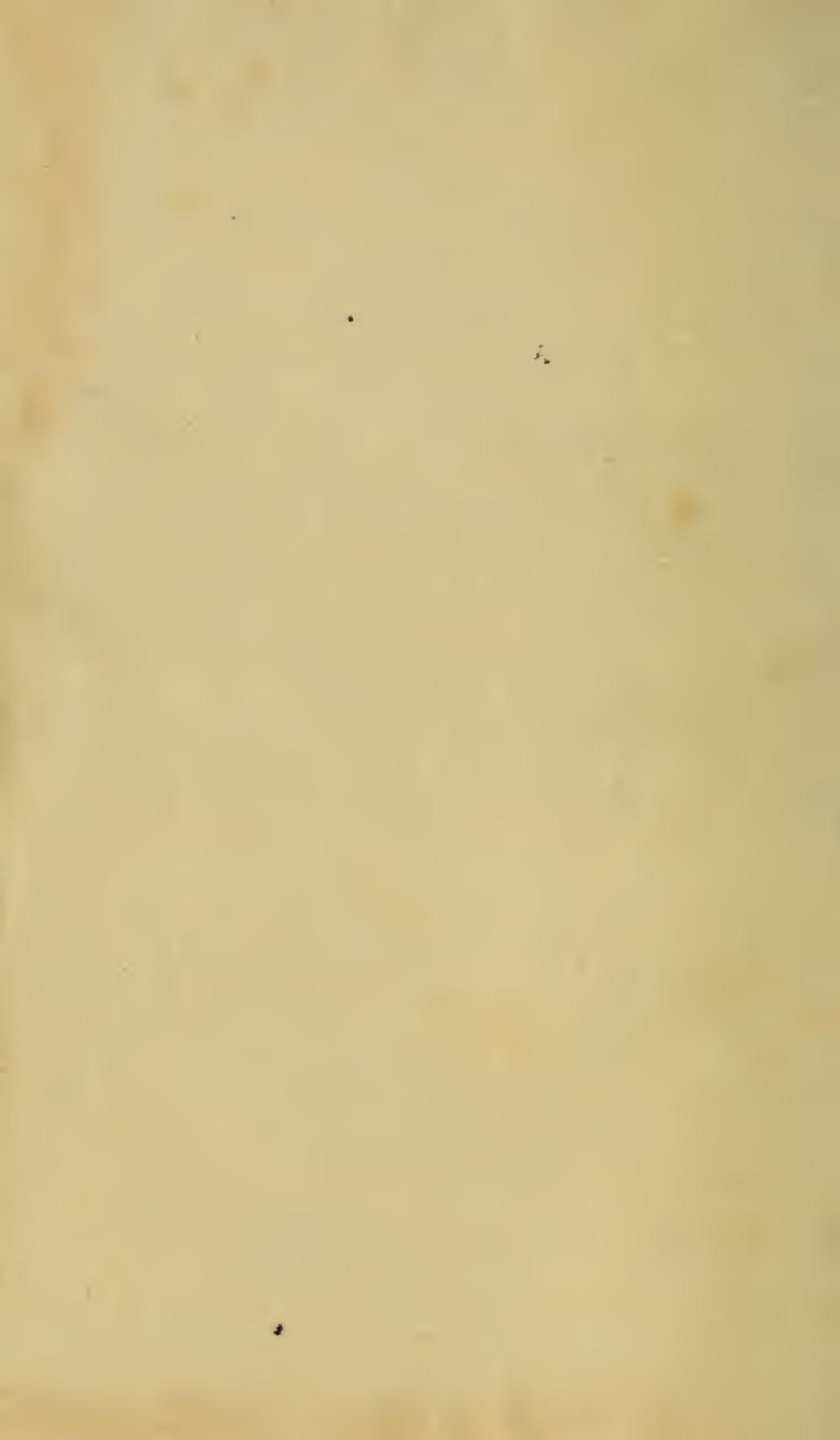


SCS #1148

Thomas F. Torrance.

SALE



A
DISSERTATION
ON
THE ATONEMENT.

IN THREE PARTS.

BY GEORGE STEVENSON,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT AYR.

Without shedding of blood is no remission. Heb. ix. 22.

THE SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED.

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1817.

TO THE

ASSOCIATE SESSION AND CONGREGATION OF AYR,

TOGETHER WITH THOSE WHO OCCASIONALLY

MEET WITH THEM FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP;

THE FOLLOWING DISSERTATION

ON

THE ATONEMENT,

IS INSCRIBED, WITH BEST WISHES

FOR

THEIR RELIGIOUS AND MORAL IMPROVEMENT,

BY

THEIR AFFECTIONATE PASTOR.

THE STATE OF NEW YORK

IN SENATE,

JANUARY 18, 1850.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE

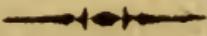
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THE YEAR ENDING 1849.

