees and covenants connected with the work of redemption, that provision for agents which we call the atonement should be found to be conditional. It *must* fall under this fundamental law of a moral government.

For in the first place, the holy action of men towards it was necessary to their enjoyment of its benefit. They could not be pardoned by it till as agents they had believed. In the second place, from the moment it met the eyes of men, (and the whole provision was made in public,) it was encircled on all sides with authority, peremptorily demanding their faith. Here then are the two circumstances which call forth a condition in all other cases. It was a matter *connected with authority*, and the enjoyment of it *did depend on the very faith which was demanded*. Only one thing more was necessary. Did God *state the latter fact*? If he did, you have all that goes into the definition of a condition in a moral government. Then in producing the atonement before the world, he authoritatively pronounced that the enjoyment of it depended on the faith of men. And there is the condition on the very face of the *express purpose*.

If the atonement was offered for agents, (and none else needed expiation or satisfaction, and none else could receive pardon,) then it was a provision to benefit them *upon their acting the part of agents towards it*, or else the essential attributes of agents are divided. If the effect was not suspended on that effort of their agency, it was not made for agents, (for creatures capable of acting, and on whose action their happiness depends,) but for the purely passive, for men in a character in which they had not sinned.

After the atonement was accepted, God was bound either to pardon believers as believers, or the elect as elect. And if you can tell which, you can tell for which description it was accepted, and of course for which it was offered. If God did not engage to pardon any by the atonement till as agents they had believed, then it was never offered or accepted with any



intention that it should benefit men as mere elect, but only those who should believe. That act is as much their own, and as essential to the benefit, and as authoritatively pronounced to be so, as though there was no Spirit. And this is the full definition of a condition.

In settling the extent of the atonement in this light, the only question is, was the benefit suspended on the faith of a particular number of men, or was it plainly declared that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish"? The question is answered.

When our brethren oppose the idea of conditions, they have a very different matter in their eye. Their question is about the secret purpose of the divine mind, and how many, as the reward of his merit, Christ obtained a right to rescue from sin and death by an operation on them as passive. And therefore they ask, not about the *atonement*, but about the end of his *death* as a whole. And when they have limited the question to the secret purpose of the Divine Persons, they find the omniscience of God arrayed against conditions. "To die conditionally for a person, is a strange mode of speaking, especially as it relates to One who is omniscient." If *our* question had been before the writer, he would not have employed such an argument as this. For who will say that conditions are excluded from a government over *moral agents*, though exercised by an omniscient God? The meaning of the writer comes out more fully. "It will be pretended that Christ died for all, but suspended the benefit of his death upon a condition. Be it so. Then when Christ died he knew whether that condition would ever take place, or rather he knew that it never would in those to whom he had determined not to give faith. And to say that a person does a thing to take

effect on a certain condition which he is sure will never occur, is the same as to say that he does a thing without any view to that effect." Plainly fastening the attention to the secret purpose of Christ. But who, except an Arminian, ever thought that the secret purpose of Christ about the application of his death by regeneration, was conditional? The limitation of the writer's meaning to the secret purpose is still more obvious. "If he died for them only on some condition, then if that condition never takes place he did not die for them." That is, if he never imparts faith to them as recipients, he did not die with any intention to make them partakers of his atonement *by such an operation*. And no one says he did. We have nothing to do with the secret purpose of Christ about an operation on passive recipients. We are only inquiring about a provision for moral agents, and whether in the declared purpose for which it was publicly brought forward, their faith was not demanded as a necessary antecedent to its application, and whether it was not pronounced applicable to all indiscriminately who would believe.

But no account is made of all this through the constant confounding of expiation with the claim of merit. "They, [the Scriptures,] require indeed faith as an instrument of receiving the benefits of Christ's death: but that very faith is the effect of Christ's *meritorious* death and prevalent intercession, and is of course bestowed on all those for whom he shed his precious blood." "The death of Christ, *considered in unison with his obedience*, is the meritorious cause of all spiritual blessings. It is therefore the cause of the gift of faith. Those therefore for whom Christ has died, will sooner or later, in consequence of that offering, be made partakers of faith, with which all spiritual bles-

sings are connected." All this is true of the higher ransom, or the united influence of expiation and merit : but the atonement had no concern with securing the gift of faith.

And yet because the Scriptures speak of the higher ransom as absolute, it is insisted that the atonement itself was not conditional. "It is nowhere said [in the Bible] that Christ died to render it possible for God to receive sinners on such terms as he might choose to appoint." Where then is that passage found which says, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish"?

The same confusion between the higher and lower ransom leads to such as this: "It is an unworthy thought of the Almighty Saviour that he should permit Satan to triumph over millions of those whom he purchased with his own blood." If this is said of the higher ransom, I agree ; but if it is said of the lower ransom or atonement, the apostle Peter thought not so ; for he expressly tells us of those "who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that **BOUGHT** *them*, and bring upon themselves swift destruction\*."

It is only of the higher ransom that the following assertion is true. "If—Christ has laid down his life and shed his blood for the redemption of any of our race, and if God as the universal Governour has accepted the ransom in their behalf, it cannot be otherwise but that it will have the effect of obtaining, sooner or later, their actual redemption." This is true of that ransom whose absolute and unailing influence lies in the claim of merit to a reward. And yet the same affirmation is undistinguishingly extended to the

\* 2 Pet. 2. 1.

expiation and satisfaction. "If they, [our sins,] are really *expiated*, they never can rise in judgment against us." "It will be said that this *satisfaction* screens from punishment those only to whom it is applied. But I answer, if really made for any individuals, it will be applied to their benefit." This is a specimen of the whole reasoning. Because merit secured to Christ the regeneration and pardon of the elect as his reward, expiation and satisfaction must be equally absolute. But where is the proof of this? It is easy to construct popular arguments founded on inapplicable analogies; but we want some tangible proof that for a certain number of moral agents expiation and satisfaction were made absolutely, that is, *without respect to their character*; and we must have proof as strong as the oath of God, before we can set aside a thousand texts to the contrary.

But it is said that the atonement was offered for the elect absolutely, yet not carrying with it this implication, *be their character what it may*, because the character itself was secured. But what secured it? Not the atonement. That provision for moral agents was a world by itself, and in its arrangements and form took no notice of such an impression to be made upon passive subjects.

In the same spirit it is alleged that the atonement was made absolutely for the elect *viewed as believers*. In answer to the objection, "If Christ died not for me I cannot be saved because there is no atonement for me," it is said, "The cause of your perishing is your own unbelief: *for if you had been viewed as a believer when the atonement was made, you would have been included.*" What is the meaning of this? Was faith foreseen as anterior in the order of nature to the atonement itself? and was this the reason that expia-

tion was made for the elect? And were the non-elect excluded from the provision because of their unbelief, when it is said in the same paper that all the faith in the world was obtained by the death of Christ?

The atonement made for the elect absolutely as believers! I admit that the merit of Christ absolutely procured for them the gift of faith; yet not for them as believers but as unbelievers. And how, before a man has faith, a thing can be done for him as a believer, and yet be done for him absolutely, is hard to tell. If the influence of the thing is to secure his faith, it is for him not as a believer but as an unbeliever\*. If the influence of the thing does not secure his faith, and yet was done to benefit him only as a believer, it suspended the effect on his own act as certainly as faith is an act of his own. No matter how sure that act was made by another influence, yet if he cannot enjoy the benefit without performing a duty, the enjoyment is suspended on his performing a duty. If men have any agency in believing, to say that the atonement was made for them absolutely as believers, is to say that it was made for them absolutely on the condition of their faith. This manner of viewing things entirely overlooks the agency of man, and makes him as passive in believing as in the complexion he wears. Before one is born a provision may be made for him as a *white* man and yet be absolute, because he has no part to act in forming his own complexion: not so for a *good* man, if that goodness implies any agency of his own. This is the grand mistake which runs through the system. They every where sink the agency of man in the mere receiver, and reason about him as though he was a passive tablet.

\* The atonement therefore could not secure the gift of faith unless it was offered for unbelievers.

Thus this concession that the elect were included in the provision as believers, and that the non-elect were excluded only for the want of faith, is really giving up the point. For then the latter would still be included if they would believe. And that is all the provision we plead for. No, you say, it is now too late: from their foreseen unbelief the pearl was not offered for them. The question then comes to this, did the atonement render those pardonable indiscriminately who would believe, or only those who it was foreseen would believe?

It must never be lost sight of that the satisfaction was in no sense or degree made in secret. We have nothing to do with the hidden purpose of the divine mind, or any private covenant between the Sacred Persons. The whole question turns on the construction to be put upon the *public instrument*. If in those open transactions and explanations which constituted the whole atonement, and laid before the world the *express purpose*, it was given out that it was offered for those who should *receive* faith, then it was offered absolutely for the elect and the elect alone. But if it was declared to be offered for the benefit of all indiscriminately who would *exercise* faith, then it was a provision for a whole world of agents, and its application was suspended on a condition.

This was manifestly the fact. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name *whosoever* believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his *friends*. Ye are my friends if ye do *whatsoever I command you*." I die a Substitute for you, Peter and John, *if ye obey me*. "This is the will of him that sent me, that *every one* which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life."

“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to *every one* that believeth.” “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto *all* and upon *all* them that believe; *for there is no difference*, for all have sinned\*.”

Now if the atonement was thus conditional as to its application, it could not as a *provision* be limited to a part, unless the condition was to some a natural impossibility. For then it could have no other effect on Paul than to secure his pardon *when he should believe*, and it must secure to all a pardon *in case they would believe*. Here then, (allowing faith not to be a natural impossibility,) is a provision for all as *capable agents*, and such a provision as gives them all a *fair chance*. It would be different if they were passive blocks. Here is a feast for all who are found in a certain house. The whole multitude without are able to enter if so disposed. There is then a provision for all in such a sense as to give them all a fair chance. It would be different if they were chained to the earth. So a bounty given to a seminary to be divided among the scholars who prove diligent, is by the very circumstance of its conditionality a provision for the whole school as capable agents.



## CHAPTER XI.

BELIEVER AND UNBELIEVER CONFOUNDED WITH ELECT AND NON-ELECT, AND WITH MAN AS A CAPABLE AGENT.

WHEN we say that the atonement was for Simon Magus, we mean that it was a provision for him as a

\* John 6. 40. & 15. 13, 14. Acts 10. 43. Rom. 3. 22, 23. and 10. 4.

*capable agent*. But when our brethren deny that it was for him, they constantly allude to the secret purpose of God about its application. And from fastening their eye thus on the secret purpose, which respected passive receivers of regenerating influence, they have in a great measure lost sight of man as a capable agent, and reasoned about him as though he had nothing to do with *exercising* faith, but only with *receiving* it. Hence they tell us, if the atonement was made to benefit believers and not unbelievers, it was not made for Simon Magus, for he was never to believe. Here again comes out the fault of the whole system. It was not a provision for him as a capable agent, because it was not to benefit one of his *character*; entirely burying his agency, and making the character as passively received and as essential to the man as complexion and sex. Had it been for white men and not for black men, or for men and not for women, you might have said of that Ethiopian that it was not for him, or of this female that it was not for her. Or if it had been publicly and avowedly offered for the *receivers* of faith, and not for the benefit of *believers*, then you might have said that it was not for Simon Magus, for he was never to receive faith. But, if it was publicly offered for the use of all indiscriminately who as agents would *believe*, and Simon was not a dead mass of matter, but endowed with natural ability to believe, then it was a complete provision for him as a capable agent. And then unbelief was not essential to him, like mind itself, but was a character which he had assumed on his own responsibility. The *man* will be charged with an atonement which was never made to benefit the *unbeliever*. But our brethren first sink the man in the unbeliever, and then make the unbeliever the mere non-recipient of faith.



And when they have thus annihilated human agency, and set men before them as mere passive receivers or non-receivers of faith, then they proceed with perfect consistency and say ; if the atonement was made to benefit believers and not unbelievers, it was not made for the *non-elect*, for they will never believe. Here they get unbelievers and non-elect confounded. Now believer and unbeliever denote *agents* of certain characters, but elect and non-elect are terms of passive import, like *chosen* and *rejected*, and denote men passively appointed to receive or not to receive regenerating influence. But in arriving at this point they make no new mistake. When they have set men before them, not as those who are to *exercise* faith, but as those who are to *receive* it, and make them entirely passive in their faith and unbelief, it is no matter whether they exclude them as unbelievers, or as men passively appointed to be non-recipients of faith. Had the atonement not been for black men or for women, you might have said that it was not for those who were *foreordained* to that complexion or sex : that is, you might have affirmed the same thing of them as *appointed* to such a distinction, that you would assert of them as *actually possessing* it, because in the appointment and the possession they are equally passive. So if men were as passive in their unbelief as they are in their non-election, you might affirm the same thing of them as non-elect that you do of them as unbelievers. But now to confound these terms, is to bury up their agency in rejecting the Gospel, and utterly to change the principles of the divine administration. Because men are denied the benefits of the atonement as unbelievers, you exclude them as non-elect. But to debar them as non-elect, is to cut them off without their own fault ; to shut them out as unbelievers, is to make their own

sinful rejection of the Gospel the ground of their exclusion. In short this confounding of unbelievers and non-elect completely overlooks the agency of men, and brings into use such a language as would besit them if they were mere machines.

And yet this very practice gives to our brethren almost all the texts which even have the semblance of supporting their cause, and it appears also in a number of their terms and popular arguments. Thus because Christ laid "down his life for his *friends*," they infer that he died only for the elect. "If a man pay a ransom price to redeem *his own friends* from captivity, however great the price, or however many others may be in captivity, yet when it is inquired, for whom was the price paid? the answer is, for *his friends* whom he designed to redeem." But if the atonement of Christ was to benefit all who would be his friends, it was a provision for all as capable agents, for no natural inability, and nothing but a blamable temper, prevents any from being his friends. In the same manner whatever is said of *the Church*, ("the general assembly" of heirs, the people who "in the dispensation of the fulness of times" are gathered "together in one—in Christ," the body with its living members compacted together and drawing present life from the Head, the bride already married to Christ by a voluntary covenant\*,) they apply unqualifiedly to the elect. But though in one or two places the body of believers, under the name of the Church, are spoken of with special reference to their antecedent election, and to their redemption from sin by the larger ransom, yet the unregenerate elect are never comprehended under the name of Church. Thus too whatever is said of the *sheep*, (the flock, by whose footsteps believers are exhorted

\* Eph. 1. 10, 22, 23. and 4. 16. Heb. 12. 23. Rev. 21. 9.

to go forth, who are under the sensible care of the good Shepherd, and are led by him into "green pastures" and "beside the still waters," who know him, and hear his voice, and follow him, and will stand on his right hand to receive a gracious reward\*,) they apply to the elect as such, merely because once by way of anticipation Christ calls the unregenerate elect his sheep†. And they reason about the sheep and goats as

\* Ps. 23. Cant 1. 7, 8. Mat. 25. 33. John 10. 14, 27.

† John 10. 16. In this chapter Christ sets before him the sheep as a flock *already gathered* and under his care; and in what he says about laying down his life for them, he alludes to the fidelity of a shepherd in exposing his life to defend his flock, *actually assembled around him*, from beasts of prey. "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is a hireling and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep and fleeth, and the wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth because he is a hireling and careth not for the sheep. I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, *and unknown of mine.*—*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*" He had begun the discourse by saying, "He, [that pastor in the Church,] that entereth in by the door, [Christ is the door, ver. 7, 9.] is the shepherd of the sheep, [of the church, or body of believers.] To him the porter openeth, and the sheep, [believers,] hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out, [from *other sheep* who are false professors.] And when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them, [in a way of holy example and instruction,] and the sheep follow him, [in a life of holiness;] for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers.—All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them." In all this he meant nothing by sheep but members of the visible Church, and except one allusion to false professors, true believers. He then changes the figure, and from the *door* through which the under shepherds enter, he becomes the Shepherd himself: but still the primary meaning of sheep is believers. When he calls the elect Gentiles his sheep, it is plainly by anticipation; but when he speaks of laying down his life for his sheep, he means for the *gathered* and existing flock, such a flock as a hireling Jewish pastor would abandon to the wolves. This was accomplished when it was said, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd." But who at that time were the flock? the unregenerate elect or believers? It is added, "Smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered." This, we are

though these terms denoted the elect and non-elect, when in fact, with the single exception already noticed, they uniformly stand for the good and bad\*. In the same way they make *the seed of the serpent* to mean the non-elect, and argue that the Seed of the woman would not die for the seed of the serpent; as though the elect themselves were not the seed of the serpent while continuing to possess the spirit of the serpent. In the same way they make the *people of God* to be synonymous with elect. "For whom Christ offered himself as a sacrifice, for the same does he intercede; (for his priestly office is not performed for any by halves :) but he intercedes, it is agreed, for none but *his own people*: therefore he died for none but his own people." "He intercedes, *it is agreed*, for none but his own people!" But who are his own people? Not the elect *as such*, not the unconverted elect, but believers.

\* Unless John 10. 26. is an exception.

expressly told, was fulfilled when the *twelve disciples* forsook him and fled\*. In another place by the sheep which he came to save he plainly means believers, viewed with reference to their lost condition as sinners. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these *little ones*.—For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these *little ones* should perish.†" On another occasion he gave a similar representation to justify himself in associating with publicans and sinners, who, with Matthew at their head, flocked to catch the word of life from his lips‡. But notwithstanding all this evidence that by the sheep for which he laid down his life he meant believers, I have admitted that in the assertion he glanced at the previous election of those believers, and at the special reference which he had to them as his reward.

\* Zech. 13. 7. Mat. 26. 31.—† Mat. 18. 10—14.—‡ Luke 15. with chap. 5. 27—32.

“In the place where it was said unto them, *ye are not my people*, there it shall be said unto them, *ye are the sons of the living God.*” “I will call them my people *which were not my people*, and her beloved which was not beloved\*.” If by this exclusive intercession you mean that Christ pleads for the pardon and acceptance of none but believers, we agree; but what is this to the purpose? We never thought that he *died* to procure the pardon and acceptance of any but believers. I suppose that the intercession of Christ is the silent plea or influence of his expiation and merit, (for it is not limited to pardon†;) and that of course it is just so far offered for all as his expiation and merit affect all. He intercedes then that millions who are never saved may have a day of probation, and the offer of life, and the common and convicting influences of the Spirit. He intercedes that all indiscriminately may be saved who will believe, offering thus his effectual intercession to all, and making it to all a complete provision for moral agents. “He is able—to save them *to the uttermost* who come unto God by him, *seeing* he ever liveth to make intercession for them‡.” He intercedes that the elect may have the gift of faith: and when as agents they believe, he employs for them that full intercession which he offers to others. After the same manner when the sacred writers say that Christ atoned *for them*, our brethren will always have it that they speak of themselves as elect, and not as moral agents and believers. But this is assumed without a particle of proof. In this way it is that they find an atonement which accomplishes reconciliation. They hear the apostles say that they and other believers had been saved from wrath by the blood of Christ, mean-

\* Hos. 1. 10. Rom. 9. 25, 26.—† John 17.—‡ Heb. 7. 25.

ing that as believers they had been pardoned on the ground of the atonement; and they at once conclude that all this is said of them as elect, and that of course the atonement reconciles all for whom it was offered.

In this way it is that they discover in the Scriptures so many appearances of a limited atonement. Take away those texts which speak of believers, and they will be surprised to find how few remain which glance at any special reference to the elect. The whole of this number which I have been able to discover, after examining the collection made by the Synod of Dort, were presented in a former chapter; and they express either the power of the *larger ransom*, or the reference of Christ to the elect as his *reward*. Not one of them touches the question now in debate. I have been struck with the fact that in an ingenious treatise lately written to prove a limited atonement, when the author came to produce his direct texts, *in the form of a distinct argument*, he quoted but these two: "I lay down my life for the sheep," and, "The Church—which he hath purchased with his own blood;" two texts of which, (if they are not limited to believers,) the former expresses the special reference of Christ to the elect as his reward, and the latter the power of the larger ransom. For the rest the author chiefly relies on election, foreknowledge, the secret purpose of God, and the limitation of the larger ransom; neither of which is denied, or has any thing to do with the present question.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE TREATMENT OF AGENTS BY ITSELF EXPRESSES  
DIVINE BENEVOLENCE.

God feels a benevolence towards all his creatures, even towards those whom he never sanctifies. That is, he does not delight in their misery, but delights in their happiness as a thing in itself agreeable, and would never sacrifice their happiness but to promote a higher good. This benevolence towards the un-sanctified he is able to express otherwise than in words, or he is not. If not, he can never bring any proof of its existence, except what depends on his treatment of the sanctified. If he can express this benevolence in actions, it must be by the mere treatment of agents.

And this is the fact. Those measures which are calculated to promote the happiness of creatures if they will do their duty, do really express his benevolence towards them, though never attended with sanctifying influence. That foundation in moral agents which gives to the measures this expression, is their capacity to use them for their good, or what we call their natural ability. For if they had no more power to derive happiness from them than stocks, the treatment, so far from being an expression of benevolence, would be a mockery. But with that power, all those provisions and mercies, all that display of light, and motives, and long-suffering, which are calculated to promote their happiness if they will do their duty, are indications of that common benevolence which God feels towards all. If they are no indications without sanctifying influence, any more than if men

were blocks, what becomes of the capacity on which all their obligations are grounded? It is plainly no adequate foundation to support any of the measures of a moral government; and those measures without the Spirit are as unsuited to men as to the beasts of the field or the clods of the valley.

Now apply this to the atonement. By such a provision for those who eventually perish, God puts remission within the reach of their natural power, and lays them under reasonable obligations to live, and fastens the blame of their destruction on themselves, and wipes off the charge of forcing them to death against their will. And all this he instructs us to believe is a genuine expression of benevolence towards them, and if he is sincere it really is. If any thing which he can do can indicate his philanthropy towards them, what more than making, at so vast an expense, such a provision for their pardon that nothing but their own distinct and voluntary agency can work their ruin? Any thing analogous to this in human affairs would certainly be indicative of love; and God has no way to discover his feelings towards the persons of the unsanctified but by conduct according with the manner of men. If his foreknowledge or failure to sanctify must silence that expression, there is no way in which he can act out the real temper of his heart towards the persons of those who perish. How then came we by the knowledge that such a temper exists?

This provision for the finally impenitent, he himself teaches us to believe, makes the same expression of character as though he had no foreknowledge or dominion over the mind. And if we find any difficulty in viewing it apart, and giving full credit to the discoveries which it separately makes, we ought to put it



down to the weakness of our apprehensions, to the incapacity of a finite mind to comprehend the Infinite, on whom it devolves not only to govern the universe by law and motives, but to form the dispositions of his creatures. But certainly it was his intention to make an impression on us that he is in all respects what he appears in a moral government to be. Certain it is that when he provided an atonement which all might have for accepting, and which all had natural ability and were under obligations to accept, he intended to make an impression on us of his real benevolence towards the whole human race. What does he plainly say? “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.” “Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” “Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” “As I live—I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” “How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.” “O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end\*!” If by fastening our eyes on foreknowledge, and election, and the passiveness of men, we get confused and lose somewhat of the expression which the atonement really makes, yet without the most blasphemous imputations we cannot doubt that these declarations of the Moral Governour explain the genuine feelings of his heart. We may be as-

\* Deut. 32. 29. Ezek. 33. 11, Mat. 23. 37. John. 3. 16, 17. 1 Tim. 2, 4. 2 Pet. 3. 9.

sured that we convey right ideas of him when we say, that his exertions for the salvation of the wicked Israelites proceeded from unfeigned love. What does he tell us himself? "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bore them and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy and fought against them." "I removed his shoulder from the burden, his hands were delivered from the pots. Thou calledst in trouble and I delivered thee, I answered thee in the secret place of thunder, I proved thee at the waters of Meribah.—But my people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own counsels. O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries\*." We may be assured that we convey right ideas of him when we say that he sent the Gospel to the inhabitants of Capernaum for their good, as an act of unfeigned mercy, and from perfect good will to them. The whole ministry of Christ to that city was evidently intended to make this impression. And what was the meaning of his tears over Jerusalem? Did they discover no interest in the happiness of its inhabitants?

But it is flatly denied that the death of Christ was any expression of benevolence to the non-elect; and the Church has heard the affecting denial. "What induced him to die for these, seeing he had passed them, and in the language of Scripture *hated* them? If he died for them, he either had a motive or not. If he

\* Ps. 81. 6—14. Isai. 63. 9, 10.

had, what was it? Not any peculiar love, for this he entertained not. *Was it from some general affection to them as creatures? but they had forfeited all regard from the Creator.*" This distressing suggestion by fair implication goes all the way of affirming that nothing which God can do is expressive of benevolence to those whom he fails to sanctify; that all the bounties and efforts of heaven are no indications of mercy or goodness while men are bent on their own destruction; that neither the creation nor preservation of the non-elect, neither temporal blessings nor the means of grace, are any tokens of good will to them; in short that God has no benevolence towards them, not even a "general affection to them as creatures." And have we come to this! that some of the rational creatures of God are excluded from his benevolence! What feelings then has he towards them? Is it absolute indifference? or is it malice? But God's professions are far different. He distinctly claims the praise of benevolence for his common mercies to the evil and unthankful, and in these acts sets himself forth as an example of genuine love to enemies. "Love your enemies,—that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Before "all nations," even while they were left "to walk in their own ways," "he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave" them "rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling" their "hearts with food and gladness\*."

\* Ps. 145: 9. Mat. 5. 44, 45. Acts 14. 16, 17. Rom. 2. 4.

But all this upon your plan is a delusive show, and the bounties of God to the heathen discovered only his existence and power, which alone could not render them "without excuse."

According to this alarming principle the non-elect have no reason but ignorance of their own reprobation to thank God for any thing he has ever done; and when they awake in hell they will never again accuse themselves of ingratitude to eternity. And yet unthankfulness is numbered among their worst sins\*. In short the pernicious influence of this sentiment is to persuade all men, in proportion as they waver about their own election, to doubt whether they have any cause to thank God for their existence or for one of all his mercies. And what must be the tendency of such a doctrine, no one, I should think, could doubt.

In opposition to all this I plead that the death of Christ, so far as it is known, lays the whole human race under obligations to gratitude, not founded on any opinion which they may form of their own election, or on the darkness which may hang around that question, but on a vast, and obvious, and common benefit, strongly marked with benevolence to the race at large; that every man, without waiting to ascertain his future destiny, is bound to bless God "for his unspeakable gift," and to acknowledge the greatness of the love in relation to himself.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

THE PURPOSES OF THE MORAL GOVERNOUR NOT TO BE  
CONFOUNDED WITH THOSE OF THE SOVEREIGN EFFI-  
CIENT CAUSE.

WHAT then, has God two minds? No, but he acts in two characters, founded on the two relations of men;

\* 2 Tim. 3. 2.

two characters in most respects independent of each other, because the two relations of men are equally independent ; two characters, as far as they are independent, just as distinct as though they belonged to two separate beings : and you may speak of the designs of the Moral Governour and the designs of the Sovereign Efficient Cause as distinctly as though they were the counsels of two minds ; and in many respects you *must* speak so or not express the truth in intelligible language.

If the treatment of agents by itself expresses the divine benevolence, then you must speak of God in that character in which he stands related to agents, as constructing his measures *for their good* : for to say that a measure is not constructed for their good, and yet that it expresses benevolence towards them, is a contradiction according to all the language established and understood in the world. And if we must say of the Moral Governour, (without reference to election or regeneration, which lie out of his sphere,) that he constructs his measures for their good, then we must say that he *designs* them for their good. In all other cases known to men, the unqualified design of the agent is necessary to the benevolent expression of the action : and without the ascription of such a design to the Moral Governour, there is no conveying to the multitude the idea, and turning over the idea in all its familiar forms, that the measures express his benevolence. We must therefore make the ascription, without any misgivings on account of foreknowledge or election, or we have no way to affirm intelligibly and familiarly of any measure unaccompanied by sanctification, that it expresses the benevolence of God.

It answers an important end for God to appear before his creatures in a character which stands related

to agents, and to speak of himself, and allow his creatures to speak of him, in a form which would express the benevolence of a temporal prince who had no control over the minds of his subjects but by motives, and in that character to say, "O that they were wise!" and, "Turn ye, for why will ye die?" It gives him an opportunity to express towards millions a benevolence which otherwise would not be revealed, and to treat his creatures according to their rational nature. And there is no deception in the case. The Being who sustains this character means not to say that he does not support another in which he can control the heart, or that the Divine Mind is really disappointed. He takes abundant care to guard against this mistake. He only means to express his benevolence by a language and measures fitted to moral agents. And it is of infinite importance that he should have full credit for all the exhibitions made in this character. But the moment you deny to the Moral Governour all purpose of mercy towards the unsanctified, (though at infinite expense he has put life within their reach, and exhausted arguments to persuade them to live,) you annihilate the whole expression of benevolence made in the pure treatment of agents, and cover up one of the departments in which God has chosen to manifest himself.

By denying to the Moral Governour such a benevolent aim, and confounding his designs with those of the Sovereign Efficient Cause, you would spread confusion through every part of the divine administration, and bring upon God and the language he employs charges which I tremble to name. You might construct propositions upon this principle which would amount to impeachment and blasphemy, and impute to God a character more baleful and disastrous than that of Satan. In this way you would denounce one half of his administra-

tion as a farce. You would contradict the sincerity of his offers to the non-elect, and even bring upon him the horrid charge of making them to be damned. The Sovereign Efficient Cause, it is admitted, had no thought of mercy towards them, no purpose to answer by them in the world: and if the Moral Governour is not allowed to have any benevolent designs concerning them, for what purpose were they created? No one has any thing to do with them in a way of favour; were they made solely to be damned? And as to the insincerity of the offer, you present God as saying, "Turn ye, for why will ye die?" and "O that they were wise!" while in no character has he any thought or desire of mercy towards them. But separate the Moral Governour from the Sovereign Efficient Cause, and allow him to express his benevolence in that independent character in which he has nothing to employ but motives, and all is plain.

I dare not therefore say of God unqualifiedly that he had no purpose of mercy towards the non-elect. Such language, I am persuaded, conveys wrong ideas of him, and contradicts that expression of benevolence which the measures of his government were intended to make.