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A
DISSERTATION
ON THE
ATONEMENT.



INTRODUCTION.

ALL things are of God. He created all things, and for his pleasure they are and were created. As he is the first cause, so his glory must be the last end of all his works: “ For of him, and “ through him, and to him, are all things ; to “ whom be glory for ever. Amen *.” This revenue of glory he secures from all his works by the energies of his government, both in the natural and moral world. The inanimate parts of the creation are only adapted for shewing forth his praise passively, and he makes them subservient to the ends of his glory by the energy of his physical government ; for what are

* Rom. xi. 36.

the laws of nature but the continued influence of Deity, upholding all things in existence, and conducting them, according to a fixed and uniform plan, to the accomplishment of the ends proposed by him in their creation? “Lift up
“your eyes on high, and behold who hath
“created these things, that bringeth out their
“hosts by number; he calleth them all by
“names, by the greatness of his might, for that
“he is strong in power, not one faileth*.” But rational creatures, being possessed of intellect, and will, and a freedom of choice, were formed for honouring God by a course of moral obedience; and God secures a revenue of praise from them by the energies of his moral administration. This can only be accomplished in one or other of the following ways: Either by their perseverance in a course of obedience to the law which he has prescribed as the rule of their allegiance; or, should they prove disobedient, by his vindicating his own supremacy in the condign punishment of their iniquity. When accountable creatures fail of answering the ends of their creation by voluntary submission to the will of their

* Isa. xl. 26.

Creator, he must either yield up his moral supremacy over them, or vindicate his right to their homage, by punishing their crimes according to their desert. But, though the punishment of sin is absolutely necessary for the vindication of God's moral supremacy; yet the manner of inflicting punishment depends upon his will. His pleasure must determine, whether sin shall be punished in the persons of sinners themselves; or whether a surety shall be provided to endure its penal consequences in their stead. The latter has been his sovereign pleasure with respect to a number of our fallen race. Hence the general idea suggested by the word *atonement*, as applied to the death of Christ. It denotes his vicarious sufferings even unto death, for the remission of the sins of his people; so as to answer all the moral purposes of that punishment, to which they must otherwise have been subjected in their own persons.

It is proposed in this treatise, *First*, To adduce some arguments in proof of the necessity of an atonement for sin, by penal sufferings unto death, in order to its remission. *Secondly*, To inquire into the essential properties requi-

site to such an atonement, and to shew that all these belong to the sufferings and death of Christ, as the Surety of the Church. And, *Thirdly*, To subjoin a few general remarks, tending to obviate difficulties, and to point out the great importance of the subject.

PART FIRST.

ON THE NECESSITY OF AN ATONEMENT.



BEFORE entering upon the first branch of the general division, it will be proper to explain the sense in which we understand the word *necessity*, as applied to the atonement in the subsequent discussion. It is not a blind or fatal necessity, inconsistent with free agency in God; but a necessity resulting equally from his unsearchable wisdom, and his infinite holiness, righteousness, and truth. It relates to the moral government of God, and supposes the subjects of his government placed in certain relative circumstances, which render it indispensably requisite for him to act towards them in this specific way, for the vindication of his own moral perfections, and the dignity of his moral administration. It is a necessity which proceeds upon the supposition of the following existing circumstances:

1st, That God created man a proper subject of moral obligation. An accountable agent is a being who possesses a natural capacity of knowing, and enjoying God as the chief good; and of acknowledging His supremacy, and his own dependence, by a course of moral obedience. Such a being is man. In his original creation, he was not only an accountable, but also an upright moral agent. He possessed not only a natural capacity of knowing, enjoying, and serving God, but also moral ability for these purposes. He was made after God's image, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. But though perfectly holy, he was subject to change; essential immutability in holiness being an incommunicable attribute of Deity. Besides, he was a moral agent, not in a confirmed, but probatory state; furnished with suitable means to avoid transgression, but left to the freedom of his own will: and upon the use which he made of his liberty, his future state, as an accountable being, depended.

2dly, This necessity also supposes the fall of man. Atonement for man's sin supposes him in a fallen and sinful state. "God hath

“made man upright, but they have sought
 “out many inventions*.” By an abuse of his
 liberty he violated the Divine law. Possessed
 of suitable means for avoiding evil, he made
 choice of that which God had expressly pro-
 hibited; and thereby ruined himself and all
 his posterity. “By one man sin entered into
 “the world, and death by sin; and so death
 “passed upon all men, for that all have sin-
 “ned †.” But the entrance of sin into the
 world did not, of itself, render an atonement
 by a vicarious sacrifice necessary. God might
 have left the whole human race to perish under
 the ruins of their fall. His holiness would
 have remained untainted, though he had con-
 signed them over, without exception, to eter-
 nal destruction. Nor would this have brought
 any just reproach upon his mercy; for mercy
 is free and sovereign in its exercise. The ex-
 ercise of mercy supposes its objects in misery;
 but mercy is not necessarily extended to every
 creature in misery. Had the exercise of mercy
 been necessary towards every miserable ob-
 ject, it behoved to have been extended to the

* Eccl. vii. 29.

† Rom. v. 12.

angels who sinned; but they are reserved in chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day. Had its exercise been necessary towards every object in misery, it must also have been extended to all mankind, which is not the case. Its exercise depends upon the Divine will, which is regulated in all its determinations by unerring wisdom. “He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy*.”

Sdly, The necessity of the atonement proceeds upon the supposition of a purpose of God to recover a number of mankind from a state of guilt and wretchedness. The existence of such a purpose is clearly stated in the inspired volume. We are there taught that God’s thoughts towards a certain number of our race were, from everlasting, thoughts of peace, and not of evil. That he made choice of that number, and predestinated them unto the adoption of children, through Christ. He did all this by an act of free, rich, and sovereign grace. “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and

* Rom. ix. 13.

“ without blame before him in love ; having
 “ predestinated us unto the adoption of chil-
 “ dren, by Jesus Christ to himself, according
 “ to the good pleasure of his will *.”

Now, it was expedient that grace should be displayed in the salvation of sinners, in a way consistent with the rights of God’s law, the honour of his holiness, and the dignity of his administration, as the moral Governor of the world. Hence the necessity of the atonement ; a necessity which, upon the admission of these existing circumstances, is founded upon the moral character of God, or his pure and unchangeable nature.

This is, of course, rejected by the Socinians, who do not in any respect admit of atonement by the death of Christ. But the necessity here pleaded is also denied by others, who not only admit the doctrine of the atonement, but have also defended it with much ability and learning against the Socinians. Among this class, however, there is a diversity of opinion, and from their manner of expressing themselves on the subject, it is sometimes

* Eph. i. 4, 5.

difficult to ascertain their real sentiments. Some admit, that, according to the present constitution of things, pardon is dispensed only through the satisfaction of Christ: but they reckon it presumptuous to suppose, that it was impossible for God to have established such a dispensation, or framed such a plan of government, as might have enabled him to have pardoned the sinner without any satisfaction to his justice. These, we apprehend, consider the atonement as proceeding merely from the arbitrary appointment of God, and not from any necessity arising from his moral perfections.—Others admit a fitness, and even necessity, that pardon should be dispensed through an atonement for sin, to render it consistent with the wisdom of God, in his good government of the world, and to afford a proper attestation of his irreconcilable hatred against all unrighteousness; yet they seem to deny that the death of Christ was absolutely necessary, in order to pardon, from the justice of God; and even suppose that God might, consistently with mere justice, have remitted as much of his own right to satisfaction as he pleased. If the meaning of those who hold this opinion

is, that the necessity of the atonement is to be vindicated from the wisdom as well as the justice of God, then it so far agrees with what is maintained in the following pages ; for justice and wisdom are always combined in the Divine government. But so far as they hold that the claims of justice are arbitrary, and might have been dispensed with, in whole or in part, without derogating from the essential rectitude and holiness of the supreme Judge, their opinion materially coincides with that which was first stated, and their language can scarcely be cleared from inconsistency.

On the contrary, we maintain, that there is a blessed necessity, arising from the purity and rectitude of the Divine Nature, that every act of transgression should be punished ; and that it is morally impossible that God could in any instance, or under any supposable constitution of things, dispense the pardon of sin, but through an atonement suited to its demerit.

In asserting this, we use no language but that which is authorized by Scripture. The Scriptures assert, That it is impossible for God to lie* :—That he cannot deny him-

* Heb. vi. 18.

self*. But we proceed to substantiate the necessity which we have just stated by the following arguments.

1st, This necessity appears from the holiness of God.

The holiness of God is the perfect rectitude of his nature, whereby he is absolutely free from all moral impurity, and, in all that he does, acts like himself, and for the advancement of his own honour: delighting in what accords with, and abhorring what is contrary to, his nature and will. Such is the description given us of Divine holiness in the Scriptures. In these sacred oracles *light* frequently denotes moral purity, and *darkness* moral depravity; and we are told, “That God is “light, and in him is no darkness at all †:” “That there is none holy as the Lord ‡:” “That he only is holy §.” Holiness, as displayed in God’s judicial procedure as the Governor of the universe, is termed righteousness; and, as interposed in the matter of a promise or threatening, it is denominated

* 2 Tim. ii. 15.

† 1 Sam. ii. 2.

‡ 1 John i. 5.

§ Rev. xv. 6.

truth. But he is “ a God of truth, and
 “ without iniquity, just and right is he*.”
 “ Of purer eyes than to behold evil †.” “ The
 “ foolish shall not stand in” his “ sight;”
 he hateth “ all workers of iniquity ; ‡” but he
 “ loveth righteousness, and his countenance
 “ doth behold the upright §.”