All those measures which are calculated to promote the happiness of creatures indiscriminately, ought to be spoken of as having such an aim, except in relation to those whom the Moral Governour himself has publicly sentenced to judicial blindness or shut up in hell. Of the former class we have a right to say, that he bears long with them on purpose "to show his wrath and make his power known," in their more aggravated destruction\*. But to impute to God such a design in sending the Gospel to men merely because they are non-elect, would be a dangerous falsehood,

\* Rom. 9. 22. with Is. 6. 10.

calculated to hide one half of the exhibitions which he makes of himself in the Gospel. Our brethren reason as though all the non-elect were given over to judicial blindness; whereas this abandonment is the act of the Moral Governour, who himself, so to speak, knows not a non-elect person on earth.

And now to show you what has called for these remarks, I present the following. "Can it be said with reason that Christ when he hung on the cross poured out his life and his soul for those whom he never intended to save? Here Arminians, and even Lutherans and Baxterians, have a subterfuge. They say it was *the will of God* to save all men. But those with whom we now contend agree that his purpose was to save the elect only, and they reject the distinction of antecedent and consequent will; and therefore to them there is no evasion.—If he died for those whom he had no intention to save, it is incumbent on those who maintain the opinion to point out for what end. No wise agent performs an important work without having an important end in view. Let them tell us then what was the end of Christ in dying for those whom he had no intention of saving."

The writer was not sufficiently acquainted with the opinions of those with whom he had to "contend." We do not indeed say of God *in his whole character* that it was his purpose to save all men. Neither do we explain any difficulties by resorting to an antecedent and consequent will. We admit that the Sovereign Efficient Cause absolutely decreed the characters of men, so far as whether he would make them holy or leave them to themselves. But we think that all these difficulties which have perplexed the Church in consequence of viewing God in a single character, may easily be solved by contemplating him in two.



While we do not say of the Sovereign Efficient Cause that he suspended any thing on the conduct of men, or had the least reference to that conduct in one of his decisions, (because his decrees and acts terminate upon men as purely passive;) we scruple not to attribute to the Moral Governour all the aims which the measures of his government are calculated to accomplish. We readily yield to the Sovereign Efficient Cause every thing that the highest Calvinist ever did, and none the less ascribe to the Moral Governour every thing, as relates to the present subject, that an Arminian ever did. In particular we find no difficulty in saying of the Ruler of agents, that he *wills* the salvation of all to whom the Gospel is sent. And we understand Peter and Paul as speaking of God in the same character, and meaning the same thing, when they say of him that he “will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth;” “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance\*.” We dare not therefore say of him who provided the atonement, (for that was the Moral Governour alone,) that he had no intention to benefit the non-elect, nor do we generally speak of him as even knowing such a class of men.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE TREATMENT OF INDIVIDUAL AGENTS INTENDED TO INFLUENCE AGENTS GENERALLY.

THE question often arises, why all this labour and expense to exert upon creatures the dominion of mo-

\* 1 Tim. 2. 4. 2 Pet. 3. 9.

tives, when without motives God could sway them by his power as he pleases? But without motives he could not sway them to *rational* action, nor furnish them with rational enjoyment. He could not sway them to *any* action, nor furnish them with any enjoyment. The maniac, the beast, the worm, is governed by motives. The moment you pass the empire of motives you are among insensible objects. The sway of which you speak must be supported by impressions on insensitive machines. There is no way to secure holy order and happiness but by motives fitted to awaken the best affections and the purest joy. Sanctifying power without these would produce no more than it did on the infant Jeremiah and John. While you speak of a sway by main strength without motives, what sense in talking of the anarchy which would have resulted from giving up the law by pardoning without an atonement? What need of an atonement or a law when motives are no longer needed? The only benefit of either is in the motives which they present.

To fill the universe with motives then is the great point. The more those which prompt to love, obedience, gratitude, joy, and praise, are spread, the richer and happier the universe is. A God of benevolence could not therefore but wish to bring forth all those motives which his own infinite perfection could furnish, all that could appear from a full exposition of the reasonableness of his claims and his unmingled benevolence, all that could appeal to the reason, the conscience, the hopes, the fears, or the ingenuousness of creatures.

This is the end for which all the manifestations of God have been made. If he exerts authority, it is to furnish motives to creatures. If he instructs, invites,

promises, or threatens, it is with no other view. Whatever direct end any measure may have, its ultimate end is this. God glorified is the universe filled with motives, drawn from himself and prompting creatures to love, joy, and praise.

Now these motives are chiefly derived from the pure treatment of moral agents. By reverting to the chapter on a moral government, it will be seen how vast a proportion of the divine manifestations are made in this separate department.

The treatment of agents by itself is therefore a system of incalculable importance. That general treatment which is bottomed on their capacity, and would have no meaning without it; which assumes at every step that they have natural ability to act without the Spirit, and is in truth the same as though they were independent; which comprehends all the instructions given, all the authority employed, all the obligations imposed, all the motives presented, all the provisions made, all the invitations offered, all the long-suffering exercised, all the guilt charged, all the rewards conferred; this system, separate from the sovereign operations of the Spirit, is of immeasurable importance. Laying out of account the direct ends which the measures are calculated to accomplish, the system as a whole is of unspeakable importance *as a mere source of motives.*

Considered in this light, and not barely as expressive of direct benevolence towards the objects concerned, the system is one which God has been at infinite expense to perfect. If to give machines a right direction by blind impressions was enough, and it was not important to support the dominion of motives over the reason and conscience of creatures, (an empire altogether distinct from the exertions of sovereign power

upon the mind,) why the penalty of the law? and why the infinite expense incurred on Calvary and in hell?

But it must never be supposed that the Moral Governour intends to draw motives from measures which hold out a false show. It is because they are what they profess to be, that they are real exhibitions of God and fitted to influence creatures.

Thus we find the Moral Governour pursuing a system of measures unfeignedly expressive of benevolence towards all whom they are adapted to serve, and entitled to be spoken of as aimed at their good. And this he does, not only with a direct view to the immediate end which the measures are calculated to accomplish, (at least in human language it must be so expressed,) but for the purpose of sending out motives to affect moral agents generally. It is with this emission of motives that we are now concerned.

Here we must fasten our eyes on the Moral Governour alone, and think and speak of him as presenting the motives in every instance from direct benevolence to the person concerned, and with a sincere aim at his good, (as the thing must be expressed in human language,) except in reference to those whom he himself has already given over to judicial blindness or to punishment. The array of motives is as directly calculated for the happiness of all to whom they are professedly addressed, as the "rain from heaven and fruitful seasons." The latter may be abused, and so may the former. But while creatures have a capacity to improve the blessing, it is certainly calculated for their good, and ought to be spoken of as aimed at their happiness. Any thing analogous to this between man and man would be called *seeking* the happiness of those concerned: and it would be so called in the government of God were it not for his foreknow-

ledge and control over the mind: and if other truths are not concealed, it may be so called without conveying any false idea of him: and it is so called by "Lutherans and Baxterians," and by the Bible itself; and ought to be so called, because it is in fact as expressive of direct benevolence as what is so denominated among men, and because there is no other way of familiarly expressing this great truth.

We must not therefore say of the measures of mercy which relate to the unsanctified, that they are intended to furnish motives for the sole benefit of elect men and angels only, but for the everlasting benefit of the persons concerned, and of all other moral agents through the universe, except those who are already given over to judicial blindness or to punishment. In these matters the Moral Governour knows no creature as elect or non-elect. His subjects lie before him in three classes; as those who are on probation and unabandoned, as those who are confirmed in holiness and happiness by way of reward, and as those who are sealed or delivered over to punishment. To say in relation to the first class, that the benevolent aim is confined to a part, is to say that their happiness is sought by an insincere treatment of the rest.

Now then to apply all this to the atonement. The ultimate design of the mediation of Christ was to fill the universe with motives, by bringing out to view the secrets of the Eternal Mind. He came to be "the image of the invisible God," "the face" in which he should be seen, "the word" by which he should be expressed\*.

But the direct end of the atonement, as related to the discoveries of God, was not to reveal the Sovereign Efficient Cause, but to bring out to view the glo-

\* John 1. 1. 2 Cor. 4. 4, 6. Col. 1. 15.

ries of the Moral Governour. The whole ground of the design lay among the relations subsisting between him and moral agents. It was the difficulties which arose in the favourable treatment of them which gave rise to the august mechanism of the whole plan; and the change wrought in their relations constituted the whole of the wonderful result. The exhibition to be made of God by the direct operation of this great measure, was in his relations to moral agents and in his treatment of them. This end had no dependance on the sovereign acts of the Spirit.

By such a provision for a sinning agent the Moral Governour intended to furnish motives for the everlasting benefit of that individual, and of all other rational creatures not already given over to destruction. It would be a great mistake therefore to suppose that the end of an atonement for Peter was limited to the pardon of Peter. Even as Peter himself was concerned, it had the further design to affect him for ever as an exhibition both of awful firmness in supporting the law and of amazing mercy. He was still to remain under moral government and the control of motives. His happiness was not to consist in a release from the restraints of law, but in living under the dominion of the everlasting King, in seeing all his rights secured, in contemplating his astonishing grace, and in being urged by competent motives to unceasing love, obedience, and praise.

But the atonement for Peter had a further end. It was intended, (according to the dialect which it is necessary to use,) favourably and eternally to affect all other moral agents not already given over to destruction. The fundamental principle in which lay the necessity of an atonement was, that not even the elect could be pardoned unless the whole universe were

made to see that the law was not to be given up. This conviction must be spread that God might still by sufficient motives support his empire over the rational creation: and that empire he wished still further to strengthen by vast discoveries of his grace. As Ruler of the whole universe, perhaps of more worlds than there are dusts in this, and looking forward to an eternal reign, he did not limit his view to the deliverance of a part of Adam's race. When that was done he had just begun his course. He wished to hold out the unchangeable authority of his law, and the infinite benignity of his government, to affect the intelligent universe to eternity.



## CHAPTER XV.

### REASONS FOR AN ATONEMENT FOR THOSE WHO PERISH.

THERE is a loud call made upon us for these reasons. Were we at all straitened for an answer, we might silence the demand by asking, what reasons for the *offer* to those who perish? This, you say, is made that God "may do what is agreeable to his own most holy nature, and that it may be made fully to appear how great is the malignity and obstinacy of those whom he punishes." Had we no other reason to give for the *provision on which the offer is founded*, you ought not to complain.

But really there was no chance for a limited and absolute atonement without consequences at which we shall all revolt. If the whole provision was made in that open and visible manner which was necessary to give it an operation upon public law, there was no

way of limiting it but by calling a part of the race by name. This is not all. If it was provided for moral agents, it was not provided for creatures viewed as related to regeneration, for this change is wrought upon passive receivers. By the capacity which moral agents possess, they have in themselves, without the Spirit, a complete foundation for all the treatment which might be rendered to independent beings, and no less a foundation for merciful than for punitive treatment. Being thus complete entities in themselves, as distinguished from the passive character, God, if he acts according to truth, will shape and carry forward the measures which relate to them without noticing in his outward dispensation the other character. If then in providing an atonement he must have called a part by name, he must have said to Saul of Tarsus, without any reference to his regeneration, For you, bloody as you are, this atonement is absolutely provided, and do what you will you shall never be punished. Not a word about his repenting or believing, for that would have been a conditional atonement. And to Simon Magus he must have said, There is no atonement for you; and should you repent, and believe in an atonement for others, still you cannot be pardoned. A limited and absolute atonement publicly provided for moral agents, must have divided the race in this way. To the non-elect it would have been the same as to the damned, and to the elect a prostration of all moral government.

But all this is not giving the reasons. There is no difficulty however in doing this provided God can express his benevolence in the treatment of agents by itself, and we are allowed to ascribe to the Moral Governour, without reference to the Sovereign Efficient Cause, a benevolent design. This is really the



dialect in which we ought to speak of the subject, and the only one which does justice to the God of love.

In this dialect then I shall name two ends, the one immediate and the other ultimate. The immediate end was the pardon of all indiscriminately to whom the Gospel was to be sent; the ultimate end was to manifest divine grace in this merciful and sincere treatment of a world, and thus to fill the universe with motives for the eternal benefit of all rational creatures not already given over to destruction.

(1.) The immediate end. In this dialect, in which elect and non-elect are unknown, we must give the same reason for an atonement for Simon Magus as for Peter, to wit, a direct regard to his deliverance from the curse. To neither was it an expression of *electing* love, (for election lay in another department,) but only of that common benevolence which God feels towards all his creatures. There was in this thing as complete an *exercise* and *expression*, (for the latter without the former would have been feigned,) of common benevolence to Simon Magus, as there is of maternal feeling where a mother runs to catch a falling infant. There was a difference as to the expected result, because God was omniscient. But his benevolence for Simon was as real as the affection of the mother, and this was as natural and unerring a way to express the one as her haste the other. At least he has warned the universe to consider his merciful treatment of the wicked as the organ by which his benevolence is expressed. No language which is adapted to our finite minds can completely express the Infinite: but in such imperfect language as we possess we must say, if we would express the truth to common apprehensions, that the Moral Governour *willed not* that Simon "should perish, but that" he "should come to

repentance." Tell me then why the mother ran to catch her falling infant, and I will tell you, in language consecrated by the Holy Ghost, why God provided an atonement for Simon.

Some are for limiting the end of this provision to the ultimate end. But this is saying that the universe were to be instructed and affected by an insincere show of mercy to Simon. This merciful treatment was no more exclusively designed to send out motives to others, than the punitive treatment which he received. Both were intended for this end ultimately, but both had an end which immediately respected the subject. There was in him as perfect a foundation to support the privilege of an atonement, as to sustain a punishment for rejecting it. His capacity made it as proper for God to provide the privilege for him, (just as though he was likely to use it without the Spirit,) as for God to punish him for not using it. The mercy then, no less than the punishment, may be contemplated as lying between God and Simon, and as being expressive of the divine character in its direct aspect upon him.

(2.) The ultimate end. This was to exhibit God and fill the universe with motives, benevolently intended to affect Simon and all other rational creatures not already given over to destruction.

As the authority of the law was concerned, we have already seen the necessity of a general provision, as without prostrating the law it was impossible to divide the inhabitants of the same world. And as the honour of mercy was respected, a provision for the whole would manifestly do more than a provision for a part. The highest exhibition of this attribute that could be made in the pure treatment of agents, was here to be brought forth. Over this entire world the Moral Go-

vernour wished to extend the sceptre of his grace, and to send out hence a report which should fill other worlds with motives to love and praise him to eternity. The universe itself was to feel the effects of Calvary for ever.

And now if you ask what was gained by this general provision, my answer is, it gave that glorious Sovereign who fills the public throne of the universe, not the cabinet of private decrees, who governs his subjects by motives, not by mechanical force, whose business during a state of probation is to express their duties, not their destinies, to provide privileges, not to constrain their acceptance ; it gave him an opportunity to come out to this entire world with his renovated law, with new favours in his hands, with new claims to the homage and gratitude of men, with new splendours around his throne, with a sceptre dipt in blood, sure to bring more glory to himself, more confusion to his enemies, and more good to the universe. It gave him a chance to add one proof of his inflexible adherence to his law which no other circumstance could furnish, a practical declaration that transgressors should not escape though his own Son had died for them. It gave him on whom devolves the task of punishing the wicked, an opportunity to prove that he does not delight in their misery, to acquit himself in a double sense of their blood, and to make this appeal through heaven, earth, and hell, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" It gave him a chance to come into contact with subjects in a new relation, and such a relation as subjects will never again sustain to eternity,—that of creatures wading to perdition through the blood of Christ expressly shed for their redemption, and a compassionate Sovereign standing over them and urging and beseeching them

to live. This exhibition of character, both human and divine, will bring an inconceivable amount of additional lustre to a throne of mercy, as well as to a tribunal of justice.

The establishment of this more benignant and glorious empire over a world of moral agents, became the personal interest of Christ, as the universal government, and this part among the rest, belonged to his stipulated reward. From the form of the dominion as it appears in his hands, we know that this part was included in the covenant. Besides a power to quicken whom he will, he holds a beneficent empire over a world of moral agents, founding his claims on their capacity, and treating them indiscriminately as under a dispensation of grace. Had we no other evidence of this, the second and third chapters of Revelation would furnish enough. As surely then as he was influenced by "the joy that was set before him," the erection of this dominion was one of the motives which urged him to the cross.

We must not therefore suppose that the salvation of the elect was the sole reward or motive of Christ. This new relation of a world of moral agents, and the administration of a benign government over the whole, are two items which must be added to the account.

But does this addition diminish the believer's comfort? It is so said. "This doctrine of a general atonement takes away from the true believer one of the most interesting and edifying views of this event which can be presented to him. When he contemplates the death of Christ, he beholds the most striking and affecting manifestation of the peculiar love of God to him. But if the atonement be as much for those who are reprobates as for him, how is it an evidence of any great or special love? It is no ground of consolation

to know that Christ loved me and gave himself for me, because the reprobate may know the same." Perpetually confounding the atonement with the higher ransom. We acknowledge that Christ "gave himself" in a peculiar sense for the elect, and obtained their salvation as the reward of that active virtue. And there is on our plan undiminished reason for all those grateful and triumphant feelings which an Owen was so zealous to cherish. But is the death of Christ "no consolation" to me because he *atoned* for others? Am I so bent on monopolizing the whole influence to myself? And is it "no consolation" that he has thrown around his Father's sceptre a splendour of mercy which sends its radiance even to the gates of hell?



## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE EXTENT OF THE PROVISION NOT INCIDENTAL BUT PURPOSELY INTENDED.

SOME have said that the influence of the atonement upon the non-elect was merely casual, and arose from their living in the same world, and under the same law, and possessing the same nature with the elect, and the same world and nature in which Christ suffered, and the same law under which he lived, and from the necessary sufficiency of his merit, resulting from his infinite dignity and worth. But by whatever means the atonement acquired this influence, certain it is that it was the determinate purpose of God that it should possess it, not because it could not be avoided, but to express his unfeigned benevolence, and to answer the important ends of a moral government.

We say that God *designed* the atonement for all. What do we mean? Not that he intended to make all partakers of the benefit by an operation upon them as passive; but that he designed by its influence so to change their relations as moral agents, that should they hear the Gospel and believe, he could pardon them all without injuring the law, and that a foundation should thus be laid for a fair and reasonable offer, and promise, and command to all; and furthermore, that he intended to send the Gospel into the world, which but for the depravity of men would spread like lightning to the utmost bounds of the earth; and that he determined to force its way to millions who would never be sanctified, and thus to place in their hands a means of pardon which they should be under obligations to improve for their everlasting good. That all who hear the Gospel have the benefit so within their reach that they could make it their own by doing their duty, and are bound to make it their own, I shall now assume. The question then is, whether God determined it should be so,—whether as Moral Governour he had any purpose to answer by putting the privilege into the hands of those who were never to be sanctified, or whether he did it incidentally through their relation to the common world, the common nature, and common law. We say he had important purposes to answer, and did it with fixed design, to gratify his benevolence, and to accomplish the same ends that are attained by other measures of a moral government. And we allege that the fact of his having done it affords the same evidence of a settled purpose, that the existence of creatures does of a previous design to create.

It ought not to escape attention that the privilege is fastened upon them by a law commanding them to believe: for without the command it would not be

a privilege in the estimation of a moral government, as it would not be a means of happiness which they would be *under obligations* to improve for their good. The question then is, whether that *law* was given them incidentally,—whether the privilege was thus authoritatively thrust into their hands, not with fixed design, to answer the purposes of a moral government, but casually, through their connexion with the common world, the common nature, and common law. How will this matter appear at the judgment of the great day? When they shall be arraigned one by one, and punished severally for rejecting the privilege, will it then seem that the talent was not intentionally committed to them as their Lord's servants, but casually fell upon them as they stood in the crowd? By the same rule you might say that all other laws and mercies come to them casually, and that the Moral Governour had no end at all to answer by them in a way of favour, but only found them in his way as he came to treat with others. But besides that this would cut off every act of God from being an expression of benevolence towards them, (as a favour done by accident is no indication of love,) I would ask, how come they in existence? and for what end were they created? Were they incidentally made? or were they brought into existence for the sole purpose of being damned? As Sovereign Efficient Cause, it is agreed, God had no favour for them or purpose to answer by them: and if as Moral Governour he had no privilege to put into their hands, as an expression of love, and to answer the ends of government, but only found them in his way as he came to bless others, I ask, who placed them there? and for what end? In no character has God any favour for them; were they created solely to be damned?

If you admit with the Church at large that the atone-

ment was expressive of benevolence to the non-elect, you must no longer say that the privilege was not intended for them, for that would be bringing words against each other in a flat contradiction. Those who have chosen to ascribe its influence upon this part of the race to its sufficiency, have still generally allowed that its bearing upon them was according to God's determinate counsel, and indicative of benevolence. This, as we shall see in another place, was the concession of the Synod of Dort, and even of those members who had the most contracted views of the subject.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### REPROBATION AND THE ORDER OF DIVINE DECREES.

IN an argument intended to prove that God had no motive to provide an atonement for the non-elect, because he had no regard for them even as creatures, but "hated" them, a respectable writer proceeds as follows. "Some hope to get over the difficulty by placing the decree of redemption before the decree of election. They conceive that God first determined to give his Son a ransom for the whole human race, and then, foreseeing that none would accept the offer if left to themselves, he elected a certain number on whom he determined to bestow the gift of faith. To this theory I object the following things. (1.) That there is no succession in the divine decrees, but God wills all things by one most comprehensive and perfect purpose. (2.) Admitting an order in the divine decrees, this order is preposterous; because it supposes God to determine upon a most important and costly means



before he had proposed any particular end to be accomplished by it. Or if he designed the salvation of the whole world in giving Christ a ransom for them, his purpose was not accomplished. (3.) It furnishes no sufficient motive to produce such a grand event. (4.) Or if it be alleged that the love which was so exceedingly great had all men for its object, why, after doing so much for their salvation, did it become ineffective and leave so many of them to perish for ever? —How can the reprobation of a part be reconciled with love so great?"

It is agreed on all hands that there is no order of *time* in the divine mind; but whether there is not in the divine decrees what is called the order of *nature*, is another question. It either is so or it is not. Let us suppose that it is not. Then it was the "comprehensive purpose" of God to do just as he has done,—to save the elect from sin and death *through a Mediator*, and to send the non-elect to hell *for rejecting a Mediator provided for them as moral agents*. And what is gained by this resort? Let us now take the other supposition, viz. that there is an order of nature in the divine decrees. And here I will pause to show that this is certainly the case. First, there is an order in *things*. Holiness in creatures is before reward, sin is before punishment, ruin is before the work of a Redeemer. Secondly, there is an order in the divine *acts*. God imparts holiness before he rewards; he suffers men to sin before he punishes or pardons; he left man to fall before he sent a Redeemer. If the acts did not follow each other in this order they would not be suitable, and some of them would not be just. On the scale of creatures they succeed each other in the order of *time*; and even to God they must follow each other in the order of nature, or they would not

appear to him suitable and just. Thirdly, if the acts of God, even as contemplated by himself, follow each other in the order of nature, so must his purposes. These must take the same order or they would not be wise, and some of them would not be just. His purpose to make men holy, is in the order of nature before his purpose to reward; his purpose to leave man to fall, is in the same order before his design to punish or pardon, or to provide a Saviour.

There is one thing more to be settled before I draw the conclusion. God's decrees concerning moral agents must be distinguished from his decrees about passive recipients. We have seen that the purposes of the Moral Governour and those of the Sovereign Efficient Cause must not be confounded. Now whether the decree of the Sovereign Efficient Cause about abandoning the non-elect, was before or after the decree respecting the fall of man or the atonement, it is not at all necessary to inquire. Allowing it to have been before both, and the non-elect as passive recipients to have been abandoned by a purpose prior to all others, yet as moral agents they still had in them a foundation to support the privilege of an atonement. These two characters both in God and man are so independent of each other, that a decree of the Sovereign Efficient Cause about the passive could not prevent the Moral Governour from proceeding to provide a privilege for the same creatures as moral agents, nor from expressing in that provision the unfeigned benevolence of the divine mind. Now when we inquire about the order of decrees on such a subject as this, we must confine ourselves to the decrees of the Moral Governour: and a decree of the Moral Governour about making a creature miserable, is only a decree about his *punishment*. The question then is, whether

the Moral Governour decreed to punish men *for rejecting a Saviour*, before he decreed to provide a Saviour. The question answers itself. The Moral Governour had nothing to do with men as elect and non-elect, but merely as moral agents, and in reference to his final treatment of them, as believers and unbelievers. And his decree to punish any for rejecting a Saviour, must be founded on his foreknowledge that they would thus reject. This was all the decree that the Moral Governour could pass respecting the misery of those who were to hear the Gospel.

This distinction between the two characters of God, founded on the two independent characters of men, would have prevented all the disputes between the Supralapsarians and Sublapsarians. The former, had not the two characters been confounded, could not have held that the non-elect were created merely to glorify justice. The rights of justice belong to the Moral Governour, whose motives are to be separated from every question relative to regeneration, and who must be considered as directly aiming at the happiness of those whom his measures are calculated to serve.

The principal mistake of the above extract lies in supposing that the merciful treatment of agents by itself was no object or motive with God, and no expression or dictate of benevolence. Allow this to have been an object with him, and there was motive enough to induce him to provide a privilege for those as agents whom as passive he had abandoned. Allow this to be a dictate and expression of benevolence, and a provision for agents could be prompted by philanthropy without being accompanied by electing love. If the Moral Governour chose to express the general benevolence of the divine mind towards certain objects, it did not follow that the Sovereign Efficient Cause must sanctify them.

It is of no consequence therefore whether the decree of election or that respecting the atonement had the priority, because they were decrees of God in two distinct and independent characters.

The fact however appears to be, that the decree of the Sovereign Efficient Cause respecting a division of character, (which was in reality the decree of election and non-election,) was subsequent in the order of nature to his decree respecting the fall of man, and to the decree of the Moral Governour respecting the atonement. No distinction was decreed in the character of men in relation to the fall: all fell. The division of character was ordained to be subsequent to this, and subsequent, as I shall now show, to the provision of a Saviour. When men were all fallen, and doomed to the curse of eternal abandonment, not one of them could receive the Spirit but through a Mediator. Not one of them therefore could be elected to "be holy\*" until a Saviour was decreed. Accordingly the earliest account which we have of election is, that the objects were chosen *in* Christ: "Chosen—*in* him before the foundation of the world;—predestinated—unto the adoption of children *by* Jesus Christ." God hath "called us with a holy calling,—according to his own purpose and grace which was given us *in* Christ Jesus before the world began." "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed *in* Christ Jesus." "Whom he did foreknow, he also did *predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the First-born among many brethren*†."

This order in God's decrees, however, does not imply that he had not before him the whole plan anterior to the commencement of the order, or that he decided one part without reference to another. For instance,

\* Eph. 1. 4.—† Rom. 8. 29. Eph. 1. 4, 5. & 3. 11. 2 Tim. 1. 9.

he saw that he could glorify his justice in punishment, and his grace in the work of redemption, before he decreed to suffer the fall of man, and he passed this decree with his eye fixed on the measures which he might subsequently adopt. And yet he could not absolutely decree to punish or to pardon till he had first determined to permit sin.

The order then seems to have been this. The Sovereign Efficient Cause resolved to permit the fall of man: the Moral Governour next decreed a provision for the whole human race: the Sovereign Efficient Cause then decided how many on the one hand he would incline to believe, and on the other, not how many he would make sinners, but how many creatures who had forfeited every divine influence he would let alone.

This being what we consider the fact, we are not pleased with the term *reprobate*, because it seems to imply that some were excluded from a chance of salvation by the limited provision of the Moral Governour, if not from holiness by the positive act of the Sovereign Efficient Cause. We prefer the term *non-elect*, because this leaves it to be supposed that after being provided for they were left to themselves.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### COVENANT OF REDEMPTION.

WE have discovered that “the joy—set before” the Redeemer consisted of three parts, the establishment of a new relation for a world of moral agents, an absolute salvation for the elect, and the administration

of the government of the universe. These then were the three parts of the reward promised him in the covenant of redemption.

From whichever Person the first proposition is conceived to have come, the surrender and accord of the Son must have been substantially as follows. From regard to thy law and the human race, 'I will become incarnate and die, to place salvation within the reach of all who hear the Gospel; and in return I ask for them a state of probation and a general offer of mercy. This I am willing to grant them because I love them all and wish to manifest this love to the universe. But as they will not bow unless subdued, I claim a right to sanctify a certain number. I expect also the government of the universe, that I may display thy glory in the merciful treatment of a world of moral agents, and in the salvation of my elect. These three parts are my reward.

This is altogether different from the offering of the pearl as an absolute price for a part and in no sense for the rest. It is offering nothing. It is only *agreeing* to offer, and stipulating about the *reward*. The distinction between this private covenant and the public transaction which constituted the whole atonement, may be illustrated thus. A regiment revolts. The colonel publicly offers to die for the mutineers, not to shield them in rebellion, not to save them from punishment whether they return to duty or not, but to give them an opportunity to return and live. This privilege is obtained for the whole regiment, but extends no further. For though the life of the officer was worth that of all the men in ten revolted regiments, and might have answered for them all if expressly offered for so many, yet as it was not, its influence was limited to one. This was all that constituted atonement in the case.

Now upon this transaction ingraft another. Suppose the general has power to change the hearts of the rebels. To gratify the benevolence of the generous victim, he secretly engages to bring one half to accept the offered pardon. This was an essential part of the motive which induced the substitute to die. Sincere benevolence to the whole, and a wish to support a vigorous and benign government, were other parts. But if it be asked for whom atonement was made, the answer is, for the whole revolted regiment.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### OUR WHOLE MEANING AT ONE VIEW.

WHAT do we mean by *FOR* when we say that the atonement was *for* all? Not that it was for them considered merely as sentient; in other words, not that it was the secret purpose of God to make them all happy by the provision through an operation on them as passive; but that it was for all as moral agents. When we say that it was for all as moral agents, we mean four things. (1.) That in its actual influence it changed the relations which all as moral agents sustained to the divine law. (2.) That it thus became, in relation to all who hear the Gospel, a provision for moral agents, and a real privilege. (3.) That the provision and privilege were purposely intended for all. (4.) That the atonement was expressly offered for all.

(1.) In its actual influence it changed the relations which all as moral agents sustained to the divine law. It removed the curse of abandonment which all as agents had incurred, and it rendered their pardon con-

sistent with the honour of the law on supposition that they should hear the Gospel and believe. It was this change of relation which laid the foundation for a fair offer of pardon to all, and for a reasonable command to all to make the benefit their own\*.