From this view of the holiness of God, it might be inferred, *a priori*, *First*, That, should he make creatures endowed with a natural capacity of knowing, enjoying, and serving him, he would also confer upon them moral ability for these purposes. *Secondly*, That, thus endowed, his moral supremacy, and their dependence, would render them the necessary subjects of moral obligation. *Thirdly*, That the law prescribed to them, as the rule of their conduct, would be perfect, suited to the rectitude and untainted purity of its Author, and enforced by a penal sanction. A law without a sanction must be nugatory. If the Lawgiver has a right to exact obedience, he must, in the nature of things, have a right to punish the transgressors of his law. No

* Deut. xxxii. 4.

† Hab. i. 15.

‡ Psal. v. 5.

§ Psal. xi. 7.

other method remains for vindicating his authority, or testifying his displeasure with moral evil.

We find all this realised with respect to man. God created him not only a reasonable, but also a holy being. He made man upright: not only free from moral stain, but also possessed of means suited for retaining his original integrity. He gave him a perfect law in his first formation, which was coeval with his existence, and engraven on his heart. He afterwards added a positive law, with a promise of life to himself and his posterity, as an additional motive to obedience. This law, both in its natural and positive form, was accompanied with the awful sanction of death, to which he was to be subjected in case of transgression. Adam, and all his posterity in him, violated this law, and thereby incurred its penalty. “By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners*.” To see the necessity of the atonement in order to the remission of sin, and the restoration of the sinner to the Divine favour, it is only necessary to shew,

* Rom. v. 19.

that the holiness of God indispensibly requires that this penalty be executed, either upon the sinner or his surety.

For this purpose, we have only to carry the foregoing argument a little farther. If the holiness of God requires that conformity to his law be enforced upon the subjects of his government by a sanction, it must also require, that the penalty of the law be executed upon transgressors. If in the one case, holiness demands that the penalty be annexed to the law, as a suitable expression of God's abhorrence of moral evil; in the other, it must require that the penalty be inflicted for the vindication of the honour of the law, and the moral attributes of the Lawgiver. Besides, in what other way can the Holiness of God be vindicated, except by punishing sin according to its demerit. If we infer, and that justly, the weakness, if not the want, of moral principle in the man who indulges his children or other dependants in a course of wickedness; would it not imply a want of moral rectitude in God to permit his dependant creatures to violate his laws with impunity? Yes; it would lead to one or other of the following conclusions:

Either, that God can take pleasure in wickedness, and connive at it, or that he is destitute of power to render a recompense. Destitute of power to punish sin he cannot be, since it is in Him that man lives, and moves, and has his being. He who sustains him in existence, and confers upon him whatever is calculated to render his existence happy and comfortable, must possess the power of penal infliction; since it requires no more than the suspension of that influence to render him miserable. If, therefore, in any instance sin remained unpunished, it would lead to the other conclusion—that God can approve of moral evil, or connive at it. Such a conclusion, however, is repugnant to every dictate of sound reason, as well as to the whole tenor of supernatural Revelation. “He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity *.” “The wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth †.”

In fine, if we view God’s supremacy or absolute dominion over the sinner, in connection with his holiness, it must appear to every

* Hab, i. 13.

† Psal. xi. 5.

unprejudiced mind, that it is as incompatible with the nature of God, not to punish sin, as it is contrary to his nature not to hate it; for the indulgence of moral evil, with the right and power of punishing it, must imply an approbation of the crimes committed, or, at any rate, a want of supreme regard to moral rectitude.

Some, perhaps, may be disposed to bring forward the permission of sin, in opposition to these conclusions, from the holiness of God, respecting its punishment; and to put the question, If it was consistent with the holiness of God to permit sin, may it not also be consistent with his holiness to suffer it to exist with impunity? We grant that God might have prevented the entrance of moral evil into our world, by exerting his positive influence in withholding men from sinning; but we positively deny that its entrance is in any respect the effect of Divine agency. When we speak of God's permitting sin, the word *permission* must be understood as conveying an idea purely negative. For, *first*, God made man upright, or endowed him not only with a natural capacity, but also with a moral ability

to know, enjoy, and serve him. *Secondly*, He furnished him with moral means, or motives to holiness; which, if improved, would have deterred him from sinning. Nothing more could, therefore, have been done for man, in the way of retaining his freedom of choice, without which he could not have been an accountable agent; unless God had been pleased to confirm him in a state of primitive integrity, as he did the holy angels, by the uninterrupted communications of his grace. But this grace God was under no obligation to bestow; and consequently, his withholding it can bring no impeachment upon his holiness. Had he conferred confirming grace upon man, it behoved to have been by an act of pure sovereignty; but Divine Sovereignty is always exercised in wisdom, for promoting some grand and important end, connected with the illustration of the Divine character and administration. In this case, however, the withholding of confirming grace, which would have kept man from falling, has, in the infinite wisdom of God, been made subservient for promoting that end more effectually than if man had, by an act of sovereignty, been preserved in

his state of primitive integrity. God has, in boundless wisdom, overruled the entrance of moral evil, not only for manifesting his sovereign mercy, but also for affording, through the atoning sacrifice of his own Son, the most illustrious display of the untainted holiness of his nature, and the unspotted righteousness of his administration as the judge of the universe. Thus, we find the permission of sin, instead of obscuring the lustre of Divine holiness, has been overruled for its more glorious manifestation; consequently, it can militate nothing against the argument, founded on God's holiness, in support of the necessity of punishment in the case of transgression.

Neither does the exercise of Divine forbearance towards sinners in the present life, in the smallest degree, militate against these conclusions; when we connect it with a future state of retribution. Divine forbearance does not, in any degree, involve in it the idea of remission, or even mitigation of punishment; since the longer punishment is delayed, it will be the more terrible when inflicted. As money upon usury loses nothing from the prolongation of the term of payment, since it accumu-

lates in proportion ; so punishment delayed, under a dispensation of Divine forbearance, increases in degree, according to the duration of the term of that forbearance. This is clearly and forcibly expressed by the Apostle Paul. “ Or despisest thou the riches of his
 “ goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffer-
 “ ing ; not knowing that the goodness of God
 “ leadeth thee to repentance. But after thy
 “ hardness, and impenitent heart, treasurest
 “ up unto thyself wrath against the day of
 “ wrath, and revelation of the righteous judg-
 “ ment of God ; who will render to every
 “ man according to his deeds *.” We must therefore conclude, that since God is infinitely and immutably holy, he must punish sin according to its desert. And this being admitted, the necessity of the atonement, on the grounds above stated, follows of course. If God in rich sovereignty purpose to acquit the sinner, and restore him to favour, he must, in his infinite wisdom, devise an expedient for vindicating his holiness in the con- dign punishment of sin : and this expedient

* Rom. ii. 4, 5, 6.

is the substitution and vicarious death of his own Son, in human nature. “ Herein is love, “ not that we loved God, but that he loved “ us ; and sent his Son to be the propitiation “ for our sins *.”

2dly, This necessity may be demonstrated from the Justice or Equity of God’s moral administration.

Justice or equity in God, has been defined, a supreme disposition to give to all their due. This definition, we apprehend, accords with the account given us in Scripture of this perfection of the Divine nature. “ The Lord “ our God, is God of gods, and Lord of “ lords : a great God, and a mighty, and a “ terrible, who regardeth not persons, nor “ taketh rewards †. Yea, surely the Lord “ will not do wickedly, neither will the Al- “ mighty pervert judgment ‡.” This attribute must have for its objects God himself, and his rational creatures, considered as the subjects of his government.

Let us attend, in the first place, to the equity of God as it respects his creatures. Viewed

* 1 John iv. 10.

† Deut. x. 17.

‡ Job xxxiv. 12.

simply as creatures, God owes them nothing. Absolute dependance, which is essential to creatures, must exclude all claim on their part, even for existence itself, and consequently for any of its enjoyments. But, considered as accountable beings, they are supposed to possess from him what constitutes them such, namely, rational intelligence, free agency, and objects suited to their wants in the discharge of their duty. With these, as we formerly stated, God furnished man in an ample manner in his original formation. He did not confer upon him merely a natural capacity for knowing, enjoying, and serving him ; but also moral ability for these purposes. Though man by his fall has lost that moral ability which he originally possessed for the service of God, he lost it by his own fault. His delinquency cannot, therefore, invalidate God's claim upon him for obedience. In demanding universal obedience from man in his fallen state, God only exacts what is right. He is not a hard master, reaping where he has not sown, or gathering where he has not strawed ; since, even in that state of moral degeneracy, man is a rational, and consequently an accountable, agent ; possessed of in-

tellect, and will, and a natural freedom of choice. Besides, he is also privileged with moral means, or powerful motives to goodness. This holds true not only of those who are favoured with the Gospel, but also of the Heathen on whom the light of supernatural Revelation never dawned. In their case, God has not left himself without a witness of his moral supremacy, of their dependance, and of the obligations they are under to serve and obey him. “ God (says Paul in his address to the “ learned Athenians) that made the world, and “ all things therein, seeing that he is Lord “ of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in tem- “ ples made with hands, neither is wor- “ shipped with men’s hands, as though he “ needed any thing; seeing he giveth to all “ life, and breath, and all things; and hath “ made of one blood all nations of men for to “ dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath “ determined the times before appointed, and “ the bounds of their habitation: That they “ should seek the Lord, if happily they might “ feel after him, and find him, though he be “ not far from every one of us. For in him “ we live, and move, and have our being, as

“ certain also of your own Poets have said ;
 “ For we are also his offspring *.” To the
 same purpose is his address to the inhabi-
 tants of Lystra: “ Nevertheless, he left not
 “ himself without witness, in that he did good,
 “ and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful
 “ seasons, filling our hearts with food and
 “ gladness †.”