(2.) By this means the atonement became, in relation to all who hear the Gospel, a provision for moral agents. The whole benefit is offered to them, and as far as can be done before they have performed their part, is actually made over to them by covenant, and they are commanded to receive it. This done, it is a complete provision for them as moral agents. It places pardon so within their reach that they can possess it by only doing their duty, no natural impossibility lying in the way, and nothing but a bad temper for which they are wholly to blame. Just as the provision now is, and not as it would have been had it been foreseen that they would believe, they are capable of living by it if well disposed, and are bound to live by it, and cannot lose it without wickedly throwing it away. And it is charged against them in the accounts of a moral government as an atonement for them; and those who fail to make it finally their own, will be eternally punished for that greatest of all sins. Thus they are brought into a salvable state and fairly put upon probation.

Now this is all that can be meant by its being a pro-

\* This explanation shows how wide from the mark the objection is which is derived from the nations who never heard the Gospel. Because the relations of all men were thus changed, it did not follow that the Gospel must be preached to all. Much like this is the objection that when Christ died many were in hell. So when he died many were in heaven; and according to this objection he could not atone for them, nor was their salvation founded on his death. But the fact is, that he virtually died the day that Adam fell, and every thing proceeded as though this had actually been the case.



vision for moral agents. If more is meant it respects men not as agents but as passive recipients. If I say that sanctification was provided for men, I speak of a provision for them as passive. If I say that absolute salvation was provided for the elect, I speak of something prepared for them as agents, and something procured for them as recipients. But if I speak of a mere provision for agents, I mean a provision which is to benefit them upon their acting the part of agents towards it, and the effect of which is suspended on their own conduct. A provision for moral agents as such, cannot be otherwise than conditional in this sense.

Now a provision which thus affects all men, may be said to be *for* all, in the same sense as a law is for those who refuse to obey it, or as Bibles and sabbaths are for those who abuse them, or as an estate is for a prodigal son who forfeits or squanders the inheritance. It gives all a *fair chance* to live; a fair chance being where a blessing is so brought within the reach of an agent that he can enjoy it by doing his duty. It is to all a complete *privilege*; privileges being only means of happiness which men are under *obligations* to improve for their good. The privilege of an atonement is as completely brought to all, as any advantage was ever brought to a man which he wickedly threw away. It is as perfectly in their hands as any privilege was ever in the hands of a man which he failed to improve. The whole advantage of an atonement, as far as depends on God, is as much in the hands of one as another, bating the single circumstance of the gift of faith; and that has nothing to do with the subject, for we are speaking of men, not as recipients of faith, but as creatures bound to believe. It could not have been for them as moral agents in a higher sense; for if a higher sense is added, it respects them not as agents but as passive receivers, or at most as sentient.

(3.) This influence upon all was not incidental, but purposely intended. It was the deliberate design of the Moral Governour to put the privilege into the hands of all, from the purest benevolence, and, (as it must be expressed in the dialect of a moral government,) with a sincere *aim* at their good, as well as to manifest his mercy to the universe.

(4.) The great question remaining is, how came the atonement to have such an influence upon all? Through its *sufficiency*, say our brethren: and some of them illustrate that sufficiency by the value of a pearl expressly *not* offered for a part. But we allege that it must have been *expressly* offered for all as moral agents to obtain such an influence. But when we say that it was expressly offered for all as moral agents, we allude solely to the purpose declared in the *public instrument*. We mean that in the public explanation accompanying the atonement, it was stated to be for the benefit of all as moral agents, that is, for the use of all indiscriminately who as agents would believe.

These four particulars comprehend our whole meaning, and if admitted, plainly make out an atonement for all *as moral agents*.

And when we have gained this point, we take off all restraint and say plainly that it was for all; because in its proper influence it was for none but moral agents. It spent all its force upon their relations, and even to Paul was no more than a provision for a moral agent. And when we have made out that it was expressly offered for all *in public*, we throw away all qualifying terms, and say unlimitedly that it was expressly offered for all; because in private it was not offered for any. The secret covenant between the Sacred Persons merely regulated Christ's reward. It was not this but the public explanation which gave to his death that

bearing upon public law which was necessary to render the elect themselves pardonable. In the latter then we must look for the express purpose. And when we turn our eye towards the public instrument, we find the sacrifice offered for none but moral agents, and for all indiscriminately, subject to a conditional application.

On the question whether the atonement was *equally* for all, and in what sense it was not; when we speak of the secret purpose and motive of the divine mind, and speak of man as a whole, we cannot say that it was as much intended for Simon Magus as for Paul. But when we would express the proper influence and tendency of the measure itself, we must speak of men as moral agents only, and then we must pronounce it as much for one as another. Its influence upon all was equal. It removed the curse of abandonment from Simon as much as from Paul, and rendered one as pardonable on the supposition of his faith as the other. And this is all that it did for either. As a privilege it was equally designed for both by the Moral Governour, and was, in itself considered, an equal expression of benevolence to both: and when we use the popular dialect of a moral government, we must say unqualifiedly that it was designed for both alike. And certainly in the express purpose, as it appears in the public instrument, there is no discrimination, no hint of any such distinction as elect and non-elect. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish."—This is all we mean.

## CHAPTER XX.

THE BOTTOM OF THE MISTAKE LIES IN OVERLOOKING  
HUMAN AGENCY.

IN all the views which our brethren take of the non-elect in relation to this question, they overlook their existence as moral agents, and affirm the same things of them as might be affirmed if they were passive blocks under the hands of the engraver. This is the principal source of the whole mistake. That it is so will appear from the following aspects of their system.

(1.) When there is an atonement which is a complete provision for the non-elect as moral agents; (one which changed their relations to the divine law, and placed pardon so within their reach that they can enjoy it by only doing their duty, and ought to make it their own, and are commanded to do it, and are punished for not doing it;) still they say it was not for them, because it was not the purpose of God to dispose them to accept it by an operation on them as passive. This is entirely burying up the moral agent, and leaving nothing in the man for an atonement to respect when the receiver of impressions is taken away. Further, when there is an atonement which spent *all* its force on the relations of moral agents, and is *nothing but* a provision for men in that character, still they say it was not for this part of the race, though they allow that it affected them in every way in which it could affect mere moral agents. That which is nothing but a provision for moral agents, and is allowed to have been such to Simon Magus, was not for Simon Magus, because he was not constrained to

accept it by an influence on him as passive. This is burying up his agency to purpose. Further, an atonement which was *expressly* offered in public for this part of the race as moral agents, was still not for them, (though it bound them to live by it, and had thus all the attributes of a provision for them as moral agents,) and we must go in search of some unknown offering made in secret for men in another character. Thus the pearl was not offered for the 900, though it bound them to come out, and therefore, unless the bond was unjustly imposed, was a provision for them as moral agents, and of course must have been offered for them as such. If in contemplating their rights as agents, the principle was fixed between the offerer and receiver that they should not be stopt if they attempted to come out, and this right was announced and made over to them by promise, then the pearl was offered and accepted for them as moral agents: and yet it was not offered for them, as though a moral agent amounted to nothing.

In some of the arguments on the other side it is even assumed that there is no such thing as a provision for moral agents. They reason thus: if God foresees that men will reject the provision he will not make it; and if he makes it he will not suffer them to reject it. A prudent physician, say they, would not prepare a medicine for those who he foresaw would refuse it, nor suffer those for whom it was prepared to cast it away if he could alter their minds\*. Then there is no such thing as a provision for moral agents. Or rather the very existence of moral agents is overlooked in such reasonings as this.

(2.) It is a fundamental principle of the system that

\* Delegates from Drent in the Synod of Dort. Acts of Synod, Part III. p. 207.

men without the Spirit have no power to believe, that is, no capacity which can be called a natural ability. Then indeed without the Spirit they are not moral agents, for capacity, we have seen, is the very foundation of moral agency. Accordingly some have the consistency to deny that there is in natural men a proper basis of obligation without resorting to Adam. In general they will not admit the natural possibility of the non-elect's believing, nor even allow us to make the supposition of such an event. From not perceiving that their capacity is a full foundation for the provision of privileges, just as though it was certain they would improve them, and enough to justify the expression that they can improve them, they are unable to see that the non-elect bear any more relation to an atonement brought to their door and offered to them, than masses of inanimate matter; and often ask, of what avail such a provision without the gift of faith? just as they would ask, of what avail a provision for the dead? Of course they will not allow that it gives them a *fair chance* to live, or is to them a complete *privilege*, though chances, (thus actively considered,) and privileges, are predicable only of moral agents. Its being for them as moral agents is a fact of great magnitude and importance, but this is wholly sunk.

(3.) They cannot see that the atonement expressed the least benevolence to the non-elect, any more than if it had suspended pardon on their possessing the intellect of a Locke or the strength of a Hercules. They do not see that the natural powers of men in such a case constitute a foundation for treatment by which benevolence can be expressed, no less than if pardon was suspended on their stretching out the hand. And this leads to the conclusion that nothing which God can do for those who remain unsanctified, can indicate benevolence towards them. And the next step is to

affirm that he has no benevolence towards them, not even a "general affection to them as creatures." And then he could have no motive to make the provision for them, and it could not be designed for them, but must have fallen out a provision for them in some incidental way, though fastened upon them severally as such by express law. In short moral agents are such absolute non-entities, that God could have no motive to make a provision for them as such; and therefore to place the decree respecting the atonement before that of election, is to charge him with resolving on a costly measure without a motive.

(4.) This total sinking of moral agency appears in their placing a limited atonement on a level with non-election, both as to the possibility of pardon and the sincerity of the offer.

First, as to the possibility of pardon. In answer to the objection, "If Christ died not for me I cannot be saved, because there is no atonement for me," it is said, "Any objection of this sort—is more directly levelled at the doctrine of particular election, than at that of particular redemption." "The decree of election and reprobation most certainly fixes the event of the salvation or damnation of every individual of the human race. And what advantage is gained by supposing that Christ has made an atonement for those whose eternal destiny to destruction is immutably fixed? Wherein has this scheme the advantage over the one which we advocate?"

If men were blocks, a decree not to impart life to them would leave them in the same condition as a neglect to make a provision for their use on the supposition of their living. And if non-election placed men where a limited atonement would have done, it is because they are as powerless as blocks. No man for a

moment could have supposed the two cases parallel without forgetting that the non-elect possess a capacity to believe. The certainty that they will perish is indeed the same on either plan; and so it is on the bare supposition of foreknowledge. But here lies the difference. Upon this scheme men are debarred independently of their own act; upon ours their own rejection of the Gospel is the ground of their exclusion. On one supposition the acceptance of the benefit is a natural impossibility, because no benefit was provided for them; on the other, it is perfectly easy for them to live if only well disposed. This difference could not have been overlooked had not the existence of creature agency been buried from view. And the existence of that makes all the difference between a righteous moral government and fate. That certainty which involves the spontaneity of creatures, is consistent with freedom and the government of a just God; that certainty which is independent of their voluntary action, is fate, as despotic as ever the Stoicks feigned.

Secondly, as to the sincerity of the offer. "The same objection," it is said, "may be made to the sincerity of offering salvation to those whom God in the decree of election has passed by, as to those who are not included in the decree of redemption." Nothing could render the offer insincere but a natural impossibility in the way of accepting it. This would: as the offer of escape to a prisoner on condition of his deciphering a scrawl which really had no meaning, would only be sporting with his misery. Insincerity placed in any thing else, would render all the offers of an omniscient God even to the elect insincere, unless simultaneously accompanied by an influence to constrain their acceptance. Now if a decree to withhold the



Spirit rendered it as naturally impossible for the non-elect to accept the offer as the want of an atonement would have done, it is because without the Spirit they are as powerless as statues. All that in creatures which supports the whole fabric of a moral government, is entirely overlooked in such reasonings as this.

(5.) The same thing appears in the confounding of elect and non-elect with believers and unbelievers, and all these with capable agents. The atonement was not for Simon Magus as a capable agent, because it was not for him as an unbeliever, and therefore he was excluded as non-elect; annihilating thus the capable agent, and making him as passive in his unbelief as in his non-election. If unbelief had been as essential to him and as passively received as complexion, this would have been right. For had the atonement not been offered for people of his colour, you might have said with truth that it was not for Simon as a man, because it was not for a person of such a hue, and that therefore he was excluded as one predestined to that complexion. But to reason thus about his unbelief, is to reduce him from an accountable being to a passive tablet, and the moral government over him to inexorable fate.

In like manner they make it the same thing for an atonement to be for Paul as a believer and for Paul as elect; and because they understand it to have been for him absolutely as elect, they say it was for him absolutely as a believer. But this, unless his own act in believing is reduced to nothing, is saying that it was for him absolutely on the condition of his faith. But they exclude the condition, and thereby reduce his own act to nothing. It might have been absolutely for one as a white man, because he has no agency

in forming his own complexion ; but to say that it was absolutely for Paul as a believer, is to annihilate the moral agent and leave nothing but the passive receiver of faith.

(6.) The same thing appears in the opposition which is made to the dialect of a moral government, as savouring too much of legality for the reign of grace and the Spirit ; though it is the only language in which the duties, rights, and relations of moral agents can be expressed. "This may be exemplified in the mark of proscription set upon *condition* and *probation*. The things denoted by these terms, we have seen, must accompany moral agents, the one until they are fixed in happiness or misery, the other as long as their existence remains : and nothing but the habit of burying from view this character of men seems sufficient to account for the opposition made to the terms. This cause comes out more fully in some of their reasonings about the *things*. "If he died for them only on some condition, then if that condition never takes place he did not die for them." What more could be said if they were stocks ? On this principle nothing can be done for mere moral agents more than for clods, and their rational powers, separate from the Spirit, are no proper basis to support the measures of a moral government. Nothing can be done for a clod that is not done for it as passive, because it is nothing but passive. And this reasoning assumes that nothing can be done for a man unless it is made effectual by an operation on him as passive ; thus sinking his active nature altogether.

It is not difficult to see by what habits of thinking great and good men have fallen into this mistake. They have fixed their eyes so steadily on secret decrees and the passiveness of men, and pondered so much on faith as "the gift of God," and so little on

faith as the duty and act of the creature, that they have lost sight of moral agents and a moral government. In particular the idea of reprobation has so fastened itself upon their minds, that they have been unable to ascribe to God in any character a serious aim to provide the means of salvation for the non-elect. In this way they have lost those discoveries of divine benevolence which are made in the treatment of agents by itself. But let them turn their eye full upon the rational faculties of man, and familiarize to their minds the operations of God in that independent character in which he stands related to moral agents, and they will find a new world opened to their view, and will see that one very interesting part of the divine manifestations has been lost. And then they will easily admit the views of a moral government which their brethren entertain, without renouncing election and special grace, and will find nothing in a general atonement to weaken the security of believers or the special love of God to the elect. And if any thing is gained by these views, it is certain that nothing will be lost.



## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF CORRECT LANGUAGE ON THE SUBJECT.

IF the atonement was for all men as moral agents, it is proper to say unlimitedly that it was for all. Whatever is true of the moral agent, may be affirmed unqualifiedly of the man. Whatever is predicable of a person either in his active or passive character, we affirm unlimitedly of that individual, leaving it to the

predicate to determine whether it respects him as an agent or a recipient. Thus we say of the man that he is under obligations, that he enjoys privileges, that he is good or bad, that he is entitled to reward or punishment; all which is true of him as an agent. Thus we say of the man that he was elected or not elected, that he has been regenerated or not regenerated; all which is true of him as a recipient. In like manner we say of a man that he is wise, of a woman that she is beautiful, of a house that it is white, or that it is capacious; leaving it to be gathered from the predicates whether the former attributes belong to the body or mind, and whether the latter appertain to the covering or the interior of the building. If then the atonement is for all men as moral agents, it is proper to affirm without limitation that it is for all. And if it is right to assert unqualifiedly of men what is true of them as moral agents, it is proper to affirm unlimitedly of God what is true of him as Moral Governour, leaving it to the predicates to determine in what character they respect him. And this is the way in which he is spoken of throughout his word.

In this way we *must* speak or depart from the established use of language, and either utter an implied falsehood, or fall into tautology. The atonement was a measure as exclusively adapted to agents as law itself. Try then the principle by the case of a law. We say unqualifiedly that such a law was made for the people of the United States. That is correct. But if in reference to their double character, we say that it was made for them *in a certain sense*, we utter an implied falsehood, for it was made for them as completely as a law could be made for any people. If we say it was made for them *as agents*, we use tautology, (such as I have been obliged to use through this whole treatise.)

for no law can be made for men in any other character. But when a law or an atonement is made for men as agents, to say unqualifiedly that it was not made for them, because they are not prevented from abusing it by another power operating upon them as passive, is something more than an implied falsehood, it is expressly untrue. The same when we speak of the design of God. To say that he did not design his law for Ahab, because he did not intend by sanctifying influence to render it an ultimate blessing to him, is manifestly false. And it is the same when we say that he did not design the atonement for Ananias and Sapphira.

That language should be employed which expresses the truth on the subject. If God has provided an atonement for all, we ought to say so, that he may have the glory, and that men may know their privileges and their hopes.

So far as the dispute is verbal, a phraseology ought not to be adhered to which does not express the truth. And how far it is verbal, is a question of some importance. Now our brethren in detail admit all that we ask. This they do as often as they say that Christ died "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish;" and as often as they allow that all may enjoy the benefit by believing, and are bound to make it their own. And yet when they come to general propositions, they contradict the one which we support, and distinctly say that the atonement was not for all. This is because they do not attach to the general proposition the same meaning that we do. And the reason of this is, they are not agreed with us as to the character in which men are to be spoken of in this matter. We contend that they ought to be spoken of as moral agents; they speak of them continually as passive re-

ceivers. In general they do not mean to deny what really is meant by the atonement's being for all as moral agents, but they so annihilate agents as to make no account of this. When therefore we say that it was for Simon Magus, (meaning that it was for him as a capable agent,) they, though they allow what we mean, refuse to use our language, and say decidedly that it was not for him, because they overlook his agency, and speak of him as merely sentient and passive. The proposition that it was for him, has a different meaning with them from what it has with us, because they see him not as an agent. And if they could see him as an agent, so as to attach the same meaning to the proposition that we do, they would not deny it. So far the dispute is verbal. But the mistake lies deeper than words, and consists in overlooking the natural ability of man. This is the bottom of the difficulty. Though therefore there is much logomachy in the contest, yet if we are right our brethren labour under a real mistake. On a subject where they ought to speak of men exclusively as moral agents, they constantly reason about them as though they were passive tablets; no more capable of believing than the clods of the valley. And when they refer to the purpose of God in this provision, they constantly speak of him only as intending or not intending to make impressions on passive recipients. This is plainly turning the Moral Governour out of a transaction which was exclusively his own, and transferring the whole business to the Sovereign Efficient Cause. This has been the grand mistake of Calvinists of the type of a part of the Synod of Dort. They have reasoned right against the Arminians about election and regeneration, but on several points have plainly lost sight of moral agents and a moral government. On the other hand, the Armini-

ans have had many correct ideas of a moral government, but have been as blind as Bartimeus to all the secrets of the other department. And thus these two parties have gone on contending from age to age, and after all both have been right—and both wrong.

This limiting phraseology, mean what it may, (for it has different meanings in different mouths,) is far from being harmless. Whatever latent reservations may lurk beneath it, on its face it carries a wrong view of the nature of the atonement itself, making it an absolute provision for a part instead of a conditional provision for all. If it means to deny that the provision was for all *as agents*, this is so incongruous with the offer to all as agents, and the obligations laid upon all as agents to live by it, and the punishment of all as agents who reject it, that, in spite of all explanations, it amounts, though unintentionally, to an impeachment of the sincerity and justice of God. If without asserting any thing concerning agents, it only buries them from view, even then, by leaving no sense in which the atonement could respect the non-elect, it carries men to the frightful length of denying that it was any expression of benevolence to this part of the race, or even that God has any benevolence towards them, or so much as a “general affection to them as creatures.” And this takes from them all reasons for gratitude, except what is founded in ignorance of their destiny, and leads all men to doubt, in proportion as they hesitate about their own election, whether they have any cause to thank God for their existence or for one of all his mercies. If it distinctly admits what is meant by an atonement for all as agents, and yet persists in affirming that it was not for all, it exactly annihilates moral agents, and that capacity on which human obligations rest, and the basis which supports the whole fabric of

a moral government. This is the greatest objection of all. And to make even this more intense, the phraseology in question *propagates* an error so disastrous. By means of this, the plain portable position *that Christ did not die for all*, is carried through the world, and calls to its support all those reasonings and forms of speech which conceal the foundation of human obligations, and cast obscurity over all the relations and principles of a moral government. The world need a right phraseology on this subject, to familiarize to their minds their own distinct and complete agency, their obligations, guilt, and privileges, and the claims and mercies of God. But the dialect in question carries in it a systematic concealment of human agency and God's direct claims upon mankind, and is not unlike what the sinner himself employs, when, filling his eye with the divine decrees, he takes shelter in the plea that he is a machine. With the better part it does not lead to a denial of the desert of punishment, but it obscures their personal responsibility, and sends them back to Adam to make out what otherwise would seem an insufficient ground of condemnation. It hides the direct and perfect claims which God has upon rational creatures willing or unwilling. To expose and urge these claims direct, is the best way to make sinners and even Christians feel their obligations, privileges, and inexcusableness. It is the deadening of this sense which makes stupidity.

A self justifying race are sufficiently prone to plead that they are machines, that God is a hard master requiring more than they are able to perform, that they are not answerable for their impenitence and unbelief, that while the Spirit is withheld they have not a fair chance for salvation, and enjoy no privileges, and are



under no obligations to Christ. And it deserves solemn consideration how far the incorrect language of good men on this subject, has tended to confirm and propagate a delusion so destructive to the souls of men.

## PART III.



### SCRIPTURAL VIEW.



#### CHAPTER I.

##### PLAN OF THE ARGUMENT.

ALL that we have to prove from the Scriptures is, that the atonement, where the Gospel comes, is a provision for all as moral agents; that in order to become such, it changed the relations which all as moral agents sustained to the divine law; and that, to produce this effect, it was expressly offered with such an intent.

That is a provision for a moral agent which he is *capable* of improving for his good if well disposed, and is *bound* to improve. The obligation cannot be imposed without the capacity. We have seen that no bond, except by means of deception, can be laid on a man to accept a privilege, which, from the foreknowledge that he would not improve it, was not provided for him; for that would be an obligation to perform an impossibility. The capacity implies that the provision is made in such a sense, that, just as it now is, he can actually enjoy it by doing his duty. Simon Magus, had Simon Magus believed, (and as the thing was not a natural impossibility we have a right to make the supposition,) would have found a provision ready for him, just as the purpose of the atonement

then stood, or he had not a capacity to make it his own even by believing; for had he believed it would not have been his own. The 900 prisoners, in the case of the pearl sufficient for 1000 but offered for 100, could not have come out had they accepted the offer. You say it was foreknown that they would not accept. Be it so. Yet if the herald at the door had told them that they could then come out by accepting, he would have uttered a falsehood; for had they attempted it they would have been stopt. It is in vain to say, "If you suppose one thing changed in a series established by infinite wisdom, you ought to suppose a corresponding change in the whole system: if you suppose that a non-elect man may believe, you should suppose at the same time that both the decree of election and redemption correspond with this event, and then all difficulty will be removed." I have nothing to do with that supposition. I am speaking of men as moral agents, whose capacity and freedom are not impaired by any decree, and whose faith, be decrees what they may, we have a right to speak of as possible. If we may not speak of them thus, what is their capacity? that of a block: and nothing remains but perfect fatality. And if we may speak thus of the non-elect, (not as non-elect but as moral agents,) then we may suppose, without reference to any decree, what would happen in case they should believe. And now it is either true in such a case that they would find a provision ready for them, just as the purpose of atonement now stands, or else it is not true that they have a capacity to use it for their benefit. If they cannot enjoy it without changing a decree of God, as your supposition implies, the thing is a natural impossibility. But if they would find a provision for them in case they of their own accord should believe,

then an atonement was made for them in such a sense that they can enjoy it by doing their duty. And that is a complete provision for them as moral agents.

And if the atonement is such a provision for them as moral agents, it certainly changed their relations to the divine law, and from a state in which they could not be pardoned on any terms, brought them into a condition in which their pardon is possible, and in which nothing stands in the way but their own unbelief.

How the atonement came to have this influence on those who remain unsanctified, is another question. Some ascribe it to its sufficiency, others to the express purpose for which it was offered. One thing is certain. No sufficiency could have produced this effect which should have left their discharge impossible even on the supposition of their faith. It could not therefore be such a sufficiency as is ascribed to the pearl, which, valuable enough to redeem 1000, is offered and accepted for 100, leaving it impossible for the rest to come out even should they accept the insidious offer. It is not indeed necessary to that sufficiency that there should have been a secret purpose to make men "willing" by an operation on them as passive; but it is necessary that the sacrifice should have been understood to be offered and accepted in such a sense for them, that should they of their own accord believe they would be discharged. It must have been offered and accepted with an express purpose of affecting their relations exactly in this manner, "that whosoever believeth—should not perish." That is, it must have been expressly offered and accepted for them as moral agents.

These are the only points necessary to be support-

ed, and the basis which I shall place beneath them is the word of God.

I will begin at the concession of the Synod of Dort, that the non-elect do not perish "for want of the sacrifice of Christ,—nor through its insufficiency, but by their own fault." This concession implies a provision made for them in such a sense that they can enjoy it by doing their duty. It implies a provision offered to them with the promise of pardon if they will accept it, or how is their failure their own fault? It implies a command to believe, or how do they violate an obligation? And the offer, promise, and command, imply that the atonement so changed their relations as to render their pardon consistent with the honour of the law if they would believe. And this it could not have done without being expressly offered for them as moral agents. After this manner I shall construct my argument. The whole may be comprised in the four following propositions.

I. In the offers and promises of the Gospel, the benefit of the atonement is not only proposed, but actually given and made over to all as moral agents, as far as it can be before they have performed their part.

II. The benefit of the atonement is so brought within the reach of all who hear the Gospel, that they are bound to make it their own, and can enjoy it by only doing their duty.

III. The atonement so changed the relations of all men to the divine law, as to render their pardon consistent with the honour of the law in case they hear the Gospel and believe.

IV. The atonement was expressly offered and accepted for all as moral agents.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE BENEFIT OF THE ATONEMENT MADE OVER TO ALL.

THE first proposition is, that in the offers and promises of the Gospel, the benefit of the atonement is not only proposed, but actually given and made over to all as moral agents, as far as it can be before they have performed their part\*.

If pardon by the atonement is really offered to all, with a promise that it shall be theirs if they do not cast it away, then, (allowing the acceptance not to be a natural impossibility but their duty,) the whole benefit is made over to them as moral agents, as fully as it can be before they have performed their part. The complete privilege of an atonement is theirs. And if this is the case the matter is settled. There is no longer any need of inquiring about the nature of the expiation, or the express purpose for which it was offered: we find the privilege actually in the hands of all. God himself guarantees that the nature of the satisfaction was such as to warrant the universal grant, and that is enough for us.

The offer and promise certainly prove that the provision was for all as capable agents, or for all in such a sense that they can actually enjoy it by doing their duty. And this is all we ask.

But an attempt is made to account for the offer on the ground of the sufficiency of the atonement, without supposing the provision in any sense for all. "That may

\* Our view of the grant differs from that of the Remonstrants in this. We say it is all God can do for *moral agents* otherwise than as a *reward* they said it was all he could do for *men* without destroying their freedom. Their error lay in denying special grace in regeneration.

be sufficient for the ransom of 1000 prisoners which in fact is paid for one hundred. Suppose the ransom price to be a pearl of exceeding great value, much more than sufficient to redeem all the captives in prison : but the person paying it had it in view only to redeem his own friends. This intention in the redeemer, and the acceptance of the price by the authority which holds them in bondage, constitutes this pearl a ransom, and confines it to the number for whom it was designed. But the pearl itself is sufficient to ransom all the rest of the captives if it had been applied to their advantage. To carry on the illustration. Suppose that the person undertaking to redeem his friends should say, ' I will have proclamation made in the prison that every one who will acknowledge me as his deliverer, and will subject himself to my authority, may immediately come forth upon the footing of the ransom which I have paid ; for none but my friends will accept these terms. The remainder will prefer their prison to liberty, which can only be had by submission to one whom they inveterately hate.' Now the person commissioned to carry these tidings to the prison, would feel himself authorized to proclaim deliverance to every one who was willing to accept the terms, and use arguments and motives to induce them to submit : but the event would be that none would accept the offer but the real friends of the redeemer. This he knew from the beginning ; and therefore he paid the ransom for no others. Is there any thing insincere in this whole transaction ? The messenger is not authorized to declare that the whole are certainly ransomed, but that there is a ransom provided for every one who will accept the terms."

Now this is as ingenious as it could be ; and all that is wanting to make it a just representation, is *an agree-*

*ment publicly made with the retainer of the prisoners that if the 900 attempt to come out they shall not be stopt.* Then, whatever foreknowledge there might be of the refusal of a part, there would be a ransom paid for all as capable agents. But for want of this the representation does not agree with the Gospel: for that the Father has publicly engaged not to cast off any of the human race who come to him, every reader of the Bible knows. For want of this the representation disagrees with the Gospel in a point which gives the transaction the appearance of great unfairness. If the 900 had attempted to come out they would certainly have been stopt, and none the less for the value of the pearl. That value was only a blind, and in no degree justified the offer. But for the advantage gained by a deceptive appearance, the proclamation might as well have been made without that sufficiency. Such a doctrine tends to make every one distrust the sincerity of the offer, and to say, as the unbelieving are too apt to do, It does not mean me, and I shall not be accepted if I go. In all this it differs from the Gospel. Who will pretend to say that if Judas had believed, (and I hope enough has been said to justify the supposition,) he would have been rejected? But if he had believed, you say, it would have been foreknown, and the atonement would have been made for him. And are you sure it would have been foreknown? We have no other idea of God's foreknowledge than that it is founded on his own purpose to produce or permit. He therefore foreknew whether he should give faith to Judas. But this possible action of which I am speaking, would not have been caused by God, nor have grown out of any purpose of his. How then should it have been foreknown? No event is in fact unforeknown; because, beyond what is produced by the direct influence of God, the



universe is governed by motives, the tendency of which he perfectly understands. But the possibility of the action under consideration, did not depend on the motives which God had actually spread, but on the faculties of a rational soul. Had Judas done as he ought, an event would have taken place which was never foreseen. And had he done as he ought without the influence and motives which God controlled, (and his obligations were independent of both,) an event would have taken place, which, so far as we can judge, could not have been foreseen. No such event ever did or will occur: I only make these remarks to show how independent of divine foreknowledge the natural possibility of action is. Unnumbered actions which God never foreknew, are still naturally possible, or prescience reduces every thing to fate.