If man, possessed of these natural powers, and moral means adapted for the service of God, does, in his fallen state, invariably make a wrong choice, it must proceed from the rooted enmity of his heart against God, which can never be pleaded, on the ground of equity, as dissolving his obligations to duty. Such a plea would go to subvert the very foundations of morality, or to confound the eternal and immutable principles of moral good and evil. It would be to say, that man's first sin put it out of his power to sin on any future occasion. For, if he were not accountable to God, because, by his own apostacy, he has lost his moral ability to serve him, then his actions, however atrocious, could be no more sinful ; for where

* Acts xvii. 24, 28.

† Acts xiv. 17.

there is no responsibility, there can be no transgression.

Let us now enquire what is God's due from his rational creatures. They owe him supreme love, unbounded submission, and universal conformity to his will; or, should they fail in these, he must possess an undoubted right to exact from them that punishment which is due to their offences:—a right which we have seen he cannot dispense with but by affixing a stain upon his holiness, and yielding up his supremacy into the hands of his rebellious creatures. All these obligations are summed up in the precept and penal sentence of the moral law—a law which, as we have shewn already, is founded on God's supremacy, and man's dependance, and which contains a suitable and necessary expression of the untainted purity of his nature, and his abhorrence of moral evil.

That God has denounced indignation and wrath upon every soul of man that doth evil, must be admitted by all who bow to the authority of the Scripture. “The wages of sin
“is death *.” “Cursed is every one who

* Rom. vi. 23.

“continuet̄ not in all things written in the
 “book of the law to do them *.” Besides,
 these are declared to be, in the judgment of
 God who cannot err, no more than the just
 retribution of human crimes. “Knowing
 “the judgment of God, that they who com-
 “mit such things are worthy of death *.”
 “Far be it from God that he should do wick-
 “edness, and from the Almighty that he
 “should commit iniquity: for the work of a
 “man will he render unto him, and cause
 “every man to find according to his ways †.”
 But if the punishment of death is no more
 than what is due to sin, God, in inflicting that
 punishment, does no more than what strict
 justice requires; and shall not the Judge of
 all the earth do right? This is a dictate of
 reason as well as Revelation. The light of na-
 ture, and the power of conscience, have
 taught the most barbarous nations to connect
 Divine vengeance with crime, as its just desert.
 Even the Barbarians of Malta understood
 that vengeance belonged unto God. This
 appears from the conclusion which they drew

* Rom. i. 32.

† Job xxxiv. 10, 11.

from the viper fastening on Paul's hand.
 " When the Barbarians saw the venomous
 " beast hang on his hand, they said among
 " themselves, no doubt this man is a murder-
 " er, whom, though he hath escaped the sea,
 " vengeance suffereth not to live *." But if
 justice required the execution of the sentence
 of the law upon transgressors, it must be exe-
 cuted. " Though hand join in hand, the
 " wicked shall not be unpunished †." " God
 " will render to every man according to his
 " deeds—To them who by patient continu-
 " ance in well doing, seek for glory, and
 " honour, and immortality, eternal life: but
 " unto them that are contentious, and do not
 " obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness,
 " indignation and wrath; tribulation and an-
 " guish, upon every soul of man that doeth
 " evil, of the Jew first, and also of the
 " Gentile ‡."

Are some disposed to object, Though satis-
 faction for sin is God's right, may he not dis-
 pense with his own right, so as to acquit the
 sinner from condemnation without a satisfac-

* Acts xxviii. 4.

† Prov. xi. 21.

‡ Rom. ii. 6, 9.

tion ? This is in other words to suppose that God may cease to be just ; for if immutable justice be an attribute of his nature, it must also be a property of his will ; and in all his dispensations towards his creatures, he must act in strict accordance with it, by giving to all their due. Were he to dispense with punishment for transgression in any one instance, it would be an act of injustice to himself. But since he is the great Supreme, the vindication of his own right from his dependent creatures, is the first idea that enters into our conceptions of what constitutes the rectitude of his administration as a moral governor : “ For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things ; to whom be glory for ever. Amen *.”

Is it still insisted, That to deny the possibility of God pardoning sin by a mere act of grace, without satisfaction to his justice, is to set limits to his sovereignty ? A reply to this objection will come in more naturally under another argument †. At present, however, we may remark, that God cannot act contrary

* Rom. xi. 36.