It is on this ground that God, in all his treatment of moral agents, (except in the single instance of prophecy,) proceeds just as though he had no foreknowledge. The capacity of creatures to act, and of course the natural possibility of their action, and their obligations, are independent of prescience; and the Moral Governour, founding his course on that capacity and possibility, and on those obligations, holds his way as though nothing was foreseen.

In the case of the prisoners, you are reduced to this dilemma. Either the offer of release to the 900 was made deceitfully, or on the avowed principle of setting them free without a price paid for them. And are you prepared to say that God has avowed the principle of offering to the non-elect a pardon unfounded on the atonement? that when he would not discharge his own elect without exacting life for life, he has offered to release others without an expiation? The other alternative is chosen; and God is set forth as offering the be-

nefit of a ransom which has never been paid, and tendering a deliverance which if accepted would be denied: for it is truly said in the same paper, that "the death of Christ must expiate our sins before any way can be opened" for pardon.

If prescience is to have any influence in such a matter, why do you stop here? It ought to carry you to a denial that the *offer* was designed for the non-elect. If foreknowledge prevented the atonement from being made for them, foreknowledge would prevent the offer from being intended for them. And some have actually gone to this length, and affirmed that the offer is made only to the "thirsty" and those who "will" come, and was not designed for those who it was foreseen would not be thirsty or willing.

This brings us to the proof that the offer and promise are indeed made to all. Facts will not bear you out in saying that the offer is made only to the elect, and falls on the ear of others incidentally, like a preacher addressing a select society, heedless of the strangers who have mingled with the crowd. No, the speaker calls those strangers by name, and declares that he means them, and lays them individually under the most solemn obligations to receive the message, and afterwards sends them all to prison for rejecting it. Those who refused to come to the wedding, were the identical persons to whom the invitation had been expressly sent; and the wicked at last will be condemned for the rejection of calls made to them in particular\*.

Either the grant is so completely made to all and each as to lay a foundation on which faith with all its confidence, (for it must not waver†,) can rest its eternal and infinite concerns, or every act which appropriates the Gospel to one's self antecedent to the full

\* Prov. 1. 24—31. Mat. 22. 1—14.——† James 1. 6.

assurance of hope, must be presumptuous. If the grant is made only to the elect, no man has a right to rest his own soul on the promise, until, from his feelings towards the abstract Gospel, he knows himself to be one of the elect. And throughout his life, in proportion as he questions his election, he must be perplexed with doubts about his right to take the invitation to himself and rest his soul on Christ. In all its appropriating acts, his faith can never exert its energies unrestrained, but must be cramped and manacled with the unceasing apprehension that it has no warrant to make the appropriation. Am I elected? will be the leading inquiry, instead of, What has God promised?

I argue the same thing from the very nature of faith. This is a belief either of a divine testimony or promise. But there is no testimony that this, that, or the other man is elected: the testimony respects the public mission of Christ, and the method and conditions of salvation. So far then as testimony is concerned, faith must exert all her attributes independently of the question who is elected. And if there are any personal concerns to transact with Christ,—if I am to receive him for *my* Saviour, and not merely to regard him as a Saviour in general, I must unreservedly receive him for my own on the authority given in the public dispensation of the Gospel, without reference to the question whether I am elected. If this is the nature of faith, then in that public dispensation the grant must be made to all. Turn now to the promise. I cannot believe a promise to me if there is none. I have no right to believe that God will be “a Rewarder” to me on any conditions, if there is no promise to me. But it is the privilege and duty of all men, without waiting for evidence of their election, to exercise

this confidence, which indeed is so essential a part of faith that without it no man can gain the favour of God. "Without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder, [of the elect? no, without distinction,] of them that *diligently seek him\**." This confidence, which certainly every man is to exercise in relation to himself, and not merely in reference to others, is thus made the very definition of faith itself. And it will appear in another place that every man is commanded upon pain of death to believe. Every man then is laid under bonds to exercise unwavering assurance that he himself shall be accepted if he diligently seeks. Whatever opinion he may form of his state and character, he must believe this as firmly as his own existence. A doubt on this subject is the very unbelief against which eternal plagues are denounced. The grand effort of every sincere and enlightened seeker is to work his soul up to this confidence, which would be dashed in a moment by a doubt respecting the extension of the promise to him. This bond on every man infallibly proves a conditional promise to every man on which his confidence may rest.

And this has been the common opinion of the Calvinistic world. It was the opinion of Calvin himself. In his Comment on Rom. 5. 18. we find this declaration: "He makes this the common grace of all because it is set before all, not because it is actually extended to all. For *though Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, and by the goodness of God is indiscriminately offered to all, yet all do not embrace him†.*"

\* Heb. 11. 6.—† Quoted in Watts' Works, vol. 6. p. 237.

This was also the opinion of the Synod of Dort. "The promise of the Gospel is this, that whosoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish but have everlasting life; which promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought without distinction and indiscriminately to be announced and proposed to all people and men to whom God in his good pleasure sends the Gospel." "As many as are called by the Gospel are called in earnest; for in earnest and most truly does God show in his word what is agreeable to him, viz. that the called come to him. In earnest likewise he promises to all who come to him and believe, rest to their souls and eternal life. And that many who are called by the ministry of the Gospel do not come and are not converted, is not to be imputed as a fault to the Gospel, nor to Christ offered in the Gospel, nor to God calling by the Gospel, but to the called themselves\*." The delegates from Great Britain say, "There is no mortal who may not truly and in earnest be called by the ministers of the Gospel to a participation of remission of sins and eternal life through this death of Christ.—Nothing false or dissembling goes under the Gospel; but whatever in it is offered or promised to men by ministers, is in the same manner offered and promised to them by the Author of the Gospel.—In this merit of Christ's death is founded the universal Gospel promise, according to which all who believe in Christ do actually obtain remission of sins and eternal life. That this promise is universal, and founded in the death of Christ, appears from Acts 10. 43. Although therefore this promise is not promulgated to all in every place and time, it is of such a nature that it might truly be announced to all and each.—The administration of

\* Acts of Synod, Part I. p. 289, 298.

grace in the Church, where, according to this promise of the Gospel, salvation is offered to all, is enough to convict all the impenitent and unbelieving that it was by their own fault, and either through their neglect or contempt of the Gospel, that they perished and lost the offered benefit\*." The delegates from Hesse say, "The Gospel is proclaimed indiscriminately to all, to the elect and reprobate†." Matthias Martinius, one of the delegates from Bremen, says, "The exercise of this love to man appears in the outward call to the elect and reprobate without distinction.—And therefore upon whatever man we fall, to him we are the messengers and publishers of this salutary grace‡." Henry Iselburg, another delegate from Bremen, says, "The remedy of sin and death, our Lord Jesus Christ, is proposed and offered by the preaching of the Gospel, not to certain persons only, or to those alone who are to be saved, but to the elect and reprobate indiscriminately; and all without distinction are invited to a participation or fruition of it, and to eternal life thereby§." The Dutch Professors say, "It is not denied by the orthodox that this ransom of Christ is to be indiscriminately announced as such, [as being sufficient to save all who believe,] to Christian people, and to whomsoever the Gospel is preached, and to be offered in the name of Christ, and that in earnest, and according to the counsel of the Father; the hidden decisions of God being in the mean time left to himself, who dispenses this grace and applies it as far as and to whomsoever he will||."

Some members of the Synod did indeed acknowledge that their own practice was to present the offers of the Gospel only to the thirsty and penitent; alleg-

\* Acts of Synod, Part II. p. 101, 102.—† p. 114.—‡ p. 134, 135.  
—§ p. 141.—|| Part III. p. 122.

ing that when they preached *repentance* to all it was not preaching the Gospel. What, not when like John the Baptist they preached “*repentance for the remission of sins*”? or like the apostles, said to the unregenerate multitude, “Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out\*”? But if they still hesitate to present the Gospel to the carnal, I will spread before them the following page. “Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars, she hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, she hath also furnished her table; she hath sent forth her maidens, she crieth upon the highest places of the city, *Whoso is simple* let him turn in hither, and as for him that *wanteth understanding*, she saith to him, Come eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled: *forsake the foolish* and live, and go in the way of understanding.” “Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.—Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well.—Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” “We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” But this is preaching repentance; what then will you say of the next? “Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth†.”

That the call is extended to the non-elect, is a fact expressly asserted in so many words: “Many be called but few chosen.” Those who belong to this class are invited when they are hardy enough to make light of the invitation, and even to destroy the messengers who bring it. “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain

\* Mark 1. 4. Acts 3. 19.—† Prov. 9. 1—6. Is. 1. 10—18. and 45. 22. 2 Cor. 5. 20.

king which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding, and they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, tell them which are bidden, *Behold I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come unto the marriage.* But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. And the remnant took his servants and entreated them spitefully and slew them. But when the king heard thereof he was wroth, and he sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers and burnt up their city. Then saith he to his servants, the wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy: go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment. And he saith unto him, friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, bind him hand and foot, and take him away and cast him into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called but few are chosen\*.”

All this was fulfilled in the invitations to the Jews, and in the commission to the apostles, “Go ye into all the world and preach,” not *repentance* only, but “the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned†.”

The preachers of the Old Testament had made in-

\* Matt. 20. 16. & 22. 2—14. —† Mark 16. 15, 16.



discriminate offers of life to the Jews in the name of a Saviour to come. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Christ himself did the same. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." To the "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," he said, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayst be rich, and white raiment that thou mayst be clothed." "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me." "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." After the same manner the apostles preached. To a mixed assembly of Jews and heathen, in the first Gospel sermon ever preached in the place, one of them said, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached *unto you* the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses\*."

Thus the grant is actually made to all, laying a solid foundation for their faith. By this important circumstance the non-elect are distinguished from devils. The latter have no foundation for faith, because there is no promise for them to believe. A God of truth has not unbarred their prison and assured

\* Luke 24. 47. John 3. 36. & 5. 24. Acts 10. 43. & 13, 38, 39. Rev. 3. 17, 18, 20, and 22. 17.

them of mercy through his Son if they will accept it. The promise and oath of God have not fallen on the ear of hell. This vast difference lies between devils and non-elect men. One have a stable foundation for their faith,—for a full assurance that they shall be pardoned by Christ if they will believe; the other have no foundation at all. One have an actual grant of pardon made to them as moral agents, as far as it can be made before they have performed their part; the other are delivered over to gleamless despair. One can easily make remission their own if only well disposed; the other could not be discharged if they were as holy as Gabriel. One will actually be pardoned if they believe, the decree of non-election notwithstanding; the other have nothing to believe but the sentence of eternal reprobation. One hear it said, with an eye directly fixed on them, “Behold I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come unto the marriage;” affirming in the plainest terms, *the provision was made for you*; the other are constantly hearing the sentence, “Depart, ye cursed.” And yet was no discrimination made between non-elect men and devils in the provision for pardon?



### CHAPTER III.

#### ALL MEN BOUND TO MAKE THE BENEFIT THEIR OWN.

AFTER all that has been said, if the benefit is offered to the non-elect upon impossible conditions, it is still not provided for them as moral agents, and the grant really amounts to nothing. This is the very opening by which some who admit the universality of

the grant, elude the force of this stupendous fact. It is impossible, say they, for the non-elect to believe, because faith is "the gift of God;" and on this assumption they proceed to draw their conclusions just as though the non-elect were dead masses of matter. If this was the case, or if salvation had been offered them upon any condition which they had not natural ability to fulfil, (for instance, on their possessing the strength of a Goliath or the intellect of an Aristotle,) then indeed the offer would not have proved a provision for them as moral agents. But if the benefit had been suspended on their stretching out the hand, it would have been easy for all to see that it was provided for them as capable agents, though they should have lost it by refusing to perform that act. Now if they do possess a capacity which is a *bona fide* basis of obligation, and which bears the same relation to the obligation to believe that muscular strength would to the obligation to extend an arm at the divine command; if they can be as reasonably required to do the one as the other, and as reasonably punished for the neglect, without resting any part of their obligation on Adam; then a benefit which is suspended on their faith, is just as much provided for them as moral agents, (or as creatures *under obligations*,) as though it had been suspended on their stretching out the hand. And the only reason why it is not easy for us to realize this, is the difficulty we find in apprehending that their natural powers are as complete a basis of obligation in the one case as in the other. If it was familiar to the mind that a rational creature, separated from the Spirit, is as perfectly and reasonably bound to believe on Christ as to extend an arm at the divine command, every difficulty would vanish. We should then see that the benefit of an atonement is as completely pro-

vided for those who remain unsanctified, as the house which they are at liberty to occupy, or the office which is suspended on their own choice.

It becomes then a question of vital importance what relation unbelievers bear to faith in point of ability and obligation; whether they are to be viewed in this matter as impotent machines, or as men possessed of ample natural powers and under reasonable bonds.

This brings us to the second proposition in the plan of the argument, which was, that the benefit of the atonement is so brought within the reach of all who hear the Gospel, that they are bound to make it their own, and can enjoy it by only doing their duty. Nothing is necessary to support this proposition but the two following facts.

(1.) The faith on which the benefit is suspended is required of all. Of every man that "charity" is demanded which "believeth all things." And many texts might be quoted like the following: "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." To the unbelieving Jews who afterwards died in their sins, such injunctions as these were addressed: "Repent ye and believe the Gospel." "Though ye believe not me, believe the works." "While ye have the light believe in the light." "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent\*."

(2.) The unbelief of sinners is condemned and punished. "He will reprove the world of sin,—because they believe not on me." "Ye have not his word abiding in you, for whom he hath sent him ye believe not.—Ye will not come to me that ye might have

\* Mark 1. 15. John 6. 29. and 10. 38. and 12. 36. 1 Cor. 13. 7. 1 John 3. 23.

life." "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." "He that believeth not shall be damned." "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." "If our Gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." "To whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?" That tremendous burst of wrath which overwhelmed the Jewish nation, and which follows them to this day, is a standing monument to the world of the vengeance of God against unbelief. So completely does the fault lie on sinners, that God wipes his hands of their blood, and in a manner which implies that he has not failed to make ample provision for them, says, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" "As I live—I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye,—for why will ye die\*?"

That the wicked lose the benefit of the atonement by their own fault, is supported, as we have seen, by the collective testimony of the Synod of Dort. I will now add the opinion of several of the particular classes of delegates. Those from Hesse say, that mankind "are all commanded to believe in Christ, and that the unbelieving are justly condemned for their un-

\* Isai. 5. 4. Ezek. 33. 11. Mar. 16. 16. John 3. 18, 19, and 5. 33, 40. and 8. 24. and 16. 8, 9. 2. Cor. 4. 3, 4. 2. Thes. 2. 12. Heb. 3. 18.

belief\*.” Those from the Wetteraw say, “The sufficiency and magnitude of the ransom of Christ, as relates to the reprobate, has a double end, one in itself and the other by accident.—The end by accident is, that they may be without excuse: because they perish, not by the fault of Christ, but by their own; since by their own unbelief they reject the benefits of Christ offered in the Gospel†.” Matthias Martinius, a delegate from Bremen, says, “In this [outward] call are to be distinguished these things: the historical narrative concerning Christ, the command to believe, the interdiction of unbelief, the promise of eternal life made to believers, the threatening of damnation to the unbelieving. And if any one does not believe, the issue of this call is condemnation, and expressly for this reason, because he does not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3. 18.) But this issue in itself is not intended by God, but follows by accident through the fault of man.—For these things, [which are required as conditions of salvation,] men are bound by the power of a divine command to perform themselves; and they who are not able to do this, are not able through their own fault‡.” *A moral inability.* Henry Iselburg, another delegate from Bremen, says, “All and each are sincerely and seriously commanded to believe in Christ;—and they who do not believe in the name of the Son of God are justly condemned.—No one of the reprobate can be condemned and perish for want of the death of Christ, or because there was not in him a sufficient remedy against destruction, but each one through his own fault entirely§.” The delegates from Drent say, “It is most true that the reprobate perish by their own fault||.”

\* Acts of Synod, Part II. p. 114.—† p. 128.—‡ p. 134, 137.—§ p. 141, 142.—|| Part III. p. 205.

Thus it is agreed on all hands that those who remain unsanctified have the benefit of the atonement so within their reach that they ought to make it their own, and have no right to lose it, and are charged with a most unreasonable and wicked neglect in not applying it to themselves; that God peremptorily forbids them to do without it, and when they attempt to put it from them, will take no excuse, and at last will visit them with eternal punishment for throwing it out of their hands. He actually enters against them, in the accounts of a moral government, the charge of *an atonement*, as a provision made for their use, as a privilege, a talent committed to them; and he will act upon this charge at the judgment of the great day and throughout eternity. In that part of his administration in which he is the most scrupulous to weigh all things in exact scales, and to express all matters with literal truth, he will pronounce, in tones as deliberate and solemn as eternal damnation, that an atonement was provided for them, and that they madly threw it away.

Now this decides the question. There is no occasion any longer to inquire about the nature of the atonement, or the express purpose for which it was offered; we find the privilege actually in the hands of all. Their obligation to use it for their benefit, makes it true, independently of every other circumstance, that it is for them as moral agents.

I know of but one way in which an evasion of this argument can even be attempted. It will be said that God, foreknowing that the non-elect would not accept an atonement if provided for them, did not make the provision; and yet, concealing the fact from them, and to bring out their hearts to view, commanded them to accept it. This is exactly the case presented in the

parable of the prisoners and the pearl. By this case then let the principle be tried.

Whether the ransom was accepted for the 900 as capable agents, depends on the question *whether they would have been stopt had they attempted to come out.* That it is lawful to make the supposition of such an attempt, though it was foreknown that it would not be made, appears from this: foreknowledge does not cause an event, and therefore has no influence in making it certain, but is only a perception of what that certainty is. Where it is foreseen that an event will not take place, the foresight has no influence to prevent its occurrence, or to destroy the power of creatures to produce it, or to render the occurrence a natural impossibility. If the certainty which exists *in the thing itself* has no influence on any of these matters, the *knowledge* of that certainty manifestly has not. But if the certainty which exists in the thing itself destroys the power of creatures to do otherwise than they do, and renders a different course a natural impossibility, then every thing is fate and men are machines. Foreknowledge has no more influence on the event, or on the possibility of its being otherwise, or on the power of creatures, than *after* knowledge. But after we know a thing to be certain by actually witnessing the event, we perceive that neither this certainty nor this knowledge had any influence on the power of the agents concerned. In the case under consideration, we plainly see that neither the foreknowledge that the 900 would not come out, nor our after knowledge that they did not come out, had any effect on their power. *They certainly were able to come out.* Upon the principle now opposed, because a thing is certain we may not make the supposition of its being otherwise. But even after the event, we do



make this supposition continually. In explaining the influence of causes, or the relation between antecedents and consequents, we constantly say, had circumstances been so and so, consequences would have been thus and thus: and we have a right to speak in this manner of all events which do not involve a natural impossibility. We have a right then to ask what would have been the consequence had the 900 accepted the offer.

And now in such an event they either would have been stopt or they would not. If they would, the whole transaction was a trick, and no command, unless supported by falsehood, could have imposed on them an obligation to come out, because the thing was a natural impossibility. And if this is the case with the non-elect, it is not true, as the Synod of Dort affirm, that they do not perish "for want of the sacrifice of Christ:" they do perish in one sense for want of that sacrifice, and in another through their own unbelief. They perish for want of the sacrifice in this sense, that they would perish if every other cause were removed; in other words, should they actually believe they would not be pardoned.

On the other hand, if the prisoners would not have been stopped, but would have been permitted to come out on the ground of the ransom offered, then that ransom was certainly accepted for them as capable agents. And if you have *evidence* that they would not have been stopt by their retainer, it must be because he had *publicly engaged* that they should come out if they would on the ground of the ransom paid. And if he had made such an engagement, he had, by a *public covenant*, accepted the ransom for them *as capable agents*. No matter what secret respect the redeemer had to the happiness of the hundred. No matter what

foresight the retainer had of the obstinacy of the rest. Here is a public acceptance of the ransom for the 900 as capable agents. And pray what more was done, or could be done, for the favoured hundred? The ransom was not accepted for them in case they would *not* come out. No, you say, but the redeemer and retainer both knew they would. Granted: but still their coming out was an exertion of their own agency, which must not be buried up or passed over in silence. This thing, which belonged neither to the redeemer nor retainer, but to themselves, was a necessary antecedent to their deliverance, and ought to be spoken of as such. The ransom then was manifestly offered for the hundred to procure their deliverance *on the supposition of their coming out*; and it was publicly agreed between the parties that it should obtain the deliverance of the 900 *on condition that they would come out*. The only difference was, that the parties foreknew that one class would come out, and that the other would not. But as this foreknowledge did not destroy the completeness of moral agency, nor any of its attributes, but left every thing pertaining to the agents unimpaired and unchanged, it did not prevent the ransom from being as completely offered and accepted for the 900 as agents as for the rest.

On the whole, if the obligation of sinners to make the benefit their own, does not prove that the atonement was offered and accepted for them as moral agents, it does not prove that the benefit would be theirs even should they fulfil their obligations. And then it is made their duty to secure an advantage which they could not secure by doing their duty. They are commanded to do a natural impossibility upon pain of damnation, and are eternally punished for not performing what with the best dispositions they could

not have done. And they would have seen the oppression of the command had they not been blinded by deception.

No such thing as this is found in the Gospel. The Father, who is represented by the retainer of the prisoners, has solemnly and publicly covenanted that all shall go out on the ground of the atonement if they will believe, and has thus openly declared it accepted for all as moral agents. He is the "King which made a marriage for his Son," and sent his servants to say to the identical persons whom he afterwards destroyed, "Behold I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come unto the marriage." I have prepared my dinner *for you* if you will receive it; all things are ready *for you* if you will partake. It was in obedience to his command that the Son declared, "He that believeth—shall be saved." "This is the will of him that sent me, that *every one* which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life\*." Thus the Father has solemnly pledged himself that he has accepted the atonement for all; and this information is brought to the world by the Redeemer himself. The Parties then are both active in proclaiming this public acceptance of the atonement for all. It is in vain longer to insist on any secret intention of Christ; here is his own voice openly pronouncing the atonement accepted for all by the mutual understanding of the Parties. On supposition then that they who remain unsanctified should believe, they certainly would be pardoned.

But it is said, if this supposition is made we must also suppose that the decree of redemption accorded with this fact. No, but the message to the identical persons who perished, and in the very circumstances

\* Mat. 22. 4. Mar. 16. 16. John 6. 40.

in which they then stood, was, "All things *are* ready" *for you*; not, all things *would have been* ready had it been foreseen that you would come. It was declared that *the oxen and fatlings had been actually killed* in sufficient numbers to supply them all, and that they, invited as they were, stood in such a relation to the feast that they could that day enjoy it by only accepting the offer; implying that no natural impossibility lay in the way, as in the supposed case of the pearl. Had it only been true that the feast *would have been* so prepared for them had it been foreseen that they would accept it, what was said was palpably false. Nor can it be alleged that this was only a parable. The plain and direct language of the Gospel to those who remain unsanctified, is exactly the same. The individuals of that number are expressly told to-day, that the atonement *has been*, not *would have been*, accepted *for them*, in such a sense as to place remission within their reach. Without the least reference to foreknowledge, and as the purpose of atonement now stands, they are told that *they*, the present capable agents, (and they are just as capable as though a different result had been foreseen,) can receive the benefit only by believing; that it is their indispensable duty to make it their own; and that if they fail to appropriate it to themselves, they shall be eternally punished for that most unreasonable neglect. All this is said to them to-day, just as foreknowledge and the purpose of atonement now stand. And if it is not so, the report is not according to truth, and the command and subsequent punishment are—what I *will not* impute to the righteous Governour of the world.

## CHAPTER IV.

## ACTUAL INFLUENCE OF THE ATONEMENT UPON ALL.

THE third proposition laid down in the plan of the argument was, that the atonement so changed the relations of all men to the divine law, as to render their pardon consistent with the honour of the law in case they hear the Gospel and believe. Before I proceed to the proof of this proposition, I wish to draw the reader's attention closely to the following remarks.

(1.) If it is allowed that the atonement did change the relations of all men to the divine law, in this precise respect, that it rendered their actual pardon consistent with the honour of the law if they would believe; the whole is granted that any one pleads for, as respects the *actual influence* of the atonement on those who perish. The only remaining question then will be, how came it to have such an influence on all?

(2.) If the atonement did render the pardon of all men consistent with the honour of the law in case they would believe, then it essentially changed the relations of all men to the divine law as it did not that of devils. In their natural relation as transgressors, they could not have been pardoned consistently with the honour of the law even had they returned to holiness. This was the very reason why an atonement was necessary. Had it been consistent with the honour of the law to pardon sinners on their mere return to holiness, their actual pardon might have been accomplished by the mission of the Spirit without an expiation for sin. Devils still retain this natural relation to the law; and should they return to holiness, (a sup-

position allowable even of them as moral agents,) they could not be pardoned. If then the atonement did render the pardon of all men consistent with the honour of the law in case they would believe, it essentially changed the relation of all men to the law as it did not that of devils.

(3.) If the relations of all men to the divine law are thus changed, or if their pardon has become consistent with the honour of the law in case they will believe, this change has been wrought by the atonement. Nothing else has taken place to produce it; nothing else could. If any thing but an infinitely dignified sacrifice could have rendered the pardon of men consistent with the honour of the law on any terms, the Son of God would not have died.

(4.) If the relations of all men to the divine law are not thus changed, or if their pardon has not become consistent with the honour of the law on the supposition of their faith, then a part could not be pardoned even should they believe. Believe what? The promise and oath of God that they shall be pardoned if they do believe. Had not that promise been made, there would have been no more foundation for their faith than for that of devils; and it would have been utterly without a meaning to talk of their being pardoned *in case they would believe*. The very supposition of its being consistent with the honour of the law for them to be pardoned *if they believe*, implies that there is something in relation to their own salvation for them to believe. It implies that the promise of God has assured them that they shall be pardoned by the atonement if they do believe. And this promise could not have been made had not the atonement rendered their actual pardon consistent with the honour of the law on the supposition of their faith. This leads di-

rectly to the proof of the proposition at the head of the chapter.

This proof is contained in the two propositions which went before; viz. that in the offer and promise, the benefit of the atonement is actually given and made over to all who hear the Gospel, on the condition of their faith; and that they are laid under obligations to make it their own, and are punished for throwing it away. It ought to be distinctly noticed, that if these two facts prove that the relation of all men to the divine law is changed, they prove that it was changed *by the atonement*. The offer and promise are of pardon through that very sacrifice; and the faith commanded is a reliance on that expiation and promise. Let us then consider the argument, first, as it is drawn from the grant, and secondly, as it is deduced from the obligation.

(1.) As it is drawn from the grant. The benefit of the atonement is offered to all. Should all accept, (and this supposition is allowable,) would they or would they not find their pardon to be consistent with the honour of the law? If not, they might justly complain of a grievous deception. If the king who invited the guests to the marriage feast, had made provision only for half, you would certainly have charged him with duplicity and mockery. True, you say, because he could not foresee how many would come. And has it not been proved that all the measures of a moral government have the same consistency of relation as though there was no foreknowledge? The character in which God stands related to moral agents, is preserved as consistent with itself as that of any wise and just earthly prince can be. The Moral Governour, to whom appertained both the atonement and offer, would no more invite a greater number than he had provided

for, than would any fair and honourable man. If ample provision is not made for all, that class of Christians alone take consistent ground who deny the universality of the offer. Again, in the offer and promise there is a foundation laid for the faith of all. And can it be supposed that there is a foundation laid in the grant for all to believe, and no foundation in the atonement for their faith to profit them? Then they stand after all exactly on the ground of devils,—with this difference against them, that they are tantalized with offers, which, should they attempt to seize them, would escape from their grasp. In the case of devils, there is no atonement and no foundation laid for their faith. This is consistent. But to lay a foundation for the faith of men, and no foundation for their faith to profit them, would in human transactions be stigmatized with an epithet which I dare not even by supposition apply to the blessed God. That Christ is offered to those to whom he could not become a Saviour even should they believe,—to whom he would be no blessing if they should receive him, is what I hope no one will continue to maintain. A foundation for faith, and no foundation for faith to profit! I wonder that single thought should have left a remaining doubt below the sun. No foundation for faith to profit! But there *is*. The promise expressly affirms it. The oath of God declares to every man who hears the Gospel, that if he will believe his faith shall profit him through the expiation of Christ. That such a foundation then is laid in the atonement, we have no less proof than the oath of God. And what fact in the universe was ever supported by better evidence? At any rate, if the promise is true, all men would be pardoned by the atonement should they believe, even if the expiation has not rendered their discharge consistent



with the honour of the law. They must be pardoned or the oath of God fails: and if the atonement has not rendered their acquittal consistent with the honour of the law on the supposition of their faith, the plain truth is, that the death of Christ does not support the grant which has been founded on it.

(2.) Another argument may be drawn from the universal command to believe, and the punishment of unbelief. What is the faith thus enjoined on every man? A belief that God will be *to him* "a Rewarder" if he diligently seeks him\*. It is a firm persuasion that God will pardon and save him through the atonement and righteousness of Christ if he believes, and that his acquittal and salvation, in such an event, have been rendered consistent with the honour of the law by the sufferings and obedience of his Redeemer. On every man, without waiting for evidence of his election, such a faith is enjoined by the positive command of God. And does God command men to believe a lie? And does he punish them with eternal destruction for not crediting a falsehood?

Upon the top of these two arguments I will bring forward the general confession of the Church. That the atonement has reconciled with the honour of the law the pardon of every man if he will believe, is a fact acknowledged in the daily practice of every minister of the Gospel. None of us hesitates to say to an assembly of unregenerate men, among whom we always presume there are some of the non-elect, if you will all believe you shall be pardoned through the atonement of Christ; which is to say, that the atonement has reconciled with the honour of the law the pardon of every soul in the assembly if he will believe. We go to the next assembly and address them

\* Heb. 11. 6.

in the same words. And if the whole race of Adam were living at once, not one of us, I suppose, would scruple to say the same to all. And when we take the race in detail, by conversing with individuals in private, we say to the unregenerate as fast as they come, if you will believe you shall be pardoned through the death of Christ; which is to say, the atonement has rendered it consistent with the honour of the law for you in particular to be pardoned if you will believe. And were it possible for the whole race of Adam to pass in succession before us, not one of us would hesitate to say the same to every individual.

If it be alleged that we should thus speak from not knowing who the elect are, I answer, Christ himself, who did know, spoke in the same manner. He said to every one, if thou believe thou shalt be saved. How often, may we suppose, he pronounced this promise with an eye fixed on Judas.

The Synod of Dort, though they ascribe this general influence of the atonement to its *sufficiency*, everywhere represent that it reconciled with the honour of the law the pardon of every man if he will believe, a thing which they never said of devils. The following is the language of the whole Synod. "The proposition that Jesus Christ the Saviour died for all and each, is ambiguous through imperfection. If you add *believers*, the proposition will be clear and true; if *men*, it remains ambiguous: for it can be understood either of the amplitude of the merit of Christ's death, which is in the highest degree sufficient for the reconciliation of all men, or of its efficacy, actually reconciling all men. In the former sense the proposition is indeed true; for the death of Christ, in point of its amplitude and power, is a remedy in the highest degree sufficient to atone for the sins of all men and

every man; nor to actual reconciliation is any thing wanting to all and each who receive it by faith. In this sense Christ may be said to have died for all men and every man. And in the same sense the sayings of Scripture, where Christ is said to have *died for all*, (1 Tim. 2. 6.) to have *tasted death for all*, (Heb. 2. 9.) to be *a propitiation for the sins of the whole world*, (1 John 2. 2.) ARE COMMONLY AND NOT IMPROPERLY UNDERSTOOD, though they may be taken also in a more restricted sense\*." The Synod affirm "that as to the sufficiency of his ransom and merit, Christ DIED AND WILLED TO DIE FOR ALL AND EACH:" and they add, "If they, [the Remonstrants,] deny their agreement [with this,] how do they not blaspheme the death of the Son of God as an insufficient ransom†?" Now this is all we mean. Christ died and willed to die for all and each, so far as to render their pardon possible and certain if they would believe; that is, he died and willed to die for all and each as moral agents.

The delegates from Great Britain say, "God, pitying the lapsed human race, sent his Son, who gave himself as the price of redemption for the sins of the whole world.—Christ therefore so died for all men that all and each, faith intervening, can obtain remission of sins and eternal life by virtue of that ransom.—In this merit of Christ's death is founded the universal Gospel promise, according to which all who believe in Christ do actually obtain remission of sins and eternal life‡."

The delegates from Hesse say, "About the first proposition, [viz. that Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all and each of mankind,] we would not contend with any man; since the Sacred Writings

\* Acts of Synod, Part I. p. 247, 248.—† p. 248, 249.—‡ Part II. p. 100, 101.

expressly say that Christ died for all, (but never for each,) and is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The true meaning of which phraseology we think to be this : that so great is the worth, power, value, and price of the passion and death of Christ, that it is abundantly sufficient to atone for the sins of all men and every man, as many as have lived, do live, or shall hereafter live.—This passion and death were necessarily of infinite value, insomuch that all and each of mankind, provided only they cleave to Christ by a true faith, will, through or on account of his passion and death, be received into the grace and favour of God, and obtain remission of sins, righteousness, and eternal life. Whence the word of the Gospel concerning Christ Jesus crucified, is proclaimed to the elect and reprobate respectively, and all are commanded to believe in him, with this promise subjoined, that all who do believe in him shall obtain reconciliation with God, remission of their sins, righteousness, and eternal salvation.”

“ They, [the Remonstrants,] have added this declaration, that Christ by his death procured *reconciliation*, not for the elect alone,—but also for all other men, and that according to the counsel and decree of the Father : which words are capable of a double meaning. The first is, that it was the counsel and decree of God the Father that Christ by his passion and death should pay such a ransom, that, in itself considered, it should be of so great worth, and power, and value, that it should be abundantly sufficient to reconcile all and each of mankind to God.—And in this sense it is true ; nor was it ever denied by the doctors of the Reformed Church. For such as the ransom of Christ—in itself is, such God the Father from eternity willed it to be\*.”

The delegates from the Wetteraw say, “ Christ is

\* Acts of Synod, Part II. p. 114, 116.

an expiation for the sins of the whole world so far as relates to the worth and sufficiency of his ransom." "When Christ is said to have died for all, this can be understood of the sufficiency of the merit, or the magnitude of the price." They quote with approbation from one who says, that "the merit of Christ has an equal bearing on all as to its sufficiency, but not as to its efficacy.—The sufficiency and magnitude of the ransom of Christ, as relates to the reprobate, has a double end; one in itself and the other by accident. The end in itself is, that God may testify that he is not delighted with the perdition of men, seeing he gave his only begotten Son that every one who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. The end by accident is, that by means of its magnitude and sufficiency the reprobate may be without excuse." And they add themselves, "For these perish, not by the fault of Christ, but by their own, since by their own unbelief they reject the benefits of Christ offered in the Gospel." "The reprobate are bound to believe this, that the merit of Christ is of so great worth that it is able to profit them also: and it would indeed profit them if they would believe the Gospel and repent\*."

Matthias Martinius, one of the delegates from Bremen, says, "There is in God a certain common love to man with which he regarded the whole lapsed human race, and seriously willed the salvation of all. The exercise of this love to man appears in the outward call to the elect and reprobate without distinction.—In this call are to be distinguished these things; the historical narrative concerning Christ, the command to believe, the interdiction of unbelief, the promise of eternal life made to believers, the threatening of damnation to the unbelieving. And if any one does

\* Acts of Synod, Part II. p. 125, 126, 128, 129.

not believe, the issue of this call is condemnation, and expressly for this reason, because he does not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3. 18.) But this issue in itself is not intended by God, but follows by accident through the fault of man.—Moreover, this outward call—necessarily requires antecedent to itself these things ; the promise and mission of the Son, (formerly future, now past,) and redemption, that is, the payment of a price to atone for sins, and God rendered so placable as to require no other sacrifice for the sins of any man, content with this only most perfect one, and that for the reconciliation of men there be no need of any other satisfaction, any other merit for them, provided, (what in remedies must be done,) there be an application of this common and salutary medicine. If this redemption is not supposed to be a common blessing bestowed on all men, the indiscriminate and promiscuous preaching of the Gospel, committed to the apostles to be exercised among all nations, will have no foundation in truth. But since we abhor to say this, it ought to be seen to how their assertions agree with the most known and lucid principles, who unqualifiedly deny that Christ died for all. Nor here will it be enough to assert such a sufficiency of redemption as *could be* enough ; but it is altogether such as *is* enough, and such as God and Christ have considered enough. For otherwise the Gospel command and promise are destroyed. For how from a benefit, sufficient indeed, but not designed for me by a sincere intention, can the necessity of believing that it belongs to me be deduced? What then shall we call this redemption? This redemption is in the new world what creation is in the old : to wit, as the creation of man is not the image of God, but is that foundation without which the image of God could

not have place in him; so also redemption is no part of the image of God, but is that in which is founded the whole exercise of the prophetic and kingly offices of Christ, and his priestly intercession. But care must be taken not to carry this comparison too far. This redemption is the payment of a price due for us captives, not that we should go forth from captivity at all events, but that we should be able and be bound to go forth: and in fact we should go forth if we would believe in the Redeemer, acknowledge his benefit, and thoroughly become members of him as the Head. And therefore upon whatever man we fall, to him we are the messengers and publishers of this salutary grace, (saving however to believers only,) from the very office of piety and charity." "The Lord even merited grace for all men; but not for all men that grace which depends on particular election. What then? That which is promised on condition of faith. For certainly to all men is promised remission of sins and eternal life if they believe. Here therefore it appears that a conditional remission of sins and salvation belong to all, but not a promise to give strength and excite the actions by which that condition is fulfilled. For these things men are bound by the power of a divine command to perform themselves; and they who are not able to do this, are not able through their own fault." "Christ merited the favour of God for all, to be actually obtained if they believe.—This his favour God declares in common in the word of the Gospel." "Christ died for all in regard to the merit and sufficiency of the ransom, for believers only in regard to the application and efficacy. In support of which very sentiment many testimonies of the fathers, and schoolmen, and more recent doctors of the Church, can be cited when there is need." "He who despises

the offering of Christ made on the cross, loses all the right which he might have had in it, and thereby aggravates damnation to himself:—and the Gospel, which in itself is a savour of life unto life, becomes to the unbelieving a savour of death unto death, by accident, through their own fault.” Among the propositions which Martinius pronounces false, are the following: “Christ died in no sense for them that perish;” and, “The decree of particular election, or reprobation of certain persons, cannot consist with the universality of Christ’s death\*.”

Henry Iselburg, another delegate from Bremen, says, “Such is the worth and virtue of the passion, death, and merit of Christ, that, by itself and in its own nature, it is abundantly sufficient to atone for and take away all the sins of all men, and to obtain and confer on all and each, without exception, reconciliation with God, grace, righteousness, and eternal life. And therefore the remedy of sin and death, our Lord Jesus Christ, is proposed and offered by the preaching of the Gospel, not to certain persons only, or to those alone who are to be saved, but to the elect and reprobate indiscriminately; and all without distinction are invited to a participation or fruition of it, and to eternal life thereby; and all and each are sincerely and seriously commanded to believe in Christ, to live to him, and to come to the acknowledgment of the truth; and they who do not believe in the name of the Son of God are justly condemned. In this sense Christ is rightly said to have died sufficiently for all, as all who believe in him and seek his aid are able and bound to obtain reconciliation, remission of sins, and the inheritance of eternal life; as the sins of no mortal are so great that the sacrifice of Christ cannot suffice to atone for them;

\* Acts of Synod, Part II. p. 133—139.



as not one of the human race is alien from him in the same sense and degree that Satan and the evil angels are. And this is the will and intention of God from eternity, that the death of Christ should be sufficient for all in such a sense and degree, that God can require no other sacrifice or satisfaction for the sins of men but that one alone, to atone for every evil, (permanent impenitence and the sin against the Holy Ghost excepted;) and on the other hand, that he may account and esteem it in the highest degree sufficient to merit every salutary good, and that there may be no need of any other merit for men. Wherefore no one of the reprobate can be condemned and perish for want of the death of Christ, or because there was not in him a sufficient remedy against destruction, but each one through his own fault entirely\*.”

Ludovicus Crocius, the other delegate from Bremen, says, “So great is the worth, price, power, value, and sufficiency of the death of Christ, that it wants nothing at all to the purpose of meriting, acquiring, and obtaining reconciliation with God and remission of sins for all men and every man. It was the counsel, aim, and intention, not only of God the Father in delivering the Son to death, but of the Son also in dying, to acquire, obtain, and merit, by that most precious death and passion, for all and each of human sinners, that if they repent and believe in Christ when they become capable of instruction, they may be able to be reconciled to God and receive remission of sins. Christ having suffered and died according to his own and his Father’s counsel, did by his death and passion merit most sufficiently for all and each of human sinners, that if they only repent and believe, they may be able to be reconciled to God, or be restored to his favour and bosom.—This doctrine, as being most true,

\* Acts of Synod, Part, II. p. 141, 142.

as being agreeable to the Scriptures, to the nature of the thing, to the confession of the Church, (and the church of Bremen expressly,) to the better and more common sentiment of the fathers, and of the theologians both ancient and modern, is necessarily, (as I believe,) to be uncorruptly and sacredly retained and defended in the Church of God, as well for the glory of God, (which is so illustrated that his truth in calling, his equity in commanding, his justice in threatening, appear to all who seriously contemplate the Scriptures,) as for the edification, growth, and consolation of the called in true faith and piety, and finally, for the salutary avoiding and refutation of divers heresies which like rocks surround this doctrine\*.”

The Dutch Professors say, “We confess that the merit and value of the death and satisfaction of Christ is so great, and of so great a price, as well on account of its perfection, as the infinite dignity of his Person, that it is not only sufficient to atone for all, even the greatest sins of men, but also to save all the posterity of Adam, though they were many more, provided they embrace it by a true faith.—It is not even to be doubted that it was the intention of God the Father in delivering his Son, and of Christ in offering himself, that he should pay such and so great a ransom: for whatever Christ accomplished by his death, this he accomplished according to the Father’s intention and his own†.”

The delegates from the synod of Gelders say, “What is here asserted, (that Christ died for all, and that none but believers are actually made partakers of remission,) if it is spoken of adults, we believe it with the whole heart: for the Scripture inculcates this so often, and in such express terms, that no one, un-

\* Acts of Synod, Part II. p. 150, 151.—† Part III. p. 121.

less he is manifestly impious, can deny or call it in question. We add,—that the power and worth of the passion of Christ was in itself sufficient to take away the sins of all men and every man\*.”

The delegates from Friesland, complaining of the unfairness of the Remonstrants, say, “Neither does it escape them that the doctrine of the sufficiency of the merit of Christ’s death to atone for the sins of all and each of mankind, if all and each would believe, has hitherto been constantly and firmly held and taught in all the Dutch churches without a dissenting voice. They are not ignorant, moreover, that this distinction has been used in a sound sense by very many of the orthodox, that Christ died for all and each in respect to the sufficiency of the ransom, but for the elect and believers in regard to its efficacy†.”

The delegates from the synod of Groningen and Omlands say, “Here it is to be noted, that the question is not about the sufficiency of Christ’s death; for we affirm without hesitation, that the sacrifice of Christ possesses so great power and value, that it is adundantly sufficient to atone for the sins of all men, as well actual as original; and that no one of the reprobate perishes for want of the death of Christ, or through its insufficiency‡.”

The delegates from the synod of the French Netherlands say, “The price of redemption which Christ offered to his Father, considered in and by itself, is most valuable and sufficient; so that all might be redeemed by the value and worth of Christ’s death if all and each would believe||.”

\* Acts of Synod, Part III. p. 127.—† p. 172.—‡ p. 193.

|| p. 210.—The author is the more assured of having done justice to the sentiments of the Synod, for having submitted his translation to the classical eye of Samuel Baldwin Esq. of Newark, an elegant scholar, and to whom he is happy thus publicly to acknowledge himself indebted.

## CHAPTER V.

SYNOD OF DORT AGREED WITH US AS TO THE ACTUAL  
INFLUENCE OF THE ATONEMENT ON THE NON-ELECT,  
AND THE PURPOSE OF THE SACRED PERSONS.

IN every dispute it goes half-way to settle the question, to know precisely the points in which the parties differ and in which they agree. In the present controversy it is of the last importance to know this, as in the main the parties have certainly been contending for different truths; one filling their eye with the secret purpose of God about the *application* of the atonement, the other with the influence which the atonement had upon *the relations of agents*. On the former subject there can be no diversity of opinion among us; and I am happy now to be able to show that on the latter subject, in the Calvinistic world at large, there is no dispute.

The Synod of Dort was a fair representative of the Calvinistic world one century after the commencement of the Reformation. Their opinions will certainly disclose what the doctrines of the Reformation were, especially as they tell us that their churches had uniformly held the same belief from the beginning. And they must also be considered no contemptible witnesses of the sentiments of the school-men and fathers.

In the Synod there was not a perfect harmony of opinion, some having more enlarged views than others of the principles of a moral government. It is fair then to discriminate between the concessions which came from different sides of the house, and after presenting those which were the highest, to give those which appear to have expressed the views of the Synod at large.

Of all the concessions those of the delegates from Great Britain and Bremen were the most ample. The former say, that God pitied the human race, and sent his Son who gave himself as the price of redemption for the sins of the whole world, and died for all, so that all by believing may be saved. The latter give their opinions separately, but they are agreed in these points: that it was the eternal counsel of God that Christ should die for all in point of the sufficiency of his atonement; and that it should not be such a sufficiency as would have been enough had other circumstances concurred, but such as would actually be enough, and such that no other satisfaction could be demanded of any sinner provided he would believe. They maintain that no man is alien from Christ in the same sense and degree that devils are, and that none perish for want of a complete expiation. Two of these delegates unite in saying, that it was the counsel of God that Christ should merit a conditional salvation for all; and affirm that this doctrine was supported by "the better and more common sentiment of the fathers, and theologians ancient and modern," and by "the confession of the Church." One of them is still more explicit. He asserts that God loved the whole human race and seriously willed their salvation; that the price of redemption was actually paid for all, and sincerely intended for all, and that the aggravated misery of those who perish was not in itself designed, but follows by accident through the fault of man; (he is speaking in the dialect of a moral government;) that had not such a conditional salvation been provided for all, the offer and promise would not have been founded in truth, nor the command reasonable; that to make out all this, it was not necessary that *faith* should have been procured for all, for this men are bound

by a divine command to exercise themselves, and if they cannot it is their own fault; that therefore election and reprobation are not inconsistent with the universality of the atonement; and that the unqualified assertion that Christ did not die for all, is one of those propositions which contravene the most known and obvious principles.

But there are two things which the Synod assert with a general voice.

(1.) That those texts which declare that Christ died for all, "are commonly and not improperly understood" in a literal sense. Some of the middle men, and even some of the strongest advocates for a limited atonement, distinctly support this construction of the texts. The delegates from Hesse say, "About the first proposition, [viz. that Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all and each of mankind,] we would not contend with any man; since the Sacred Writings expressly say that Christ died for all, (but never for each,) and is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world." The delegates from the synod of Gelders say, "What is here asserted, (that Christ died for all, and that none but believers are actually made partakers of remission,) if it is spoken of adults, we believe it with the whole heart: for the Scripture inculcates this so often, and in such express terms, that no one, unless he is manifestly impious, can deny or call it in question." The delegates from Friesland, complaining of the unfairness of the Remonstrants, say, "They are not ignorant, moreover, that this distinction has been used in a sound sense by very many of the orthodox, that Christ died for all and each in respect to the sufficiency of the ransom, but for the elect and believers in regard to its efficacy."

(2.) That the atonement was sufficient for all.

This they understood to be the real meaning of those texts which speak of a universal expiation. Now every thing depends on ascertaining what the Synod meant by this sufficiency. Was it merely a sufficiency of the *Victim*, which would have been enough had he been offered for all, or a sufficiency of *actual atonement*? Was it such a sufficiency as *could have been* enough, or such as really *was* enough? Was it such a sufficiency as still left a natural impossibility in the way of the pardon of the non-elect even should they believe, or a sufficiency, (even as foreknowledge and the purpose of atonement then stood,) which placed remission completely within their reach as moral agents, and made it possible and certain that they would be pardoned if they would believe? The Synod shall decide. They affirm with one voice, “that as to the sufficiency of his ransom and merit, Christ died and *willed* to die FOR all and each.” “The death of Christ, in point of its amplitude and power, is a remedy in the highest degree sufficient to atone for the sins of all men and every man; nor to actual reconciliation is any thing wanting to all and each who receive it by faith.” It “is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins, of infinite value and worth, abundantly sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world\*.” Or as the same idea is amplified by some of the members, “This is the will and intention of God from eternity, that the death of Christ should be sufficient for all in such a sense and degree, that God can require no other sacrifice or satisfaction for the sins of men but that one alone,—and that there may be no need of any other merit for men:” so that none perish “for want of the death of Christ.” The delegates from Hesse say, “His passion and death were

\* Acts of Synod, Part. I. p. 289.

necessarily of infinite value, insomuch that all and each of mankind, provided only they cleave to Christ by a true faith, will, through or on account of his passion and death, be received into the grace and favour of God." They add, "It was the counsel and decree of God the Father that Christ by his passion and death should pay such a ransom.—Nor was it ever denied by the doctors of the Reformed Church." The delegates from the Wetteraw say, "Christ is *an expiation* for the sins of the whole world so far as relates to the worth and sufficiency of his ransom." The end of this sufficiency in itself considered, say they, is, "that God may testify that he is not delighted with the perdition of men, seeing he gave his only begotten Son that every one who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life." The Dutch Professors give the same account of the sufficiency, (which they call the sufficiency of Christ's "*satisfaction*,") and of the purpose of the Sacred Persons concerning it. The sufficiency is defined in the same manner by the delegates from the synod of Gelders, and by those from the synod of Groningen and Omlands, and by those from the synod of the French Netherlands, and by those from Friesland. The latter affirm that the sufficiency, as thus defined, "has hitherto been constantly and firmly held and taught in all the Dutch churches without a dissenting voice."

Such were the views entertained of the sufficiency of the atonement by the Calvinistic world one century after the commencement of the Reformation, and if we can trust the uncontradicted testimony of several bodies of delegates, by the Reformed Church from the beginning, and by the better and larger part of the schoolmen and fathers. According to all these, it was the eternal purpose of the Sacred Persons, (to express



the divine benevolence towards those who perish,) that the death of Christ should possess such a sufficiency as to render it an expiation for the sins of the whole world, and give it such an influence as to make the pardon of all and each possible and certain if they would believe; that on this account he may be said to have died for all, and that this may be considered the meaning of those texts which speak of a universal atonement. Now this is enough. Such a sufficiency, I fully acknowledge, is competent to support the sincerity of the offer and promise, and the justice of the command and punishment; and I must be allowed to add, it constitutes a complete and designed atonement for all men as moral agents.

But this is a very different representation from that of the prisoners and the pearl. The points of contrast between the two theories are strongly marked.

(1.) The Synod say that Christ died and willed to die *for* all in respect to the sufficiency of his ransom; but the pearl was in no sense paid *for* all, and nothing in the transaction would justify the use of such an expression. When the Synod affirmed that the universal terms found in the Bible might be applied literally, that Christ might truly be called a propitiation "for the sins of the whole world," they could not have had such an image in their mind as that of a pearl paid expressly for a part and expressly not paid for the rest.

(2.) It appeared to be the general voice of the Synod, and was expressly affirmed by several bodies of delegates, that this sufficiency of the death of Christ did express, and was intended to express, the divine benevolence towards all. But the payment of the pearl exclusively for the hundred, expressed no love for the 900 who were excluded; and it is a part of the

system connected with this representation, that the atonement was no indication of benevolence to the non-elect.

(3.) The sufficiency maintained by the Synod is not that which *would have been* a provision for the pardon of the non-elect had their faith been *foreseen*, but *is* a provision which they may now enjoy. It is a sufficiency wholly independent of foreknowledge. It is a sufficiency which is ready for them *even while they are known to be non-elect*. The delegates from the Wetteraw say, "The *reprobate* are bound to believe this, that the merit of Christ is of so great worth that it is able to profit *them* also; and it *would indeed profit them if they would believe*." "The sufficiency and magnitude of the ransom of Christ, *as relates to the reprobate*, has a double end." Matthias Martinius says, "Nor here will it be enough to assert such a sufficiency of redemption as *could be* enough; but it is altogether such as *is* enough, and such as God and Christ have considered enough. For otherwise the Gospel command and promise are destroyed." Henry Iselburg says, "No one of the *reprobate* can be condemned and perish for want of the death of Christ, or because there was not in him a sufficient remedy against destruction." The delegates from the synod of Groningen and Omlands say, "No one of the *reprobate* perishes for want of the death of Christ, or through its insufficiency." It was plainly the opinion of them all that the sufficiency changed the relations of the reprobate themselves. But the relations of the 900 could not be affected by the value of the pearl, and nothing but an imposition upon their ignorance could lead them to imagine such a change.

(4.) The sufficiency maintained by the Synod is such that the ransom of Christ "wants nothing at all.

to the purpose of meriting, acquiring, and obtaining [a conditional] reconciliation with God and remission of sins for all men and every man." It is such that "God can require no other sacrifice or satisfaction for the sins of men but that one alone," and such that there is "no need of any other merit for men." But can all this be said of the pearl? Should the 900 accept the offer, would their retainer be bound by the ransom to discharge them? What has bound him? The ransom was not paid for them; nor has he promised to accept it in their behalf. Its value cannot bind him, for the whole was given for the hundred. He certainly would have a right to demand, and would demand, another ransom. If you say he has promised to accept it for the 900 in case they will come out, then the ground is changed and the dispute is ended. For then there is a ransom publicly accepted for them as capable agents. And this is all we ask.

(5.) The sufficiency which the Synod supported is such as places remission within the reach of every man who hears the Gospel, and leaves nothing in the way but a wicked heart. This cannot be said of the pearl. It had no influence on the 900 at all, except what existed in their own imaginations. It did not bring deliverance within their reach, only in a delusive appearance. It left their escape still as much a natural impossibility as ever. And yet the same respectable writer that makes this representation, says to a non-elect man, "It is still true, if you believe you shall be saved. If you believe there is atonement for you." He had lately said, "The death of Christ must expiate our sins before any way can be opened" for pardon. That non-elect man had been told that Christ did not expiate his sins; and now he is assured that there is an atonement ready for *him* if he will re-

ceive it. This certainly is what the words import, (and what the preaching of the same class of men continually imports,) but this was not the meaning of the writer. His meaning was, all who *in fact* believe will find an atonement. But he ought not to have said to a moral agent whose faith was naturally possible, and acknowledged to be such in the very form of the address, and for whom he knew no expiation had been made, (for the man is addressed *as* non-elect,) "If you believe there is atonement for you." If I say to a man from the roof of my house, leap up to me and I will give you a kingdom, I only trifle with him; we understand each other. But if because I know a man is effectually induced to go another way, I say to him, if you will come into my house, (an action which is possible,) you will find a feast prepared for you, when no feast is provided, I deceive him and utter a falsehood. It would have been false if the herald had told the 900, you may come out if you please.

On the whole, the sufficiency set forth by the Synod was not like the value of a costly pearl expressly not paid for a part of the prisoners, but the sufficiency of a ransom in such a sense offered for all as purposely and expressly to secure pardon to them in case they would believe.

If I rightly understand the Synod, (and I think I certainly do if they are consistent with themselves,) they differed from us in nothing but in identifying the atonement with the higher ransom. Their question was about the united influence of Christ's expiation and merit, which they contemplated under the name of his *meritorious* death; and the shape of their question was, for whom did he *die*? meaning, whose salvation did he intend to merit and receive as his

reward? And this carried them to the secret purpose of the divine mind, and the private covenant between the Sacred Persons, respecting the application of the atonement. And when they had fastened their eye there, they overlooked the public explanation in which we find the express purpose, together with all the influence which that explanation had to render the death of Christ a complete atonement for a whole world of moral agents. And then they had no way to account for the influence of the atonement upon all, but to ascribe it to its sufficiency. But that sufficiency, as they explained it, really constituted all that we mean by a general atonement. In short, had the Synod distinguished as we do between expiation and merit, they would have had no dispute with us even in words.



## CHAPTER VI.

### TESTIMONY OF CALVIN, WATTS, AND OTHERS.

DOCTOR Watts says of Calvin, "that some of the most rigid and narrow limitations of grace to men are found chiefly in his Institutions, which were written in his youth: but his Comments on Scripture were the labours of his riper years and maturer judgment\*." With this remark he introduces the following Comments of that distinguished Reformer.

Mat. 26. 28. ["This is my blood of the New-Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins."] "Under the name of many he denotes, not a part of the world only, but the whole human race."

1 Cor. 8. 11, 12. ["Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died."] "If

\* Watts' Works, Vol. 6. p. 287. Note.

the soul of every weak person was the purchase of the blood of Christ, he that for the sake of a little meat plunges his brother again into death who was redeemed by Christ, shows at how mean a rate he esteems the blood of Christ."

1 John 2. 2. ["He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."] "Here a question is raised, how the sins of the whole world are atoned for.—Some have said—that Christ suffered for the whole world sufficiently, but for the elect alone efficaciously. *This is the common solution of the schools: and though I confess this is a truth, yet I do not think it agrees to this place.*"

2 Pet. 2. 1. ["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."] "Though Christ is denied in various ways, yet in my opinion Peter means the same thing here that Jude expresses, viz. that the grace of God is turned into lasciviousness. For Christ has redeemed us that he might have a people free from the defilements of the world, and devoted to holiness and innocence. Whosoever therefore shake off the yoke and throw themselves into all licentiousness, are justly said to deny Christ by whom they were redeemed."

Jude 4. ["Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."] "He means that Christ is really denied when those who were redeemed by his blood again enslave themselves to the devil, and as far as in them lies, make that incomparable price vain and ineffectual\*."

This is decisive as relates to Calvin; and shows

\* Watts' Works, Vol. 6. p. 287, 288.

that in his maturer years his opinion was the same as that of the schoolmen and fathers before him, and the same as that of the Calvinistic world a century after.

The seraphic Watts wrote a treatise on purpose to support the very sentiments contained in these sheets. I cannot refrain from presenting a syllabus of his argument in his own words.