† Page 59.

to, or deny himself. Were he to do so he would cease to be righteous, and consequently cease to be God. We have shewn already, that justice is not only an essential attribute of his nature, but also necessary with respect to its exercise, whereas the exercise of his mercy proceeds from his will. But the will of every rational being must, in all moral determinations, accord with his nature; God's sovereign acts of mercy must therefore be just and holy. In fine; to dispense pardon by a mere act of sovereign mercy without regard to an atonement for sin, would be to sacrifice the rights of justice to the exercise of mercy, and to disgrace mercy by its own supposed triumphs; for mercy exercised to the injury of the honours of justice, is not praise-worthy in the creature, and much less could it be so in God. On the whole, since the Judge of all the earth must do right, if the sinner is to be pardoned, it must be in the way of atonement being made for transgression:—the point to be proved in the present question.

3dly, The Necessity of an Atonement also appears from the Veracity of God.

We have already proved that the atonement

is necessary on the grounds stated, from the holiness of God. But truth, when ascribed to God in relation to the creatures, is merely his holiness as interposed in the matter of a promise or threatening, so that the same arguments which have been advanced to prove the necessity of the atonement from his holiness might be again brought forward to prove it from his truth. Whether he speaks to men in the way of a promise, or of a threatening, he speaks in his holiness. “God hath spoken
 “in his holiness, I will rejoice*.” Immutable truth is invariably ascribed to him in Scripture. “God is not a man that he should
 “lie, neither the son of man that he should
 “repent: hath he said it, and shall he not
 “do it, hath he spoken, and shall he not
 “make it good †?” Yea, we are told that it is impossible for God to lie ‡: That he keepeth truth for ever §. But Divine veracity is pledged in the penal sentence of the law, which adjudgeth the sinner to suffer condign punishment for his crimes. “In the day thou
 “eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die ||.”

* Psal. lx. 6.

† Numb. xxiii. 19.

‡ Heb. vi. 18.

§ Psal. cxlvi. 6.

|| Gen. ii. 17.

“ Cursed is every one that continueth not in
 “ all things written in the book of the law
 “ to do them *.” That the death threatened
 is penal cannot be doubted, and that it includes
 not only temporal, but also eternal death, if
 executed upon the sinner himself, is likewise
 obvious. It is the reverse of that life which
 God confers upon his own elect, through the
 mediation of Christ; but if that life is eternal,
 the death to which it stands opposed must also
 be eternal. “ The wages of sin is death, but the
 “ gift of God is eternal life †.” This sanction
 accompanies not only the revealed law, but
 also the law as engraven upon the heart and
 conscience of every child of Adam. Whence
 arises the deep remorse which men often feel
 upon the commission of crimes, which, from
 their secrecy, expose them to no danger from
 fellow mortals? and whence also proceed the
 awful forebodings of a future state of retribu-
 tion, in the minds of the wicked, who have not
 the written law,—but from the testimony of
 conscience, that death, either infinite in its

* Gal. iii. 10.

† Rom. v. 23.

degree, or eternal in its duration, is the just recompense of transgression ?

Since death, therefore, is the proper punishment of sin, and since God has awarded this punishment to it in the penal sentence of the law, he must cease to be true, or that penalty must be inflicted either on the sinner or on his Surety. The truth of God, as we will have occasion to shew afterwards, admits of a change of person as the subject of punishment, but it can admit of no change or mitigation of the punishment itself. A change of punishment in degree from that stated in the sanction of the law, would infer a violation of Divine veracity, pledged in that sanction. But it is impossible for God to lie. “ He is
“ not a man that he should lie, nor the son
“ of man that he should repent.” Nothing can occur with respect to God, to produce a change of that sentence which he has pronounced upon the sinner, since it is pronounced in judgment and in righteousness. It contains no more than what sin deserves, so that God cannot, in consistency with his holiness and universal equity, either mitigate or change it. He who has pronounced the

sentence foresaw all the circumstances under which man would incur the penalty which it contains, so that none of these circumstances can warrant a change. We must therefore conclude, that since God is a Being of immutable veracity, before the sinner can be pardoned, his veracity, in the penal sentence of the law, must be vindicated, by the punishment of sin according to its demerit.

Is it objected to this conclusion, That God has in some instances dispensed with the execution of his threatenings, as in the case of Nineveh? And is it thence inferred, that the execution of the penalty of the law cannot be necessary from the veracity of God? We deny the fact alleged, and consequently, the justness of the inference from it. Every person conversant with ancient history must know, that Nineveh was destroyed, according to the tenor of the threatening denounced by the ministry of Jonah. The only change that took place respected the time of the execution of the judgment threatened; and that change falls under the head of the exercise of Divine forbearance, which we have already proved to be in its nature distinct from a dispensation

of pardoning mercy *. Divine forbearance is a temporary suspension of the execution of punishment upon sinners under a dispensation of moral means, tending, from their nature, to lead them to repentance. Its exercise has one or other of the following ends, corresponding to the two classes of persons about whom it is conversant. As exercised towards those for whom God has designs of mercy, he waits that he may be gracious, or to display his sovereign mercy in the remission of their sins, through the atonement: “ This is
“ a faithful saying and worthy of all accepta-
“ tion, that Christ Jesus came into the world to
“ save sinners, of whom I am chief. How-
“ beit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in
“ me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all
“ long suffering, for a pattern to them who
“ should afterwards believe on him to life ever-
“ lasting †.” But as exercised towards others, the end proposed is to render them wholly inexcusable, and thereby to vindicate more effectually the equity of the Divine administration in their condign punishment. Hence

* See p. 24.