“ I. It is very hard to vindicate the sincerity of the blessed God or his Son in their universal offers of grace and salvation, and their sending ministers with such messages and invitations to accept of mercy, if there be not such a conditional pardon and salvation provided for them.—It is hard to suppose that the great God who is truth itself, and sincere and faithful in all his dealings, should call upon dying men to trust in a Saviour for eternal life, when this Saviour has not eternal life intrusted with him to give them if they do repent. It is hard to conceive how the great Governour of the world should be sincere in inviting and requiring sinners who are on the brink of hell to rest themselves on an empty word of invitation, a mere shadow and appearance of support, if there be nothing real to bear them up from those deeps of destruction, nothing but mere words and empty invitations. Can we think that the righteous and holy God would encourage his ministers to call them to lean and rest the weight of their immortal concerns and happiness upon a Gospel, a covenant of grace, a Mediator, and his merit and righteousness, &c. all of which are a mere nothing with regard to them, a heap of empty names, an unsupporting void which cannot uphold them?—I think we must cancel all these Scriptures, and deny all offers of grace and salvation made to sinners in general, if Christ procured and provided nothing for them.—

II. It is very hard to defend the sincerity of the Spirit of God in awakening the consciences of these persons sometimes who are not elected, and stirring them up to think of receiving the salvation of Christ upon the terms of the Gospel, if there be no such salvation conditionally provided for them to receive.—

III. It is equally difficult to vindicate the equity of God as the Judge of all men, in condemning unbelievers, and punishing them eternally for not accepting the offers of pardon, if there was not so much as a conditional pardon provided for them; and for not resting upon the merit of Christ and receiving his salvation, when there was no such merit appointed for them to rest upon, nor any such salvation for them to receive.—Can we think that the righteous Judge of the world will merely send words of grace and salvation amongst them, on purpose to make his creatures so much the more miserable, when there is no real grace or salvation contained in those words?—

IV. It is very hard to suppose that when the word of God, by the general commands, promises, threatenings, given to all men whatsoever, and often repeated therein, represents mankind as in a state of probation, and in the way towards eternal rewards or eternal punishments, according to their behaviour in this life; I say, it is hard to suppose that all this should be no real and just representation, but a mere amusement.—

V. This seems to be a fair and easy way to answer several of those texts of Scripture which represent God as the Saviour of all men, &c.—Nor can I see any reason why the strictest Calvinist should be angry that the all-sufficient merit of Christ should overflow so far in its influence as to provide conditional salvation for all mankind, since the elect of God have



that certain and absolute salvation which they contend for secured to them by the same merit.—

VI. That all mankind have some conditional salvation provided for them, and some real grace and pardon offered them by a new covenant, appears from this, that all men, both wicked and righteous, or just and unjust, shall be raised from the dead, to give an account of things done in the body, whether good or evil, and to receive rewards or punishments in their body as well as in their souls, according to their improvement or misimprovement of the dispensations under which they have lived.—Now surely this resurrection of all mankind must be built upon the foot of a new covenant given or offered to all mankind, since the old covenant of innocency, or the law of works, appoints eternal life without dying for the obedient, and death without a resurrection for the disobedient.—There was therefore doubtless a general proclamation of pardon and salvation to all mankind—contained in the first promise, or the Gospel that was preached to Adam, the first father of mankind:—and this was again preached to all the world by Noah, the second father of mankind:—otherwise, I think, the resurrection would not reach to every man and woman in the world. Let it be considered also, that this very resurrection of the bodies of sinful mankind, brings with it an additional penalty and misery beyond what the law of innocency threatened.—Now this cannot, with such evident justice, be inflicted upon the non-elect if they are under no other covenant but that of innocency.—For since the broken law or covenant of works leaves the body under the power of death for ever, we can hardly suppose that the Son of God, the chief Minister of his Father's grace, would provide a resurrection of the body for the breakers of that original law, merely to

put them to severer punishments and more intense torments than that broken law threatened, if there were not some advantage in the nature of things derived to them from his mediation to balance it.—He will never give them reason to complain that with regard to them he came not to be a Mediator or Saviour, but merely to add to their misery by a resurrection to eternal pain, without any equivalent of hope ; or that he came to expose them to double damnation for refusing his grace, when he had none for them to accept.—‘ God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.’—

The doctrine of *reprobation*, in the most severe and absolute sense of it, stands in such a direct contradiction to all our notions of kindness and love to others, in which the blessed God is set forth as our example, that our reason cannot tell how to receive it.—When therefore I hear men talk of the doctrine of reprobation with a special gust and relish, as a favourite article, I cannot but suspect their good temper, and question whether they love their neighbour as they do themselves.—

I would ask leave also in this place to inquire, what great advantages can be derived to religion or Christianity by endeavouring to limit the extent of the death of Christ, and to take away all manner of hopes, and prayers, and endeavours from the non-elect? Does the doctrine of election of persons obtain any further confirmation by it? No, by no means. Their salvation is secured whatsoever becomes of the rest of mankind, whether they have any hopes or no.—Are the elect any way discouraged by [such a general provision?] Not in the least. But many persons who are awakened to a sense of sin, and are seeking after Christ for salvation, by this narrow doctrine may be

terribly discouraged from receiving his offers of grace, when they are taught to doubt whether there be any grace provided for them, or whether Jesus be appointed to act as their Saviour. It may be the means to drive some persons to despair, when they hear that unless they are elected they may seek after salvation by Christ in vain.—And it may tempt them to begin at the wrong end, and seek to pry into the counsels of God, and inquire after what they can never know, that is, their election of God, before they dare trust in grace or submit to the Gospel of Christ.—

Objection I. But may it not be said here, if there be only an outward sufficiency of salvation provided for the non-elect, by a conditional pardon procured through the death of Christ,—but no inward sufficiency of grace provided,—the event will be infallibly and necessarily the same,—since they of themselves—cannot believe, for by the fall all men—became—dead in sin?

Answer.—The final event will be the same as if they were under a *natural* impossibility, or utter *natural impotence*.—Yet we must say still that sinners are not under such a real natural impossibility of repenting and believing as though they were naturally blind or dead.—It is plain that these natural faculties, powers, or capacities are not lost by the fall; for if they were, there would be no manner of need or use of any moral means or motives, such as commands, threatenings, promises, exhortations. These would all be impertinent and absurd, for they could have no more influence on sinners than if we command or exhort a blind person to see, or a dead body to rise or move—All the other impotence and inability therefore in sinners to repent or believe, properly speaking, is but *moral*.—I grant this inability—has been sometimes called by

our divines a *natural* impotence, because it arises from the original corruption of our nature.—But this *spring* of it is much better signified—by the name of *native* impotence, to show that it comes from our birth; and the *quality* of this impotence is best called moral, being seated chiefly in the will and affections, and not in any want of natural powers or faculties to perform what God requires.—Even in things of common life the *cannot* sometimes signifies nothing but the *will not*. Luke 11. 7. ‘Trouble me not, my door is shut, my children are with me in bed, I cannot rise to give thee;’ that is, I will not.—They have natural powers or faculties in them, which if well tried might overcome their native propensity to vice, though they never will do it\*.—Let this then be constantly maintained: there is a *natural* inward sufficiency of powers and faculties given to every sinner to hearken to the calls—of—the Gospel, though they lie under a moral impotence; and there is an outward sufficiency of provision of pardon in the death of Christ for every one who repents and accepts the Gospel.—And thus much is sufficient to maintain the sincerity of God in his universal offers of grace through Jesus Christ, and his present commands to all men to repent and trust in his mercy, as well as to vindicate his equity in the last great day when the impenitent and unbelievers shall be condemned. Their death lies at their own doors.—I think this distinction of natural and moral power and impotence will reconcile all

\* To show that this distinction of natural and moral inability is not new, I will present the following quotation from Burkitt under Mat. 13. 58. and Mar. 6. 5. [“He could there do no mighty work.”] “Christ was unable because they were unwilling: his impotency was occasioned by their infidelity: he did not because he would not.” “Christ had a natural ability to do mighty works there, but no moral ability.—He could not because he would not.”

the various expressions of Scripture on this subject, both to one another as well as to the reason of things, which can hardly be reconciled any other way.

Objection II.—Since the great God—foreknows they will never accept the salvation of Christ,—does not this future certainty of the event lay an effectual bar against their believing?—We inquire also further, can his offers of grace be sincere to persons whom he foresees will certainly reject it?—

Answer I.—The mere foreknowledge of any event, without any real influence from the power that knows, does not make the event necessary.—

Answer II.—The Gospel is never sent—to any people—when God foresees there are none at all that will accept of it. Now in the way of God's government of this world, he deals with mankind as a number of free and moral agents.—God's secret foreknowledge of those who will not accept it, is by no means a sufficient reason to prevent—the general offers of his grace to them, because the design of his government is to treat mankind as reasonable and moral agents.

Answer III.—There may be valuable and unknown ends—attained by his sincere forbidding sin to creatures whom he knows resolved to practise it.—The wisdom, holiness, and dignity of his government must be maintained in all the just appearances of it, though sinners will rebel against it; for the honour of divine government, in the authority, wisdom, and holiness of it, is of much more importance than the welfare of ten thousand of his creatures.—

Answer IV. Whether or no we can guess at any of the reasons of God's government or conduct in this thing, yet the matter of fact is certain and beyond all dispute\*.”

\* Watts' Works, Vol. 6. p. 293—296.

To this powerful testimony of the ethereal Watts, I might add the judgment of most of our standard English Annotators. The following specimens are selected.

*Pool's Continuator.* Heb. 2. 9. ["That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."] "To render sin remissible to all persons, and them salvable, God punishing man's sin in him, and laying on him the iniquities of us all; (Isai. 53. 4—6. 1 John 2. 2.) and so God became propitious and plausible to all: and if all are not saved by it, it is because they do not repent and believe in him. (2 Cor. 5. 19—21)."

*Burkitt.* 1 John 2. 2. ["He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."] "Christ our Advocate became a propitiation for us, and for the whole race of mankind, for all that lived before us or shall live after us.—There is a virtual sufficiency in the death of Christ for all persons, and an actual efficacy as to all believers.—Our Lord Jesus Christ, suffering death upon the cross for our redemption, did by that one oblation of himself once offered, make a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

*Henry.* 1 Tim. 2. 1—8. ["I exhort therefore that first of all supplications—be made for all men:—for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all."] "One reason why all men are to be prayed for is, because there is one God, and that God bears a good will to all mankind.—This one God will have all men to be saved; that is, he desires not the death and destruction of any, (Ezek. 33. 11.) but the welfare and salva-

tion of all ;—and none perish but it is their own fault. (Mat. 23. 37.)—There is one Mediator, and that Mediator gave himself a ransom for all. As the mercy of God extends itself to all his works, so the mediation of Christ extends itself thus far to all the children of men, that he paid a price sufficient for all mankind. He brought mankind to stand upon new terms with God, so as that they are not now under the law as a covenant of works.—but under grace.—He gave himself—a ransom for all, so that all mankind are put in a better condition than that of devils. He died to work out a common salvation.—God hath a good will to the salvation of all ; so that it is not so much the want of a will in God to save them, as it is a want of will in themselves to be saved in God's way. Here our blessed Saviour charges the fault : 'Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.' (John 5. 40.) Under 2 Pet. 2. 1. the same commentator says, "He—paid a price sufficient to redeem as many worlds of sinners as there are sinners in the world."

*Doddridge.* The same passage. "Who indeed wills that all men should be saved and come to the acknowledgment of the truth.—I must confess I have never been satisfied with that interpretation which explains *all men* here merely as signifying *some* of all sorts and ranks of men ; since I fear it might also be said, on the principles of those who are fondest of this gloss, that he also *wills all men to be condemned.*—The meaning therefore seems to be, that God has made *sufficient* provision for the salvation of all, and that it is to be considered as the general declaration of his will, that all who know the truth themselves should publish it to all around them.—And one Mediator between God and men, even the man Christ Jesus, who hath not undertaken to plead for this or that nation or party of men alone,

but whose kind office in the court of heaven, where he now dwells, extends in some degree to the whole human race, and who refuses not the blessings he has procured to any that with sincerity and humility cast themselves upon him."

*Scott.* The same passage. "It seems improper to say—that 'all men' signifies 'some of all sorts.'—This provision and appointment has been made and revealed for the common benefit of the human race,—that all who will may come in this way to the mercy-seat of a pardoning God.—This Mediator therefore gave himself 'a ransom for all,' as 'the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world;' that by the all-sufficient atonement of his death upon the cross, and the redemption there made, a foundation might be laid for the hopes of sinners all over the earth, and that all who believe might actually be saved by it.—There are but few of those that limit such expressions to 'some of all sorts,' who do not allow the all-sufficiency of Christ's atonement, and admit that all men should be called on to believe in him, and that all who do believe will be saved by him." Under John 1. 29. the same commentator says, "On this ground any man may come to the throne of grace for all the blessings of salvation; nor does he want any other plea than that 'Christ has died, yea rather is risen again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us.'—This general proposal and declaration of the death of Christ as a common benefit to all throughout the whole world who desire to avail themselves of it, is entirely consistent with a particular purpose of God in making 'his people willing in the day of his power.'"

The sentiment contained in these quotations, it may be proper to add, has all along been held by the great body of the English divines, not only in the establish-



ment, (of which there can be no doubt,) but among the Dissenters, the Baxters, the Wattses, the Doddridges, and the like. And it is certainly at the present day the common belief in those two countries where the true Church is chiefly found, I mean Great Britain and the United States. At a moment when the millennium is near, and great light is rising on the world, this is found to be the general faith of the purest branches of the Church. And if we go abroad to Catholic regions, and even search among all the denominations which bear the Christian name, this will be found to be the belief almost universally associated with the religion of the New-Testament.



## CHAPTER VII.

### ATONEMENT OFFERED AND ACCEPTED EXPRESSLY FOR ALL.

THE fourth proposition in the plan of the argument was, that the atonement was expressly offered and accepted for all as moral agents.

That the atonement was *made* for all as moral agents, we have the plain evidence of our senses. We see it *applied* to all as moral agents, first in the offers and promises, and then in the command and threatenings, and in the punishment of unbelief. It is no longer a question whether the privilege was provided for all, when we see it actually in their hands.

The three propositions which have already been proved, viz. that the death of Christ rendered the pardon of all consistent with the honour of the law in case they should hear the Gospel and believe; that in vir-

tue of this general change in the relations of men, pardon is actually made over to all who hear the Gospel, as far as it can be made over to moral agents before they have performed their part; and that the benefit is so brought within their reach that they can enjoy it by only doing their duty, and are bound to apply it to themselves; do together make out the truth complete, that an atonement is provided for all as moral agents. The single proposition that the death of Christ rendered the pardon of all consistent with the honour of the law if they would believe, comprehends the whole. It expresses the entire influence of the atonement, (except what relates to the curse of abandonment,) and all that any Calvinist on our side ever asserted. How the atonement came to have such an influence upon all, is now the only question that remains. Some ascribe this to its sufficiency, others to the express purpose for which it was offered. Of the former there are two classes. One allow to that sufficiency all that we mean by a general atonement: the other represent it by the value of a pearl expressly not offered for a part; and to give it a greater bearing on non-elect men than devils, they resort to the common world, the common nature, and common law. We take the other ground, and affirm that nothing could have given the atonement such an influence but an express purpose bearing upon all men as moral agents.

I may subject myself to voluntary sufferings to the age of Methuselah, without an express object, and it will never convince the community that the law of the land will be executed upon thieves. But let my friend steal and be bound to the stake: let me at that moment cover his body with my own, and take the stripes avowedly in his stead: and all the spectators are as much convinced that the law will continue to be exe-

cuted against theft, as though the offender himself had suffered. The pith of the applicability lies in the express purpose. Look again at the case of the prince of Wales. The object of his death was to convince the public that future forgers would die. Had he suffered by his own or another's hand without giving out that he died in the room of any, it would have done nothing at all towards producing this conviction; and the pardon of the criminals, however reclaimed, would have ruined the law as much as though the prince had not suffered.

That express purpose which was necessary to give the atonement such a general bearing, it is not difficult to find. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life. 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*.\*" Here is express purpose enough to answer every purpose. There is no longer any need to resort to the unintelligible notion of sufficiency; here is the express purpose itself reaching to a whole world of moral agents†.

\* John 3. 14—17.

† It is curious to see to what straits, from not attending to this express purpose and its proper influence, men are reduced in accounting for the universal offer. Dr. Gray of Baltimore, with all his talents and learning, has not escaped without difficulty in his *Fiend of the Reformation*. He was too enlightened not to see that the offer and promise, and command, are extended to all, and that to deny the imputability of Christ's righteousness to all would lead to blasphemous consequences. He therefore resorts to the idea that the imputability does not depend on his representative character, or though he might be the Saviour of those whom he did in no sense represent. Why then not of devils? And how after all does Dr. G. justify the offer and command? Why thus:

Sufficiency avail without an express purpose! Was it ever known or heard of that Christ rendered it consistent with the honour of the law for any to be pardoned *even by faith* without dying as their proper and avowed Substitute? Did you ever read of any influence which he exerted upon the actual or possible pardon of men but by dying in their stead, “the just for the unjust”? How in any other way *could* he have such an influence? If a real and acknowledged Substitute was necessary to actual pardon, it was equally necessary to the grant of conditional pardon, if the grant was made in good faith: and if without expressly dying for men he could obtain the one, he could the other,

God requires of all the righteousness of the law: Christ’s righteousness is the righteousness of the law: therefore God must require all to present the righteousness of Christ: thus establishing a legal identity between the righteousness of Christ and the personal righteousness demanded of us, though he had allowed that we are not one with Christ or with Adam except in a figurative sense. Besides, why was not this reasoning extended to devils? God requires of them the righteousness of the law, (or their present sin is not transgression :) Christ’s righteousness is the righteousness of the law: therefore he must require devils to present the righteousness of Christ.

After all Dr. G. is not so much out of the way as it might seem. His mistake arises solely from misapplying the term *representation*. He supposes Christ to have represented men in the secret covenant rather than in the open transactions. And yet he has correct ideas of what took place in that secret covenant, making it to be nothing but the yielding of consent on the one part, and the gift of the elect as a reward on the other. So that he really means no more than that the imputability of Christ’s righteousness does not depend on men’s having been given him as a reward: and he pronounces the opposite sentiment, (viz. that the righteousness of Christ is imputable only to the elect,) one of the two great sophisms which have corrupted the doctrines of the Reformation. He goes further, and introduces the Son of God as saying to all who hear the Gospel, that by an express agreement with the Father, he through his death has obtained a right to assure them that they shall be saved by his mediation if they will believe. In that agreement with the Father, then, he represented, or transacted for, a whole world of moral agents.

Dr. G. is dealing with Mr. M’Chord because the latter makes repre-

and the whole world might have been discharged without an express atonement.

The pardon of the non-elect possible without an express Substitute! Then they are treated with more indulgence than the chosen themselves. Is it to be believed that when God would not release his own elect without exacting life for life, he has offered to forgive others without a satisfaction?

Either then Christ expressly atoned for all, or a part could not be pardoned even should they believe, and ought not to be blamed for losing the benefit. There is no avoiding this dilemma unless some way can be discovered in which he could reconcile with the honour of the law the pardon of a part, on the supposi-

sentation to be necessary to the imputability of righteousness. But the difference between them is chiefly about words. They mean different things by representation. Mr. M'C's theory is, that Christ represented only the Church or body of believers, (had Dr. G. attached the same idea to representation he would have said the same,) leaving to all a chance to come in and share in the representation. In this he really makes out a representation of all as moral agents, the very thing that Dr. G. virtually admits: and he plainly concedes all that Dr. G. appears to mean by the representation of the elect. So that the dispute is chiefly about words, and turns on the question what transactions and influence ought to fall under the name of representation. In one respect Dr. G. has the advantage. Mr. M'C. in allowing none to be represented till they believe, overlooks their previous representation as moral agents which his own theory implies. Dr. G. turns upon him and says, if Christ is the Head, (he makes Head and Representative the same,) of none but believers, he has no right to command unbelievers. Let him be the Head and Representative of all as moral agents, and every difficulty vanishes.

Thus these two able writers are struggling together on the borders of truth; and nothing is necessary to bring them together, and to unite them both in perfect accord with us, but to fix their eye on moral agents, and on this public express purpose concerning all men as such. It is pleasant to see with what Christian urbanity these distinguished men treat each other. Mr. M'C. has the generosity to concede to Dr. G. the reputation of possessing the highest literary attainments in our country.

tion of their faith, without expressly atoning for them. Can that way be found? This brings us at once to the alleged sufficiency. Could then the dignity and purity of the Victim accomplish this? Let us first suppose that these attributes had nothing to point their influence to non-elect men more than devils. How then could they affect the former more than the latter? None can doubt that the Son of God was competent to atone for devils, had circumstances given his death a bearing upon them. But the sufficiency of the *Victim* did not extend to them a sufficiency of *actual atonement*, rendering their pardon consistent with the honour of the law on the supposition of their return to holiness. It is plain therefore that the sufficiency of the Victim could not have this effect on non-elect men, without something to bring it to bear on them as it did not on devils, and making out for them a competency of *actual atonement*. If there is no other sufficiency for them than that of the *Victim*, they still stand exactly on the footing of devils; and then they could not be pardoned even should they believe. Why then the offer and command to them, and the condemnation for losing the benefit? What have they to do with a sufficiency which has nothing to do with them?

Take now the other supposition, that the dignity and purity of the Victim *were* brought to bear on non-elect men as they were not on devils. How was this done? By his taking, it is said, the nature of man, and subjecting himself to the law given to the human race, and dying in a world which they inhabited. And what did all this accomplish? A sufficiency of *actual atonement* for the non-elect? No; for it is asked, "Why need we contend for an *actual atonement* for those who never will believe?" A sufficiency then of

what? "Of Christ's merit:" and "this sufficiency," it is added, "depends upon the dignity of his Person and the greatness of his sufferings." Then it might be sufficient for devils. No; it is not "true that the merit of Christ can be asserted to be sufficient for devils," for want, it seems, of the three circumstances meeting in their case. Then the "sufficiency" of his "merit" for non-elect men "depends" not merely "upon the dignity of his Person and the greatness of his sufferings." But what does this sufficiency of merit do for the non-elect? It renders their salvation *possible*. For in making out that a limited atonement does not place them "in the same condition with devils," it is stated to be one of the points of difference against the latter, that "their salvation is in the nature of things impossible." Here then is a sufficiency of merit which renders the salvation of the non-elect possible without any "actual atonement" for them. Salvation possible without an actual atonement! The elect themselves were never thus indulged. But how does the sufficiency of Christ's merit render the salvation of the non-elect possible without an "actual atonement"? Why, just as a ransom paid for 100 prisoners renders possible the release of 900 for whom it was not paid. This is the very simile chosen to illustrate the principle; and it plainly shows that the sufficiency pleaded for by this respectable writer did not render the salvation of the non-elect possible, but left them after all "in the same condition with devils," with this difference against them, that they are tantalized with offers and promises, and oppressed by commands and threatenings, which they ought never to have received.

Our brethren, while they deny an "actual atonement" for the non-elect, acknowledge that the death of

Christ rendered their pardon consistent with the honour of the law if they would believe. And pray what other "actual atonement" was made for Peter? But how do they get this influence out of the death of Christ? They ascribe it to "the dignity of his Person and the greatness of his sufferings," brought to bear upon the non-elect as they do not upon devils, by the common law, the common world, and common nature, while they are expressly excluded. Let us see whether these three circumstances, without an express purpose, and directly against the express purpose, could produce so mighty an effect.

Could the common *law* work this wonder? But what is meant by this emphasis laid on a common law? Is it meant that all the transgressions of that law were atoned for in a mass? Then the guilt of the non-elect was expressly expiated. Is it meant that such a satisfaction was made as to prevent the law from being injured whoever of the human race should be pardoned on their believing? This is exactly what we assert, and then it was expressly made for all men as moral agents. Is it meant that it was offered for those transgressions of the law only which the elect would commit? The question then returns, did an atonement expressly offered for a part of the transgressions of a law, and expressly *not* offered for the other part, render it consistent with the honour of the law for the excepted transgressions to be pardoned on any terms? Then there was as complete an atonement for the excepted transgressions as for the rest, and the exception was no exception: and as there is essentially but one divine law in the universe, the great law of love, (holiness being radically the same in all worlds,) what should hinder the sins of devils, (who are under the



same general law,) from sharing an equal influence with the excepted transgressions of men?

Did the common *world* and *nature* produce so great a wonder? That is to say, did these render the pardon of some consistent with the honour of the law, on the supposition of their faith, for whom atonement was expressly *not* made? How *could* they nullify an express exception and render it no exception? And what particle of proof from the Bible of this omnipotent influence of a common world and nature? Where is the chapter and verse?

In the supposed case of the prince of Wales, besides the ten noblemen, say there were twenty more who had committed the same crime. Keep in mind that the only way in which he could render the pardon of any consistent with the honour of the law, was by making as strong an impression as their death would have made, that the law was still to be executed on future offenders. Suppose now that the prince expressly offered himself for the ten, and expressly did *not* offer himself for the twenty; how could his death answer in the room of the punishment of the twenty, or on any conditions render their pardon consistent with the honour of the law? Could his living under the same law that all had broken, and atoning for that species of crime which all had committed, and belonging to the same kingdom, and having the blood of an Englishman in his veins, and the honours of a prince upon his head, make any difference in favour of those who were expressly excluded? Who, after seeing the twenty pardoned for whom he did not die, would conclude that all future forgers would be punished? And if the twenty could not be discharged on any terms, it is not true that his death rendered their pardon consistent

with the honour of the law on certain conditions : and the offer to them on those conditions, would either be deceptive or a bare-faced mockery.

This one decisive fact still rises before us : the three circumstances were all tried upon the elect, and they could not procure pardon for the chosen of God, with all the faith imparted to them, without an atonement expressly offered for them. And it is wonderful if they exerted a more powerful influence upon the non-elect, and brought them into a salvable state, not only without an atonement, but notwithstanding their express exclusion.

But if the three circumstances must be allowed to have the mighty influence pleaded for, then in all fairness they ought to be considered as containing in themselves the express purpose in favour of all. The immaculate and dignified character of the Victim could no more affect non-elect men than devils, without some intelligible reference to the former rather than the latter. If the three circumstances contained that reference, and pointed to the human rather than the angelic part so intelligibly that their language is understood on earth, (and if not understood how comes this influence to be so confidently ascribed to them ?) then in all reason they ought to be regarded as expressing themselves the universal purpose. If they brought the sacrifice so to bear upon all as to render all men pardonable upon their believing, and did this by indicating a reference to the race at large, then they helped to accomplish an actual and complete atonement for all as moral agents, and wrought this effect by expressly announcing to the world the universal reference.

Thus it seems that nothing could give the atonement such an influence on the race at large as it confessedly had, but an express declaration, some way pronounced,

that it was so offered and accepted for all as to have this precise effect, "that whosoever believeth—should not perish." Such a declaration we find in words. And when we have found the very thing that was necessary to give the atonement this effect, why should we look any further, or lose ourselves in unintelligible language about a sufficiency which without the express purpose would have amounted to nothing?

Let us now repair to the Scriptures. And here the first thing that strikes us on every page is, that the atonement was expressly *accepted* for all. This appears as often as we hear the Father tender life to all, and promise with an oath that they shall live on the ground of that satisfaction, provided they believe. This is pledging all that is sacred in him that he has accepted it in behalf of a whole world of moral agents. It is itself the public and formal acceptance.

And when we look for the express and universal purpose of the offering, the evidence is equally decisive. <sup>THE</sup> THIS purpose is found in whatever declares to the world, directly or indirectly, that Christ died to make atonement for all. And what less than this can be meant by the "price" in the hand of a fool which he has no heart to improve? or by the repeated declaration that God "has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live;" that he is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"? or by the universal call, attended by the proclamation that "all things are ready"? or by the pressure of the command upon all, and the awful punishment of unbelievers? or by the solemn appeal, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" What else can be meant by the "birth-right" which all are warned against selling, and which when sold cannot

be recovered though sought "carefully with tears"? But you ask for something more direct. What then will satisfy? Do you require an explicit declaration that Christ died for *all*, even for as many as were dead? "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 which died for them and rose again." "We trust in the living God who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." "I exhort therefore that first of all supplications—be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority:—for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." We must pray for all because there is a Mediator and a ransom for all, and because God wills all men to be saved. And no one can open his Bible without finding these words put into his mouth: "All we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Would it satisfy you better to hear it said that he died for *each* and *every one*? "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;" (*υπερ παντος*, for every one.) Do you insist on a positive declaration that he atoned for the *whole world*? "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." "The bread of God is he which—giveth life unto the world." "The bread—is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world." Do you demand a

categorical assertion that he died for the identical persons who eventually perish? "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died." "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." "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." The prophecy of Caiaphas foretold that Christ should die for the Jewish "*nation*," the mass of whom went to their place\*.

Forced attempts have been made to explain away the literal and obvious meaning of these texts, leaving the Bible really too uncertain to support any thing. But the Synod of Dort, who spoke the language of the Calvinistic world two centuries ago, allow to them their literal import, and tell us that the same had been the common construction. And indeed what need of this effort to limit these passages, since in their most universal form they prove no more than that Christ died for all in such a sense as to render their pardon consistent with the honour of the law if they would believe; a position which must be admitted to be true if these texts were out of the Bible.

And now I ask, what proof from Scripture or reason can be set against all this mass of evidence? Reason is silent; but what counteracting testimony can be brought from the word of God? Not a particle. You may find there the doctrine of election. You may find a seed given to Christ as a personal reward for the merit of his obedience "unto death." You may find notices of the larger ransom, made up of expia-

\* Prov. 17. 16. Isai. 5. 4. and 53. 6. Ezek. 33. 11. Mat. 22. 4. John 1. 29. and 6. 33, 51. and 11. 50—52. Rom. 14. 15. 1 Cor. 8. 11. 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. 1 Tim. 2. 1—6. and 4. 10. Heb. 2. 9. and 12. 16, 17. 2 Pet. 2. 1. and 3. 9. 1 John 2. 2.

tion and merit, by which he purchased the sanctification and salvation of the elect. You may find the Redeemer in his work on earth manifesting, even with the consent of the Father, a special reference to the elect as the interest which fell to him as one of the contracting Parties ; and may find the completion of their salvation a leading end of his receiving the kingdom. This is all you will find : and all this, if I mistake not, has been shown to be consistent with a general atonement. Is it then too much to say, that the whole array of evidence which has been spread over this and the foregoing chapters, stands without a scintilla of opposing testimony ? that the unnumbered texts which have been quoted, which with their kindred ones form the whole texture of divine Revelation, have nothing to weaken their force or limit their universality ?

I have heard excellent men say, in answer to every argument which could be urged, I am resolved to abide by the language of Scripture. But I entreat them to consider who it is that abides by the language of Scripture. There is not a text in the Bible which asserts that Christ did not atone for all ; but there are many which affirm in the plainest terms that he did. We are under no necessity to put a forced construction on a single passage ; but our brethren are obliged to limit the most universal terms. They are grieved that we, (as they view the subject,) appeal from Scripture to human reasonings ; and yet how often, when pressed with some of our plain texts, they will turn and say, *I cannot conceive* that God should provide salvation for those whom he did not intend to save. This very resort to human reasoning frequently appears to be the strongest bar against their admitting the plain and obvious meaning of the word of God. I say this with all tenderness, and if I wound a feeling by it, I shall wish that it had been suppressed.

AN

**APPENDIX,**

EXHIBITING THE INFLUENCE OF

*CHRIST'S OBEDIENCE,*

AND SHOWING THAT ON THIS GROUND THE CHURCH RECEIVE

**ALL POSITIVE GOOD:**

IN OPPOSITION TO THE THEORY WHICH REPRESENTS

*PARDON*

TO BE THE ONLY BLESSING

PROCURED BY

THE REDEEMER.

## APPENDIX.

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AN opinion has gone forth that Christ procured for us no other benefit than pardon; that besides clearing from the current of blessings those obstructions which sin had thrown upon it, he is in no sense the ground of our positive happiness; and that in respect to sanctification, he only made such a work consistent with the *wisdom* of God by rendering remission possible. Such a sentiment ought to be subjected to a rigid and solemn scrutiny.

That Christ must have had a reward, and one awarded by law, is just as certain as that he was "made under law" and received a command to die. If the Father assumed the rights of the Godhead, and took the ground of authoritatively requiring the service, he must reward it as a service done to himself. But whatever reward Christ received, was for his obedience alone, and not for his sufferings *as such*. Sufferings viewed by themselves, that is, as *uncommanded*, could be entitled to nothing. Besides, the law promised no reward to any thing but obedience.

Now if Christ received a reward, it must have consisted in blessings for men. He had no private wants to supply, no selfish propensities to satisfy by a personal and separate good: and without blessings for men he could have had no redeemed kingdom to reign over, not a gift in his hand ever to tender to the human race, and nothing at all to gratify his benevolence.

Our general opinion is, that for his *filial* obedience he received the *inheritance* of a Son, and was made "Heir of *all things*;" and that in the "all things" was comprehended the whole amount of positive good ever intended for a fallen race, or ever to be placed within their reach, including whatever was to be conferred on them sovereignly or in gracious rewards, or offered to them on the condition of their faith. We believe that all these things were given to him as the legal reward of that amazing exhibition of holiness which he made under law, and belong to the general estate which he holds by a mediatorial claim, and were made over to him, not for his own private use, but to be disposed of exactly as they are,—some in sovereign gifts, some in gracious rewards, and some barely offered to capable agents, leaving the issue to be decided by them.



The "gifts" which we suppose he "received for men," may be divided into two classes: first, regenerating grace for the elect as passive recipients; secondly, the good obtained for moral agents. In the latter class we understand to be comprised whatever he bestows in sovereign gifts fitted to a state of probation which moral agents enjoy, including the enlightening influences of the Spirit on the unregenerate; whatever he imparts to believers in gracious rewards, comprehending their continued sanctification; and whatever he offers to men on the condition of their faith, constituting a provision for moral agents to improve. I shall glance at both classes, but shall dwell chiefly on the latter. And in considering the good obtained for moral agents, though I shall refer occasionally to what he sovereignly bestows, I shall principally attend to that which he offers to men on the condition of their faith, and confers on believers in gracious rewards.

It is no part of our system that Christ obeyed *in our room* to supersede the necessity of our obedience, as he suffered *in our room* to supersede the necessity of our sufferings. The obedience which we owed he was never bound to pay, but only that which was due from him. The obedience which was due from him we never owed, and we still are bound to render that which was demanded of us. He obeyed for himself, and we obey for ourselves.

Nor yet is it any part of our system that we are *rewarded* for two things at once, (Christ's obedience and our own,) but rather that two persons in different senses are rewarded by the same thing. A divine reward is *a token of approbation presented as a motive to virtue*, and is the recompense of him alone who is therein approved. It may be legal, and it may be gracious. Our obedience, begun late and continuing imperfect, is not entitled to reward by law, but yet is a thing really approved; and therefore is fitted to receive, not the legal, but the gracious tokens of approbation. What Christ received was in approbation of his righteousness alone, and was of course a reward to none but himself. The direct act of giving to him, though for the use of those who should be approved, was not itself the approbation of them. But the grant consisted in blessings for our use. When those blessings come from his hands, they are tokens of approbation of none but us. The same blessing therefore which to him is the reward of law, is to us the reward of grace. As it issued from Godhead, it was his reward not ours; as it comes from his hands, it is our

reward not his. Though therefore we are *blessed* for his sake, (as without his righteousness to detach the blessings from God they could not have come to us,) we are *rewarded* solely for our own; that is, the benefits as they come from his hands, are to none but us *the tokens of approbation presented as motives to virtue.*

We may see therefore in what sense it can be true that eternal life is granted for Christ's sake alone, and yet is a token of approbation to us, and would not have come to us had we not been approved. As it came out from Godhead according to law, it came for his sake alone; but it was delivered to him, not for his own private use, but for the benefit of those who would obey him. It would not have been a reward nor an honour to Christ to have deposited with him eternal life for those who should remain his enemies; nor would it have comported with the honour of the law to have delivered to him that blessing for those who should refuse to obey. And this distinction in favour of believers was because they were fit to be approved. While therefore the blessing comes out from God on Christ's account, it comes to us as a gracious token of approbation.

But it is said that if Christ is the ground of what believers obtain, they must all receive equally. Not so. It was the very idea of his reward that his disciples should receive according to the interest which they hold in his heart, or in proportion as they love and obey him. The good was dealt out to him with an express understanding that it should go to them according to this rule. The only reward, (as relates to the present subject,) which he ever desired, was that his disciples should receive at his hands the gracious tokens of approbation according to their fitness to be approved. Thus while his merit is the legal *ground*, their holiness, which constitutes a sort of spiritual capacity, is the *measure* of their blessedness.

A parent labours for a man and receives his wages in articles of clothing for his children of different ages, which he could not wear himself. It is as much a transaction between him and his employer, and the reward is as much his own, as though it had consisted in money. But he did not fulfil an obligation which belonged to the children, or do a work in their room which they were bound to perform. They were never under obligations to render that service. When he has received the articles, he deals them out to his children according to their ages and character, and gives to

none further than they are approved, except what he sovereignly bestows to put them in convenient circumstances to render the service required.

This is the explanation of the system, and now for the proof. The principle which I set up is, that it did not comport with the highest honour of the law for God to issue a single positive good but out of respect to a perfect righteousness. It was as much a principle of the first covenant not to bestow a cup of cold water out of respect to any other than a righteousness perfect for the time the subject had been in existence, as it was that Adam should not be confirmed in happiness without an obedience entire through the period of his probation : for the moment the first sin appeared, the law doomed the transgressor to the loss of all things. The following reasonings therefore will as much prove that every particle of positive good ever destined to reach a sinful world, was granted as a reward to Christ, as that the blessings were which constitute the reward of believers. The latter however I have chiefly in view.

In the two great instances of a government by law which have come to our knowledge, it was a principle to require creatures to obey before they were confirmed in holiness and happiness, and not to confer a covenant claim to immortality but as the reward of a finished righteousness. The inhabitants of heaven were not confirmed at first, for some of them fell ; and it was long before we heard of "elect angels." Man was not confirmed at first, and the issue is known to us all. This requisition of obedience as an antecedent to the gift of eternal life, was not indeed so absolutely necessary as the punishment of sin without an atonement ; but it answered the important purpose of honouring the law. It held this language in the ears of the universe : no creature shall receive eternal life till he has first done homage to my law. There was indeed no other way of conferring immortality in a governmental form. In any other way it must have been a sovereign gift. On either plan the gift to the possessor and the direct benevolence of God would be the same ; but the method chosen had the advantage of showing God's determination to honour his righteous statutes.

This then must be considered the settled principle of the divine law. And there was no reason why the principle should be given up under the Gospel. No necessity existed for the abandonment ; for nothing was easier than to

make over to Christ as a legal reward the whole inheritance for the benefit of the "joint heirs." This indeed was not so necessary as an atonement in the matter of pardon, but it answered all the purposes of the original principle.

Atonement covered sin and placed us back where Adam stood the moment he was created, before he had either obeyed or transgressed. But how is eternal life to reach us? Upon the original principle it must be the reward of a perfect obedience. Well, you say, when all the believer's sin is covered, the imperfection of his obedience is covered also; and that obedience, standing thus spotless, may be rewarded for its own sake. It may indeed without that utter prostration of government which would have resulted from pardon without an atonement, but not without departing from one of the two great principles of the law. These were, to punish sin, and to grant no reward but to a perfect and uninterrupted obedience. But your theory represents God as coming down from this high ground to reward an obedience which possesses neither of these attributes. That its imperfection is covered, only takes away its *sin*; but it still wants something positive to make it sterling. No covering of imperfection can add to it that standard weight and measure which the law requires. No washing can render it that thing to which the reward was originally promised. If the recompense is dealt out directly to this shrivelled morsel, more than half of the original demand of the law is given up. This is the precise thing that has been overlooked. Because God could daily bestow good on Adam for his own works, it is inferred that he may on believers after their sin is covered; not considering that in the former instance he rewarded a perfect and uninterrupted obedience, and in the latter, would recompense one defective in both of these respects. This would certainly be a very material change in the principles of the divine administration, and a change altogether at the expense of law. It would be an innovation wholly needless, and ought not to be believed without decisive evidence.

But it is said that to suppose God unwilling to reward the obedience of his people after their sin is covered, without calling in the aid of another's righteousness, would militate against his grace and benevolence. But why? If a certain amount of good is dispensed to the ill-deserving, which upon every principle is both benevolent and gracious, why should these qualities be diminished by any respect that may be paid, on account of the honour of the law, to

the obedience of Christ? If the law refuses to deliver that good to any but a perfect obedience, and God, to save the honour of the law, contrives to measure it out to Christ, with intent that it shall go through him to sinners, is it not as great a favour to the ill-deserving as though it had passed directly to them? And is not the benevolence as great at least as though it had rushed to the conclusion without respect to the law? The gift is the same to the sinner, and finds him as ill-deserving, as though it had come in the other way, while the method chosen subserves the further end of honouring a righteous law. The only difference is, that upon one plan the principle of the law is adhered to, on the other it is given up. And why the benevolence or grace should be the greater for selecting the manner most injurious to the law, when no one is benefited by it, would be hard to tell. At any rate upon this principle grace and benevolence are both excluded from *pardon*. It is admitted on all hands that this favour is granted to sinners out of respect to the atonement of Christ: and did any one but an infidel ever dream that the grace or benevolence of pardon was the less on that account? And if without impairing the benevolence or grace of the gift, remission can be administered on account of the expiation of Christ, why not eternal life on account of his obedience?

Having thus stated the ground on which our principle rests, and cleared off some of the objections, I will now bring forward the proofs that such a principle does exist under the administration of grace. I will first suggest some considerations which appear to have less weight, and then others of a more decisive character.

(1.) The plan in question sends us immediately to God for all positive good; not indeed as sinners, for our sin is covered by the atonement, but as having nothing to offer but an imperfect obedience. All that Christ does is to cover the *sin* of that imperfection, leaving the imperfection still remaining: and after men are thus purged from guilt, with all that defect of positive righteousness they are sent to God without a Mediator for their whole positive salvation. After the sin of withholding ninety degrees of obedience is pardoned, ten degrees are accepted, without a Mediator, where the law demanded a hundred.

(2.) This system takes away one half of a Saviour and one half of his praise. According to its representation, Christ procured our release from prison, and secured us against a return to the prison-house, and then left us to

make our way through the world alone, to rise to opulence and a throne by our own independent merit, supported by such strength and favoured with such mercy as we may obtain from God without a Mediator. We are left to fight the world, the flesh, and the devil without the Captain of the Lord's host, and to conquer, not under his banner, but in a separate warfare. Half of our dependance on Christ is thus taken away; and for all the positive good of both worlds we must rely on our own works, or on the mercy of the pure Godhead. The Redeemer is turned out of one half of our religion, and the whole is left cold and gloomy. We no longer feel that every particle of food, and every article of raiment, was procured by our divine Friend, and turn him off with the frigid acknowledgment that he was the mere antecedent of these gifts. Our common comforts upon this plan are not half so sweet, nor the crown in prospect half so precious. How delightful to view all these things as Christ's, earned by his obedience, and laid up in him for our use.

(3.) We have been accustomed to consider Christ the centre of all Bible truths; but this scheme separates from him the whole action of the Spirit, and every smile and favour of heaven. It separates from him, or attaches to him but loosely and in a consequential way, the greater part of the Bible. It is a comfortless theory which thus associates with our blessed Redeemer a bare escape from prison, and no positive good, no light, no consolation, no inheritance.

(4.) We have been accustomed to suppose that the intercession of Christ is for more than pardon, and have even heard him say, "I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter." And again, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are.—I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.—Sanctify them through thy truth.—Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.—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\*." This seems to have been more than a prayer of the *man*, and nothing less than the intercession of the Mediator; for he repeatedly

\* John 14. 16. and 17. 11—24.

alludes to his mediatorial fidelity, reward, and authority. Now it is apparent that the whole of his intercession must be founded on what he himself has done and suffered ; otherwise it would seem to be an unmeaning and useless thing, and merely to import that God needs solicitation as one loath to give. Indeed as it is made in heaven, we can form no other idea of it than as the silent plea or influence of what he did and suffered on earth. His intercession for pardon we know is founded on his death ; for had not this been offered, that could not have been made. By a parity of reason, if he pleads for more than pardon, this part of his intercession must be founded on his positive righteousness. It would seem therefore that we must either reject the theory in question, or plainly assert, notwithstanding the quotations which have been made, that Christ intercedes for nothing but pardon.

(5.) The Church is called "the bride, the Lamb's wife," and believers are denominated his "seed." The principal idea suggested by these figures is, not that they are *pardoned* on his account, but that they *inherit* from him or for his sake. A wife or child is not generally pardoned on account of the husband or father, but they uniformly inherit with or from their correlates. I am sensible that these names are applied for other reasons ; but so far as they suggest the treatment which believers receive on Christ's account, they point us to the inheritance rather than to pardon.

(6.) It would seem reasonable to suppose that all the good which is suspended on faith in Christ, and especially on *trust* in him\*, was procured by Christ ; and that faith and trust, when they take hold of that offer and promise, rely on him as the Procurer of all that is there engaged : otherwise it is difficult to see how faith and trust in that promise are faith and trust *in Christ*, any more than in Gabriel or Adam. Are they so called because he procured pardon, and thus opened the way for eternal life to be bestowed without further respect to him ? This certainly has the appearance of being far-fetched. To talk of a son's depending on a father for an estate which he is to earn himself or receive as a present from another, merely because the father pays his debt and sets him at liberty to work for himself or apply to another, is manifestly using language in a way calculated to deceive. Are these graces so called

\* Ps. 2. 12. Rom. 15. 12. Eph. 1. 12, 13.

merely because they expect to receive from *the hands* of Christ as God's Distributor? or merely because *the promise has been announced by him* and his commissioned servants? Upon these principles we might with some reason talk of faith and trust in the "ministering spirits," and in other instruments of promised good, (for they are real distributors,) and faith and trust in the angels of Bethlehem, and in ministers of the Gospel, for they have proclaimed the promises of God.

But it is still more difficult to see upon this plan why eternal life should be *promised*, and promised exclusively, to a trust in *Christ* for salvation. I can see a good reason for connecting *pardon* with a reliance on him for that discharge; but why a trust in the word and agency of a mere instrument should be the all in all in the condition of *eternal life*,—why a bare Agent, appointed to utter the words and distribute the goods of another, should so fill the whole field of vision, and occupy the place which would seem better to befit the Being who employed him, is not so easy to explain.

That eternal life is promised to faith and trust in Christ, and suspended on no other condition, the Scriptures abundantly teach. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth *in him* should not perish but *have everlasting life*." "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth *on him*, may *have everlasting life*, and *I will raise him up at the last day*." "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe *on him to life everlasting*." "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life\*."

Now why is this? According to the common understanding of Christians, it is because the life is *in Christ* as the Vine, and is derived from him to the branches, and because faith is the very bond which so unites us to him that we can draw life from him. And this accords with the representations of Scripture. "This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and *this life is IN his Son*. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life. *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of*

\* John 3. 16. and 6. 40, 68. 1 Tim. 1. 16.



*the Son of God.*" This then was the reason why faith in Christ was urged, and why eternal life was suspended on it: "*This life is IN his Son.*" Christ is the fountain of eternal life, and faith is a coming to him for supplies. "Ye will not come to me that ye might have *life.*" Accordingly the life promised to faith is received *through his name.* "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that *believing ye might have life through his name\*.*"

(7.) It would seem strange if Christ was appointed to manage more than his own inheritance,—if more was committed to him for distribution than he received as a reward,—if he gives gifts as a Mediator which as Mediator he did not procure. I know of no reason why any blessing should come down through him as the channel of conveyance, which was not procured by his own proper influence.

Now he does impart all the good which the Church ever receive in this world or the world to come. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." To him is committed the ministration of the Spirit, by which he becomes the Prophet of the world, and diffuses all the *light* which illumines the minds of men. He is "the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "All things are delivered unto 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." By the same means he *subdues* and *sanctifies* the world. "I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient." "Who *by him* do believe in God." "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.—That we henceforth be no more children,—but—may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." "There shall come out of Zion a Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." By the same means he imparts *strength*. "He said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in

\* John 5. 40. and 20. 31. 1 John 5. 11—13.

weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." "Without me ye can do nothing." By the same means he gives *refreshment*. "They drank of that spiritual rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ." By the same means he imparts *comfort*. "Our consolation—aboundeth by Christ." Not only has he the entire ministration of the Spirit, but he distributes the final reward. "I give unto them eternal life." "To him that overcometh will I give to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne;" his own reward thus empowering him to reward his disciples. "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life\*."

(8.) I draw another argument from what in Scripture is called "*the fulness*" of Christ, particularly from his fulness of "*grace*." This fulness is spoken of in the first chapter of John, and again in the Epistle to the Colossians; and in both places it is a plenitude of *grace* and *truth*. The passage in John is as follows: "We beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.—And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Let us examine what these two parts of his fulness mean.

[1.] His fulness of truth. When it is said that truth came by Christ, we are to understand, not only that he was the reality of what had been set forth in the shadows of the Old Testament, but that the whole revelation of God was made by him. By the fulness of truth in him, we are to understand three things. First, that he had a perfect knowledge of the mind and will of God; as it is said in the very next verse, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Secondly, that the whole amount of truth belonged to him as his own, and that the Spirit of revelation was his subordinate Agent. "When he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all

\* Mat. 1. 21. and 11. 27. John 1. 9. and 10. 28. and 14. 13. and 15. 5. Rom. 11. 26. and 15. 18. 1 Cor. 10. 4. 2 Cor. 1. 5. and 12. 9. Eph. 4. 7—16. Phil. 4. 13. 1 Pet. 1. 21. Jude 21. Rev. 3. 21.

truth; for he shall not speak of himself, [at his own suggestion,] but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak.—He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of *mine* and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I that he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you\*.” Thirdly, that the revelation made by him was an ample disclosure of the secrets of the Eternal Mind, sufficient for all the purposes of faith and practice, without any supplement drawn from human reason. “He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him†.” Hence to reach the perfection of revealed knowledge, is to “come—unto the measure of the stature of the *fulness* of Christ‡.” This idea is plainly illustrated in the passage in Colossians, as we shall presently see.

[2.] His fulness of grace. By grace is plainly meant all besides truth that “came by Jesus Christ,” in contradistinction to the law which “was given by Moses.” All grace is asserted to have come by Christ. If then it is any grace to bestow the Spirit and eternal life on sinners, these also “came by” him. If it was not so, or if any part of grace was not found in him, how could there be in him a *fulness* of grace? and how could we read of “the fulness of the *blessing* of the Gospel of Christ§”? To talk of a fulness from which we all receive, when there is nothing but a sort of negative influence to prevent punishment, would seem to be an extraordinary dialect. Fulness is altogether a positive term, and imports not barely enough to save us from the deepest poverty and ruin, but an abundance to make us *rich*. I never hear of the fulness of Christ without having the idea awakened of unlimited stores of positive good laid up in him from which the whole Church are supplied: and then I can see a glorious import in the term,—a meaning too rich and vast to be relinquished till demonstration tears it from me.

This fulness of grace consists of three parts. First, a plenitude of *pardon*, sufficient for sins however great or numerous. Secondly, a plenitude of the *Spirit*, given to Christ without measure; from which fulness we receive “grace for grace,” and are “strengthened with might” “according to the riches of his glory||.” Thirdly, a plenitude of *inheritance*. The fulness is particularly marked as being that of “the *only begotten* of the Father,” who gives

\* John 16. 13—15.—† John 3. 34.—‡ Eph. 4. 13.—§ Rom. 15. 29.—|| Eph. 3. 16.

to all that receive him, “power to become the sons of God\*,” in other words, “joint heirs” with him to “the riches of the glory of his inheritance†.”

All these ideas are plainly comprehended in the fulness mentioned in Colossians. To that passage let us now direct our attention. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the *forgiveness* of sins; who is the *image of the invisible God*, [by whom he is *revealed*,] the *First-born* of every creature, [the *Heir* of all things,]—the Head of the body, the Church, [the *fountain of influence*; “the Head,” as it is said in the same passage, “from which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God,”]—the First-born from the dead, [who not only rose first, but rose to *inherit* as the eldest Son,] that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. FOR *it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell*:—whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man *perfect in Christ Jesus*, [perfect in knowledge, holiness, and justification;]—that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God—and of Christ, *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, [the fulness of truth, competent to furnish a complete revelation.] And this I say lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.—Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ; FOR *in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*; [knowledge is a part of “the fulness of God‡:”] and ye are complete in him; [so far as *instruction* is concerned, ye have need of nothing more than “the fulness—of the Gospel of Christ.” But this is not all: for as wisdom, love, and power, the sum of the divine perfections, go in to constitute “the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” ye are complete in Christ not only in point of instruction, but in regard to his influence as King, Heir, Sanctifier, and Deliverer from the bondage both of Jewish ordinances and of Satan. Ye are complete in him,] which is *the Head of all principality and power*; *in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands*.—You—*hath he quickened*,—having *forgiven* you all tres-

\* John 1. 12—14.—† Eph. 1. 18.—‡ Eph. 3. 19.

passes, blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us;—and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly\*.” These are “the unsearchable riches of Christ,” and “the exceeding riches of—grace—through” him†: and they all go in to constitute that fulness of grace and truth which is found in him.

Having suggested these considerations, I now proceed to arguments of a more decisive cast.

I. That which is our *righteousness* in the sight of God is no other than the righteousness of Christ‡, and is said to be *in* Christ§, to be *of* Christ||, to be *by* the faith of Christ¶, and is called the righteousness of God, because appointed by him\*\*. The term is obviously taken from the first covenant, as appears by the frequent comparison between a legal righteousness and this. “Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doth those things shall live by them: but the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise.” “If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” “If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” “That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ††.” Now what ought to be the influence of a righteousness which thus plainly comes in the room of a legal one and takes its name? Under the first covenant, a righteousness both protected the subject from punishment and entitled him to positive good. If then “the Lord our righteousness” does only the former and not the latter, he is but half what a righteousness was under the first covenant, (leaving the rest to be supplied by our own works,) and the very term in the Gospel is sunk down to one half of its original meaning. But who told us that the word is thus changed? If you use a term to-day which I know had a definite meaning yesterday, I am bound to understand it in the same sense, unless you plainly tell me that its import is altered. Where has God told us that righteousness under the Gospel means but half what it did under the law? On the contrary, the very nature of the word precludes the possibility of such a change. Righte-

\* Col. 1. & 2.—† Eph. 2. 7. & 3. 8.—‡ Jer. 23. 6. & 33. 16.—  
 § Isai. 45. 24.—|| Isai. 54. 17. & 61. 10.—¶ Rom. 3. 22.—  
 \*\* Rom. 1. 17. & 3. 21, 22. & 10. 3. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Phil. 3. 9.—  
 †† Rom. 10. 5, 6. Gal. 2. 21. & 3. 21. Phil. 3. 8, 9.

ousness is a term altogether of a positive import. It implies more than a title to be exempted from an ignominious death : it imports the claim of one who is *right* ; who not only has not transgressed, but has done all that was required. A righteous man is something more than a man who is not a malefactor. To say of one that he does not deserve to be executed, would be a poor compliment to a righteous person. We do not talk of the righteousness of a culprit just released from the state-prison, because the law has no longer a penal demand against him. And the term has a meaning no less positive in the New-Testament. "They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and *going about to establish* their own righteousness, [certainly something more than avoiding crimes and escaping punishment,] have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God\*." Self-righteousness always means, as it does in this place, a pretended claim, not so much to pardon, as to a reward. We read of "the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness *without works*†." But why without works ? What have good works to do with pardon ? This is only not to impute *bad* works. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness‡:" but is the law nothing but a penalty ? and is its whole end answered, so as to make out a righteousness, without fulfilling the precept ? Thus we see that the term in the New-Testament has not lost its original meaning. If then Christ is our righteousness, he must do more than save us from the death of a malefactor, he must be the ground of all the treatment which belongs to the *righteous*. If his righteousness has the same influence, and answers the same end in the government of God, that the perfect righteousness of men would have done ; or if the common expression is true, that believers are *treated as righteous* on his account ; then he is certainly the ground of their title to life. To talk of their being treated *as righteous* on his account, and to deny that they receive eternal life for his sake, is to say that a *personal* righteousness would not have entitled them to the rewards of heaven.

But there is no need of further reasoning ; it is a plain matter of fact, spread obviously to view on the sacred page, that the same righteousness that procures pardon entitles to eternal life. "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doth those things shall

\* Rom. 10. 3.—† Rom. 4. 6.—‡ Rom. 10. 4.

*live* by them : but the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise,—that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved : for with the heart man believeth *unto righteousness*, and with the mouth confession is made *unto salvation*.” “If there had been a law given which could have given *life*, verily *righteousness* should have been by the law, [to wit, that righteousness which *now* gives *life*.]—We through the Spirit *wait for the hope of righteousness* by faith.” “Henceforth there is laid up for me *a crown of righteousness*.” Noah “became *heir* of the righteousness which is by faith.” Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the *reward* not reckoned of grace but of debt ; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.—The promise that he should be *the heir of the world*, was not to Abraham or his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be *heirs*, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.” “If by one man’s offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundant of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall *reign in life by One*, Jesus Christ. 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 one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the *obedience* of One shall many be *made righteous*.—That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign *through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord*\*.”

As righteousness signifies merely that which entitles to justification, this argument will really be carried forward in a new form under the following head.

II. Justification in its whole extent is allowed to be grounded on Christ† : but though the term is sometimes used with special reference to pardon‡, in its larger and more common sense it comprehends a title to eternal life. Some of the passages just quoted plainly show this, particularly that in which the contrast between the first and second Adam is

\* Rom. 4. 3, 4, 13, 14. and 5. 17---21. and 10. 5, 6, 9, 10. Gal. 3. 21. and 5. 6. 2 Tim. 4. 8. Heb. 11. 7.—† Isai. 45. 24, 25. and 53. 11. Rom. 3. 20---28. and 4. 25. and 5. 1, 9. 1 Cor. 6. 11. Tit. 3. 6, 7. —‡ Acts 13. 39. Rom. 5. 9.

drawn. So do all those which assert that justification is not *by works*. Pardon not by works! what has pardon to do with works? The mention of works suggests no other idea than that of *reward*. James of course uses the term in the larger sense, when, to prove that a justifying faith is operative, he asserts that we are justified by works and not by faith only\*. In the following passages also the word obviously means the same. “Not the hearers of the law are *just before God*, but the *doers* of the law shall be justified.” “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 was delivered for our offences, and was raised again, [by way of recompense,] *for our justification*; [we sharing in his reward, according to the principle, “Because I live ye shall live also.”] Therefore being justified by faith, we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and *rejoice in hope of the glory of God*.—For 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*.” “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, [receive all the blessings *promised to faith*, which are manifestly included in that justification which the Scripture foresaw.]—That no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, is evident, for, The just shall *live* by faith. And the law is not of faith, but, The man that *doth* them shall *live* in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,—that the *blessing* of Abraham might come on the Gentiles *through Jesus Christ*, that we might receive *the promise of the Spirit* through faith.—If the *inheritance* be of the law it is no more of promise, but God gave it to Abraham by promise.—Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given *life*, verily righteousness should have been by the law.—The law was our school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.—Ye are all the *children*, [and of course *heirs*,] of God by faith in Christ Jesus.—And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and *heirs* according to the promise.” “That being justified

\* James 2. 14---26.



by his grace, we should be made *heirs according to the hope of eternal life.\**"

If justification is an act or sentence declaring the subject entitled to all the good *promised to faith*, then it confers a title to eternal life as well as to pardon; for we have seen that both are unchangeably promised to the first act of faith in distinction from all subsequent *works*. And why should not both titles be embraced under the general name of justification? Ought there not to be a word to express the whole amount of these new claims? Why should an essential part be left without a name? And is not justification a proper word for that purpose? Why is it not? What was its original meaning under the first covenant from which it is manifestly taken? It there denoted a title to life as well as an acquittal from blame. And why should it not mean the same under the new covenant? What has operated to change its import? The principal force of the word still is and always must be positive. To justify a man, plainly signifies to invest him with a claim to be treated *as just*, and of course to entitle him to all the rewards of well doing. Under the law it would have given him a claim to the eternal life engaged to obedience; under the Gospel it ought to entitle him to the whole amount of blessedness promised to faith. Why should not justification by faith secure all that faith claims by covenant? If the promise does not deceive, the moment a man believes, he becomes entitled to eternal life as well as to pardon. All that good is instantly conferred on faith by the act or sentence of God. If that act or sentence is called justification, (and why should it not be?) the question is decided.

Further, justification in the larger sense is expressly grounded on Christ's *obedience*. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the *obedience of One* shall many be *made righteous*:" or as it is expressed in the preceding verse, "so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto *justification of life*:" or as it is in the verse still preceding, "much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by One, *Jesus Christ*†."

III. Eternal life is declared in the plainest terms to be *in, by, and through Christ*. "That they may also obtain the salvation which is *in Christ Jesus* with eternal glory." "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain

\* John 14. 19. Rom. 2. 13. and 4. 25. and 5. 1, 2, 10. and 8. 33, 34. Gal. 3. 8—29. Tit. 3. 7.—† Rom. 5. 17—19.

salvation *by* our Lord Jesus Christ ; who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should *live together with him.*" "The gift of God is eternal life *through* Jesus Christ our Lord." "Unto him that—washed us from our sins in his own blood, *AND hath made us kings and priests* unto God and his Father,—be glory." "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation ;—whereunto he called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." "If in this life only we have *hope in Christ*, we are of all men most miserable." "The riches of the glory of this mystery,—which is *Christ in you the hope of glory.*" "God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might *live through him.*" "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the **PURCHASED POSSESSION.**" "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." "The bread of God is he which—*giveth life* unto the world.—I am that bread of life.—If any man *eat of this bread*, he shall *live for ever.*—As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, [that life does not mean preservation from hell,] *so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*" "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." "I will give unto him that is athirst of the *fountain of the water of life.*" "I am the way, and the truth, and the *life.*" "I am the resurrection and the life." "When Christ *who is our life* shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." "That which was from the beginning,—which we have seen with our eyes,—and our hands have handled of the *Word of life*: for the *Life* was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that *Eternal Life* which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and *Eternal Life*\*."

IV. We are directed to ask for all things, and to render thanks for all things, in the name of Christ. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.—If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." "I have chosen you,—that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

\* John 6. 33, 48, 51, 57. and 7. 37. and 11. 25. and 14. 6. Rom. 6. 23. 1 Cor. 1. 30. and 15. 19. Eph. 1. 14. Col. 1. 27. and 3. 4. 1 Thes. 5. 9, 10. 2 Thes. 2. 13—17. 2 Tjm. 2. 10. 1 John 1. 1, 2. and 4. 9. and 5. 20. Rev. 1. 5, 6. and 21. 6.

Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name ; [because he had not yet finished the work which was to constitute his claim ;] ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.—At that day, [after my title is completed,] ye shall ask in my name\*. “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, [by, or from respect to, his authority,] giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all.” “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end†.”

To ask in the name of Christ, can mean nothing less than to pray that blessings may be granted for his sake, or out of respect to his merit. To give thanks *in the name of* Christ, is to thank God for blessings received on his account. To give thanks *by or through* Christ, is to deliver our tribute into his hands to be presented to the Father, as the ancient priests used to present the thank-offerings and other gifts and sacrifices of the people.

To escape the point blank force of these texts, it has been said, that in asking for positive blessings in the name of Christ, we are conscious that our guilt stands in the way of our receiving, and our meaning is, that we may be pardoned for his sake, that so the mercies may come directly to us without his further influence. Now this after all would be asking nothing in his name but pardon, and the command as well as our prayers would hold out a false appearance. Had we been directed to recognise over our food and in all our petitions our need of pardon through Christ, *that* we could have understood : but expressly to tell us to ask all things in his name, in the same unlimited manner in which we are directed to ask pardon in his name, and to mean only the latter, would certainly seem to be an extraordinary mode of directing ignorant creatures.

V. The most decisive as well as complicated argument I have reserved for the last. The Son of God, in reward of his filial obedience, was constituted “Heir of all things,” and received an inheritance which comprehended all the blessings which ever come to us.

To exhibit a connected view of this interesting subject, it is necessary to go back to the essential ideas of sonship.

\* John 14. 13, 14. and 15. 16. and 16. 23, 24, 26.—† Rom. 1. 8. and 7. 25. Eph. 3. 21. and 5. 20. Col. 3. 17.

Wherever the relation, character, and circumstances of a father and son are perfect, there are three ideas essentially involved in sonship; generation, filial obedience, and inheritance. If the last two are united without the first, as in the case of adoption, the *relation* is imperfect. If the first and last exist without the second, the *character* of the son is defective. If the first two are found without the last, the *circumstances* or character of the father is not good. These three parts go in to constitute the sonship of Christ; and in reference to every one of them he is apparently said to have been begotten. The first is beyond dispute\*. In respect to the second, as obedience was a vital part of the character of the Priest, and as his ordination to that office was really an appointment to a course of filial obedience, or an introduction to the *character* and *conduct* of a Son, that ordination is apparently called his generation. "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a High Priest, but, [*he that ordained him to that office*, you would expect to hear: the same thing is expressed in other words: but] he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee: as he saith also in another place, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec†." Accordingly when he was publicly inducted into the priestly office by baptism and anointing, (agreeably to the Mosaic forms,) at the moment of receiving the divine unction which constituted him a Priest, he was named from heaven the Son of God, beloved because obedient‡. The very name involved the idea of obedience. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered§." As if it had been said, Though he was one whose very nature it was to obey, yet he was perfected in that virtue by the things which he suffered. As to the third, there needs nothing more to support it than a single sentence in Paul's sermon at Antioch in Pisidia: "The promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children in that he hath raised up Jesus again: as it is written in the Second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee||." If we turn back to the Second Psalm, we shall find these words to be the public acknowledgment which God made over the sepulchre, when he raised the sleeping Saviour to

\* Luke 1. 35.—† Heb. 5. 4—6, —‡ Mat. 3. 17. — § Heb. 5. 8. — || Acts 13. 32, 33.

the possession and honours of a Son, and set him King upon the holy hill of Zion, and gave him the heathen for his *inheritance*. This reason for the appellation of Son, and for the expression in the Second Psalm, is again recognised by the same apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews: "Being made so much better than the angels as he hath BY INHERITANCE *obtained* a more excellent NAME than they: for unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee\*?" Here he is expressly said to have "obtained" the "name" of the "Son" of God "by" the "inheritance" which he received. And in the Epistle to the Philippians it is affirmed, that he was exalted to this name as the reward of his obedience: "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a NAME *which is above every name*†;" to wit, the name of the Son of God. The same reason for the appellation is suggested by Gabriel in his message to Mary: "He shall be *great*, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David‡." Accordingly when his glorified state was set forth on mount Tabor, where God had decked him in the robes prepared for the "Heir of all things," the voice from heaven again pronounced, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased§." And one of the witnesses tells us, "We beheld his glory, *the glory of the only begotten of the Father*||." It is because his obedience "unto death" entitled him to the portion of a Son, and because he arose to possess the inheritance, that the grave is represented as the womb in which he was conceived, and his resurrection as the completion of his generation. He is called "the First-born from the dead," and "the First-begotten of the dead," and is said to have been "declared the Son of God with power—by the resurrection¶." It is by a continuance of the same figure that the "joint heirs," who *inherit* in consequence of his having risen to the estate of a Son, are said to have been "*begotten—again UNTO a lively hope BY the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, TO an inheritance* incorruptible and undefiled\*\*." The same form of speech is used whenever the *adoption* of believers is spoken of, or whenever they are called the *sons*

\* Heb. 1. 4, 5.—† Phil. 2. 8, 9.—‡ Luke 1. 32.—§ Mat. 17. 5.  
— John 1. 14. Compared with 2 Pet. 1. 16—18.—¶ Rom. 1. 4. Col. 1. 18. Rev. 1. 5.—\*\* 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4.

of God. These terms, (though the latter refers also to their new generation and filial spirit,) always allude to their inheritance.

This inheritance was conferred on the Mediator as the reward of that amazing exhibition of holiness which he made under law, in other words, for his obedience "unto death." "Therefore doth *my Father* love me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again.—This commandment have I received of *my Father*." "He—became obedient unto death:—wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." In that remarkable description of the inheritance of the "Son" and "Heir of all things," which is contained in the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the ground of the whole is stated in these emphatic words: "*Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*" And it is added, "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses.—Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant,—but Christ as a Son over his own house\*." Indeed the very name of *inheritance* denotes the estate to be the reward of his filial obedience. He received nothing by birth, but by merit. And what he received by merit and not by birth, was called the portion of a Son, not so much in reference to his generation, as to his filial obedience. In that filial character, and in the reward which followed, and which hence took the name of inheritance, lie two parts out of three of the whole meaning of *Son of God*.

What then was his inheritance? I will first premise that it comprehended every thing which he received by way of *reward*. Whatever was bestowed as the recompense of his obedience, was granted for his *filial* obedience, for only as a Son was he bound to obey. And whatever was granted for his *filial* obedience, was the portion of a *Son*, or his *inheritance*. If any inheritance was conferred for his filial obedience, why should it not comprise every thing which he received in that way? Why should half of his reward take this name and not the whole? Let it not then be

\* John 10. 17, 18. Phil. 2. 8, 9. Heb. 1. 9. and 3. 1—6.

thought that any part of his possession or power, (the whole of which was conferred as a reward,) belongs to him as a mere distributing Agent, and not as the "Heir of all things;" that any part of what he governs and gives remains undetached from Godhead, ungranted to the Mediator, and passes through him as the mere channel of conveyance. It is all his own inheritance, his own "purchased possession." His dominion itself is only the appendage of heirship: for it belongs to the heir when he comes of age to manage his own estate, to press every thing which he lawfully may into subserviency to it, and to give it to whomsoever he pleases. It was "by" the "inheritance" solely, and not by any dominion distinct from this, that in point of outward state he was made "better than the angels," and "obtained a more excellent name than they\*." It was only as "the First-begotten," or "Heir of all things," that he was exalted to receive the worship of angels†. It was only as "the First-born from the dead," "the First-born of every creature," that in point of outward glory he had "in all things—the pre-eminence‡." In short he received nothing into his hands but what he inherited as the "Heir." We may therefore unhesitatingly conclude that his whole reward went into the inheritance, and remains his own property, detached from pure Godhead, held by a mediatorial claim, and placed in a new relation to this world. Accordingly we shall find the different parts of it interchangeably spoken of as an inheritance and as a reward.

Let us now see what that inheritance contains. It comprehends *all the nations of the earth*, over whom, as an appendage of heirship, he exercises dominion both to save and to destroy. "Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed; [alluding, as we are expressly told, to the combination of Pilate, and Herod, and the rulers and people of Israel, and the Roman soldiers, against Christ§.]—Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; [referring, as the Holy Ghost declares, to his resurrection||.] Ask of me and I shall give thee, [manifestly by way of reward,] the heathen for thine INHERITANCE, and the uttermost

\* Heb. 1. 4.—† Heb. 1. 6. with ver. 2.—‡ Col. 1. 15—18.—  
§ Acts 4. 25—27.—|| Acts 13. 33.

parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.—Kiss the Son, [the *Heir*,] lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him\*.”

The inheritance includes all worlds and things through the universe, over which, as lawful Owner, he is appointed to rule. “God—hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed *Heir of all things* :—who, —when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels as he hath *by inheritance* obtained a more excellent name than they: for unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? and again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the *First-begotten* into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.—Unto the Son, [the *Heir*,] he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.—Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.—But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool?—For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection *the world to come* whereof we speak: but one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him?—Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put *all things* in subjection under his feet. For in that he put *all* in subjection under him, *he left nothing that is not put under him*, [nothing but God himself, as it is said in another place†.] But now we see not yet all things put under him: but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour‡.” “He—became obedient unto death:—wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the *name* of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father||.” “Jesus knowing

\* Ps. 2. 1—12.—† 1 Cor. 15. 24—28.—‡ Heb. 1. and 2.—  
|| Phil. 2. 6—11.



that the Father had given all things into his hands," said *after his resurrection*, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And not to him as a mere distributing Agent, but for his own. "*All things that the Father hath are MINE\**." Indeed all things were expressly made "*for him*," as "the First-born of every creature," "the First-born from the dead," the "Heir of all things†."

In other places all worlds and things are represented as given him for a *reward*. "For the joy that was set before him" he "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." I will "divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, *because he hath poured out his soul unto death‡.*"

This is a general view of the inheritance. Before I descend to those particulars which will bear more directly on the subject, I will remark here, that he received this general inheritance for the use of the Church and the world. There was a special reference to the elect. If he received "power over all flesh," a leading object was, "that he should give eternal life to as many as" God had "given him." If he was "exalted," a principal end was, that he might "be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins§." Did he obtain the Spirit? it was indeed to call the race at large, and to sanctify and comfort all who would believe; but it was also to regenerate his chosen. Did he obtain dominion over angels? if it was that they might be "ministering spirits" to a world of moral agents, it was in a special sense that they might "minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation||." When I say that he received the inheritance for the use of the *Church*, I mean two things: first, that he received it for the unfailing advantage of his elect, whom he had obtained a right to form into a Church by sanctifying grace: secondly, that he received it for the benefit of all who would believe, holding it thus as a provision for a whole world of moral agents, and as such offering the benefit of it to all. In both senses it may be said, the Father "raised him from

\* Mat. 28. 18. John 13. 3. and 16. 15.—† Col. 1. 15—18.  
—‡ Isaiah. 53. 12. Rom. 14. 9 Heb. 12. 2.—§ John 17. 2. Acts  
5. 31.—|| Heb. 1.14.

the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come, and—put all things under his feet, and gave him to be Head over all things TO THE CHURCH, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all\*.” In both senses I wish to be understood when I say, if he vanquished the powers of darkness, it was not in a separate warfare, but in the service of the Church, and for her use: if he took possession of heaven, it was “to prepare a place for” his followers†. Even his personal splendours are only the royal robes appended to his regal office, which he holds for the benefit of the Church. But a part of the general estate was received, not for the Church as such, that is, not to be given in rewards to believers, and offered as such to men, but to be bestowed on the race at large in sovereign gifts fitted to a state of probation.

In proceeding to the particular parts of the inheritance, I shall present them in two general divisions; those which respect the elect distinctively, and those which relate indiscriminately to a world of moral agents.

(1.) The elect themselves as a redeemed kingdom, and the regenerating influence by which they are constituted a holy seed, and the sanctifying influence and inheritance by which they are graciously rewarded, all belong to the inheritance and reward of Christ.

The elect themselves, as a holy seed and redeemed kingdom, belong to his *inheritance*. “Thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon One that is mighty, I have exalted One chosen out of the people.—He shall cry unto me, Thou art *my Father*; [that is, he shall be *my Son*.]—Also I will make him my *First-born*, [my *Heir*,] higher than the *kings* of the earth.—His *seed* also will I make to endure for ever, and his *throne* as the days of heaven.” “I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance‡.” The elect belong to his *reward*. “When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. By his knowledge shall my *righteous* Servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.” “We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of

\* Eph. 1. 20—23.—† ‡ John 14. 2.—‡ Ps. 2. 8. & 89. 3—37.

promise\*." The regenerating influence by which they are constituted a holy seed, belongs to his reward. Hence they are said to be created and begotten "*in Christ,*" and to be regenerated for his sake. God has "saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly *through Jesus Christ our Saviour*†." Indeed the Heir himself, as an essential right, received uncontrolled power to raise them from the death of sin. "As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.—For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given the Son to have life in himself‡." Both the influence by which they are regenerated, and the sanctifying influence by which they are graciously rewarded, belong to his promised recompense. What else can be meant by our being "*chosen—in him* before the foundation of the world, *that we should be holy and without blame before him in love*" ? God has "*saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began;*" that is, made over to Christ for us§. We are distinctly taught that he obtained their complete sanctification as the reward of his obedience "*unto death.*" He "*loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.*" "*Who gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil world.*" "*Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.*" "*For their sakes I sanctify myself, [devote myself to die,] that they also might be sanctified through the truth||.*" The inheritance also, which they receive as a gracious recompense, is a part of his promised reward. What else can be meant by the eternal election of men *in him* to the inheritance? "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him* before the foundation of the world;—having predestinated us *unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.*" "*Paul,—an*

\* Isai. 53. 10, 11. Gal. 4. 28.—† 1 Cor. 4. 15. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Eph. 2. 10. Tit. 3. 5, 6.—‡ John 5. 21, 26.—§ Eph. 1. 4. 2 Tim. 1. 8, 9.—|| John 17. 19. Gal. 1. 4. Eph. 5. 25—27. Tit. 2. 14.

apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, —in hope of *eternal life* which God that cannot lie *promised before the world began.*" Promised to whom? To Christ unquestionably\*.

(2.) Passing by the special notices of the elect, I say in general, that all the positive good, (including expressly sanctification and eternal life,) which is offered and promised to men on the condition of their faith, (constituting a complete provision for a world of moral agents,) and actually bestowed on believers in gracious rewards, is comprehended in the inheritance of Christ.

The general administration of the Spirit, for the sanctification of all who will believe, belongs both to his inheritance and reward. First, it belongs to his inheritance. "When he the Spirit of truth is come,—he shall not speak of himself, [at his own suggestion,] but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak.—He shall glorify *me*, for he shall receive of *mine* and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I that he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." The grant was made to him as the beloved Son and Heir. "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him; the Father *loveth the Son* and hath given all things into his hand†." Secondly, it belongs to his promised reward. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you." This gift could not be bestowed till Christ had earned his reward. "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." But when he "ascended on high," among other gifts for men he received this, "that the Lord God might dwell among them;" and within ten days he sent the blessing forth. On that occasion Peter was instructed to make the following explanation: "Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the *promise* of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear‡." Accordingly the sanctification offered and granted to men, is every where ascribed to the essential influence of Christ. "The law of *the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus* hath made me free from the law of sin and death." "This is he that came *by water* and blood." "The grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ." "Filled with the

\* Eph. 1. 3—5. Tit. 1. 1, 2.—† John 3. 34, 35. & 16. 13—15.—

‡ Ps. 68. 18. John 7. 39. & 16. 7. Acts. 2. 33.

fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ." We are said to be sanctified, built up, and established "*in Christ*," and to conquer *in* and *through* him. We are said to be "dead with" him, to be "quicken together with him," to be "risen with him," "that the life—of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." We are said to "know—the power of his resurrection," to be "dead to the law by the body of Christ, that we should be *married* to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should *bring forth fruit* unto God," and to be "alive unto God *through* Jesus Christ our Lord." Christ is set forth as the all in all in the cure of our spiritual maladies, and in the support of our spiritual life; as being not merely the channel through which the streams flow, but the source itself. The cures which he wrought in the days of his flesh exhibit him, not as an under physician dealing out the medicines of another, but as the healing fountain. Is no other idea to be awakened in our minds by all those affecting representations of him as the olive-tree constantly shedding its oil to feed the lamps, as the good olive and vine nourishing the branches, as "the Head by which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God," but that he is the mere Agent to dispense supplies which might have come through another hand? He is a "quickening Spirit," not merely as King, but as "the last Adam:" and sanctification is *Christ within us*, not merely his image, but his *life*: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "Know ye not—that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates?" "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness." Christ is "the Author and Finisher of our faith;" and it is he who pronounces, "Behold I make all things new\*."

In like manner that eternal life or inheritance which he offers to a world of moral agents, and bestows on believers as a gracious reward, belongs to his own inheritance. We inherit through him. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance." "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." "When the fulness of

\* Zech 4. 2—14. John 15. 1—6. Rom. 6. 2—11. and 7. 4. and 8. 2, 10, 37. and 11. 17. and 12. 5. 1 Cor. 1. 2, 4. and 6. 15. and 12. 12—27. and 15. 45, 57. 2 Cor. 1. 21. and 2. 14. and 4. 10, 11. and 13. 5. Gal. 2. 20. Eph. 2. 20—22. and 4. 15, 16. and 5. 30. Phil. 1. 11. and 3. 10. Col. 2. 7, 11—13, 19. Heb. 12. 2. 1 John 5. 6. Rev. 21. 5.

time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the *Spirit of his Son* into your hearts, crying, Abba Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son ; and if a son, then *an heir of God through Christ.*" The last clause shows what is always meant by a son of God. In Christ as the Second Adam, and not merely by his Kingly power, the believing dead will be raised to immortal life. "For since by man, [by the sin of one man,] came death, by man, [by the righteousness of one man,] came also the resurrection of the dead. For *as in Adam* all die, *EVEN SO IN Christ* shall all be made alive\*." Thus he who is the Alpha, is the Omega also of our salvation.

Accordingly all the promises which are offered to the world and applied to believers, expressly including those of the Spirit and of the inheritance, were really made to Christ, and reach us as the oil on Aaron's head did the skirts of his garments. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,—that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles *through Jesus Christ*, that we might receive *the promise of the Spirit through faith*, [that is, as a reward.]—Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises, [all the promises,] made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of One, And to thy Seed, WHICH IS CHRIST. And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God *in Christ*, [this shows what is meant by promises made *in Christ*,] the law—cannot disannul.—For if the *inheritance* be of the law, it is no more of *promise* ; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law ? It was added because of transgressions, *till the Seed should come to whom the promise [of the whole inheritance] was made.*—The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that *the promise by faith* of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. [This shows what is meant by a promise inherited *by faith* in the Redeemer.]—The law is our school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master, [no longer minors incapable of the inheritance conferred in justification ;] for ye are all the *children*, [heirs,] of God *by faith in Christ Jesus.*—And if ye be Christ's, then are

\* John 1. 12. 1 Cor. 15. 21, 22. Gal. 4. 4--7. Eph. 1. 11.

ye Abraham's seed, [as being the seed of Abraham's greater Son,] *and heirs according to the promise.* Now I say that the *heir*, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all." Hence the promise of inheritance, and all other promises, are *IN Christ.* "The mystery of Christ—is now revealed,—that the Gentiles should be fellow *heirs* [with the Jews,]—and partakers of his *promise in Christ.*" "The *promise of life* which is *in Christ Jesus.*" "For *ALL the promises* of God *in him* are *yea*, and *in him amen*\*."

Now the promises made to Christ, either in the covenant of redemption or in the revelation to the Church, implied nothing less than that the things promised were to be the *reward* of his work on earth, *and what his services might fairly claim.* I can conceive of but two other grounds on which they can be supposed to have been made to him. First, a guardian may receive promises that his wards shall be endowed, not for his sake but their own. Secondly, a parent may be made acquainted with a similar design respecting his children, and though the estate is to be conferred for their conduct alone, yet the *information* may be given as a real reward to him. Neither of these cases illustrates the subject. As to the former, if the promises were not intended as a reward to Christ, but only deposited with him as the Guardian of his people, why were they made to him before the foundation of the world†? The Church were not there to enjoy the pledge, and when the intelligence reaches them, it makes them no more assured than the simple purpose of the Father would have done. As to the latter, if the promises were intended as a reward to Christ, the recompense could not lie in the pleasure of receiving *new information.* The Second Person in the Trinity needed not to be informed. Indeed what can be understood by a promise in the divine cabinet? Not a declaration in words, and yet something more than a mere design. It was a purpose connected with a *bond*; a bond not arising out of the intention itself, as out of the verbal promise of a man, but from the very service which the Son was to render. It was a mere recognition of the claim which his work on earth would create, and an unchangeable resolution to satisfy it; a claim not originally binding on the Father, but growing

\* 2 Cor. 1. 20. Gal. 3. 13—29. and 4. 1. Eph. 3. 4—6. 2 Tim. 1. 1.

† We have seen that the promises of the covenant of redemption were not limited to the elect, but extended to a world of moral agents, securing to Christ the salvation of all who would believe.

out of the acceptance of the Son's submission. And as to the promises which appear in the public revelation, why should they be made to Christ at all, and not to the Church directly, if they were not intended to announce to the world that the things promised come to us as his reward?

On what other ground can you account for the *absolute form* of the promises, ensuring to every believer continued sanctification and eternal life? Is it because those believers were elected? But the same absolute covenant is tendered to the world at large. Every man, elect or non-elect, is assured that if he will once believe, he shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Now why is this? Why if Christ is not the ground of the promises, and if it is not secured to him, without reference to election, that no member shall ever be torn from his bleeding side,—that no moral agent who will once believe in him shall ever perish? Why, unless it has been promised of him as the “*First-born*” and *Heir*, “If his children forsake my law and walk not in my judgments,—then will I visit their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail\*”? If after removing our guilt, Christ has left us exactly where Adam stood the moment he was created,—to transact directly with God, and receive only what we can earn; why this “everlasting consolation†” to us more than to Adam? Mere freedom from guilt in the Gospel sense, creates no more necessity that men should be kept from falling away, than original innocence did. Whence then this “better covenant,—established upon better promises”? these “exceeding great and precious promises” by which we become “partakers of the divine nature,” and are assured of “all things that pertain unto life and godliness‡”? If the influence of Christ ends with pardon, and believers stand before God in the same relation that Adam did, why this pledge against apostacy? Do you say that Christ procured their *eternal pardon*? What, without procuring their *sanctification*? We have seen that he could not even render their pardon *possible* but on the supposition of their being holy. If then he did not obtain their sanctification, he could not obtain *absolute* pardon for them a moment, and created no reason why God should issue absolute promises either of sanctification or eternal life. Why then were they

\* Ps. 89. 27—33. —† 2 Thes. 2. 16. —‡ Heb. 8. 6. 2 Pet. 1. 3, 4.



issued? We have been accustomed to suppose that it was because the salvation of believers was made over to Christ as his reward. No such thing upon this plan, and we are left to account for this wonderful change in the treatment of spotless creatures without any reasons drawn from a Mediator. Tell me then in what sense he is “the *Mediator*” of this “better covenant,—established upon better promises\*”? If he did nothing but render sanctification and pardon consistent with the honour of the law, and had no influence in obtaining these absolute promises, how is he the Mediator of a better covenant than the conditional one at Sinai? for this is the thing asserted. How in any other sense than as the mere *Promulgator*? The argument of the apostle is, that Christ has “obtained a more excellent ministry” than the Levitical priests, “by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant” than that at Sinai. The superiority of the covenant is explained to consist in its absolute form, ensuring both sanctification and eternal life. The Sinai covenant, to which were appended all the bloody sacrifices, certainly secured the pardon of every one who would believe, and secured it through the atonement of a Saviour to come. If in this new and absolute covenant the Mediator has no higher influence, that is, no influence to *make the covenant absolute*, his “more excellent ministry” turns out to be the mere *promulgation* of “better promises” which he had no hand in procuring. And then if an angel had been sent to announce these absolute promises, (allowing any reason for their being made,) he would in as high a sense have exercised this “more excellent ministry,” and been “the mediator” of every thing in this “better covenant” which distinguished it from that at Sinai.

Now if all the positive good ever promised to the world on the condition of their faith, was really measured out to Christ as his reward, and expressly for the use of those who would believe, then it comes to them because it was first given to him. And this is his own account of the matter. “The glory which *thou gavest me I have given them*, that they all may be one as we are; *I in them and thou in me*, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know—that *thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me*†.” The whole amount is this: he earned the inheritance, and his seed share it with him. By whatever

\* Heb. 8. 6.—† John 17. 22—26.

means it happens, all things are actually made over to them by covenant. Now on what ground do they claim? and are not the "all things" which are given to them the identical "all things" which were made over to the universal "Heir"? If so, how came they in possession of the very things which were given to Christ? Are there conflicting claims? or do they inherit under him? Let the word of God decide. "All things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, *and ye are Christ's*, and Christ is God's\*." Hence the seed "INHERIT *all things*†." In particular they inherit the promises of eternal life. "Followers of them who through faith and patience *inherit the promises*. For when God made promise to Abraham,—he swore by himself:—wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the *heirs of promise* the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:—which hope—entereth into that within the vail, [takes hold of heaven,] whither the *Forerunner* is FOR US entered, even Jesus, made a High Priest forever‡." That is, he has entered upon the inheritance as our Forerunner, to take possession of it for our use, and by his priestly intercession to obtain the acknowledgment of our title to it as joint heirs: and the hope which follows him thither, is grounded on the promise of inheritance made to Abraham and his Seed, which Seed was Christ. As the ancient Church inherited from Abraham the land of Canaan§, the type of heaven||, so we "inherit" from Christ the "better country," as "heirs together of the grace of life," "heirs according to the hope of eternal life¶," and are said to have an "inheritance in the kingdom of Christ," and to reign "with" him, and even to be "partakers of Christ\*\*." Hence in that great description of the inheritance of the "Son" and "Heir of all things," in the first chapter of Hebrews, we read of the "heirs;" the meaning of which is found in this, "If children, then heirs, heirs of God and *joint heirs with Christ*††." At one time he is the Parent from whom the seed inherit, at another time, "the First-born among many brethren,"—really the "Heir," but admitting his younger brethren to share with him. "Whom

\* 1 Cor. 3. 21—23.—† Rev. 21. 7.—‡ Heb. 6. 12—20.—§ Gen. 15. 7. Ps. 37. 29, 34. and 105. 11.—|| Isai. 60. 21.—¶ Mat. 19. 29. and 25. 34. Mar. 10. 17. Tit. 3. 7. 1 Pet. 3. 7.—\*\* Eph. 5. 5. Heb. 3. 14. Rev. 3. 21. and. 20. 4, 6.—†† Rom. 8. 14—17. Heb. 1. 14.

he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the First-born among many brethren\*.”

It might be expected therefore that every thing would be ascribed to his essential influence. And so we find it. “In” and “through him we—have—access—unto the Father,”—“boldness and access with confidence.” We are “complete in him,” “perfect in Christ,” “approved in Christ,” “accepted in the *Beloved*,” (that is, *because he is beloved*;) and our acceptableness is called “a sweet savour of Christ,” he and not our works being the acceptable incense. Even common blessings come to us through him; and to rejoice in them religiously, is to rejoice in Christ. “That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.” Those salutations at the beginning and end of the Epistles, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you,” “The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit,” “Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ;” were breathings of desire for all good on those addressed, and acknowledgments that all good came through the Redeemer. Hence that confidence of the apostle, “My God shall supply *all your need—by Christ Jesus* ;” and that devout and comprehensive acknowledgment, “To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND WE BY HIM†.”

And now is it too much to say of the scheme against which these arguments are arrayed, that it takes away one half of a Saviour and one half of his praise? Nor is it the least important part that it filches from us, so far as our comfort and gratitude to Christ are concerned. To fill the eye with him as the “Heir of all things,” “the First-born among many brethren,” who has taken possession of the inheritance in our name, to manage it as our Guardian, and to reserve it for us against our arrival; to view every comfort, every morsel of daily food, as purchased by him, and as belonging to the mediatorial estate; is one of the sweetest and sublimest contemplations that ever occupied the Christian mind. To know that we are indebted to him for all things, is the richest ingredient in prosperity, and the brightest gem in the immortal crown. Do you tell me that it is no

\* Rom. 8. 29.—† Rom. 16. 20. 1 Cor. 8. 6. 2 Cor. 2. 15. with Eph. 5. 2 and Phil. 4. 18. Eph. 1. 6. and 2. 18. and 3. 12. Phil. 1. 26. and 4. 19. Col. 1. 28. and 2. 10. 2 Pet. 1. 2—4.

matter whether blessings come through Christ or directly from the Father, as upon either plan they are equally secure? This is precisely the Socinian plea. The worst evil in the Unitarian heresy is its tendency to lower down the influence of Christ in the business of man's salvation, and to send a fallen race immediately to God. Exactly in proportion as Christ is excluded, our faith, dependance, gratitude, and all our religion is changed. If Socinianism changes it entirely, this error changes it in part. Give me a religion which yields to Christ all his influence and all his honours,—which in every part of salvation makes him our **ALL IN ALL**.

## ERRATA.

- Page 26, line 17 from top : for *a personal sinner* read *personally a sinner*.  
— 36, top line : insert *t* after *i*.  
— 162, *Note*, line 2 from top : insert *t* after *no*.  
— 204, *Note*, line 2 from bottom : insert *a* at the end of the line.  
— 210, top line : for *this* read *his*.  
— 232, line 7 from bottom : for *a mere* read *an*.  
— 279, line 16 from top : for *hearts' lust* read *heart's lust*.  
— 290, line 11 from top : strike out *sole*.  
— 300, line 13 from bottom : for *come* read *came*.  
— 334. A small inaccuracy crept into this page between the 2d and 10th line from the top. The reader is desired to consider the passage as standing thus : But the possibility of the action under consideration, did not depend on the power of motives to influence the temper which that sinner actually possessed. The temper itself was not necessary. It was certain, but the certainty was not that physical necessity which rendered a different issue naturally impossible. Had Judas felt as he ought, he would have fallen under the control of motives in a way different from what was ever calculated in heaven. Had he done as he ought, an event would have taken place which was never foreseen. And had he felt and done as he ought without the influence which God controlled, (and his obligations were independent of that,) an event would have taken place, &c.