† 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.

the term of God's forbearance with wicked nations, and individuals, has usually been prolonged till they had poured contempt upon every external means of reformation, to which they had access. But this was not the case, as yet, with the inhabitants of Nineveh. They repented at the preaching of Jonah. And although their repentance did not constitute a ground for the remission of their national sins, so as ultimately to avert the threatened judgment; yet it furnished a reason for prolonging the season of a dispensation of Divine forbearance towards them. As long as they were susceptible of serious impressions, however temporary, the cup of their iniquity was not full; and consequently the threatening, so far as it regarded the time specified for inflicting punishment, no longer applied to them; as it proceeded upon the supposition of their continuing in the same moral circumstances. But it must still be remembered, that the threatening, as to the matter of it, continued in force. They were reprieved, not pardoned: so that their respite furnishes no argument in favour of impunity in the case of transgression. Nor does the history of Divine government

furnish us with an example of the execution of the penal sentence of the law upon the sinner being finally dispensed with; except in the way of punishment for the offence committed being endured by his Substitute.

x *4thly*, The Necessity of an Atonement may be demonstrated from the Goodness of God.

Goodness, as ascribed to God in Scripture, has sometimes a more general, and at other times a more restricted, signification. Though we must conceive and speak of the properties which constitute the Divine character distinctly, owing to the limited nature of our apprehensions, yet they are one combination of excellence in him, and completely consistent in their exercise. Hence, God's goodness in a more general sense, includes all his moral excellencies, agreeably to the account given of it to Moses. At present, we shall, however, confine our views to the goodness of God, as it frequently denotes, simply, the benignity of his nature; and the more especially, as this view of Divine goodness has been considered by some as incompatible with the punishment of transgressors, and consequently with the

necessity of an atonement for sin in order to its forgiveness. There is no expression more descriptive of benignity than love. But to point out the pure benignity of the Divine character, the Scriptures tell us that "God is love." This amiable view of God has been considered by some as incompatible with the doctrine which these arguments tend to establish. Since God is love, they infer, that a being of such pure benevolence will never pursue his offending creatures with so great severity, as to subject them to condign punishment for their crimes. This inference proceeds, *first*, From a mistake respecting the supreme object of God's benevolent and complacent regard. As God is the Supreme good, so he must be the Supreme object of his own regard. Were this not the case, Divine love could not have an adequate object; for a being of infinite excellence only can be an adequate object of infinite love. God's benevolence, therefore, as diffused throughout all his purposes and operations towards his creatures, must still revert upon himself as its supreme object. This being the case, his supreme regard to his own honour,

and his supreme delight in his own rectitude, must render the punishment of sin in his creatures absolutely necessary. He would not act up to his character as thus delineated, were he to suffer it to exist with impunity. Since God is love, he must punish sin, which is an insult upon his holiness, and a contempt of his authority, according to its desert; for in no other way is it possible to vindicate his supreme delight in his own purity, and his supreme regard to his own honour. *Secondly*, This inference proceeds upon a mistake respecting the end proposed by God in punishing his guilty creatures. The moral end of punishment is not the destruction of the sinner, but the vindication of the holiness of his own nature, and the rectitude of his moral administration. God does not hate any of his creatures, as creatures; nor does he afflict them for the purpose of rendering them miserable. “He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men;—To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth*.” “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the

* Lam. iii. 53, 54.

“ death of the wicked ; but that the wicked
 “ turn from his way and live : Turn ye, turn
 “ ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die,
 “ O house of Israel * ?” Hence, the reason
 assigned in Scripture why God will inflict
 punishment upon the wicked is his supreme
 delight in rectitude. “ Upon the wicked God
 “ shall reign snares, fire, and brimstone, and
 “ an horrible tempest ; this shall be the por-
 “ tion of their cup : for the righteous Lord
 “ loveth righteousness, his countenance doth
 “ behold the upright †.” To the same pur-
 pose is the explanation Moses gave of the
 moral end of that terrible judgment inflicted
 on Nadab and Abihu, when they offered
 strange fire before the Lord. “ And Nadab
 “ and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took each
 “ of them his censer, and put fire therein, and
 “ put incense thereon ; and offered strange
 “ fire before the Lord, which he commanded
 “ them not. And there went out fire from
 “ the Lörd and devoured them, and they
 “ died before the Lord. Then Moses said
 “ unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake,

* Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

† Psal. xi. 6, 7.

“ saying, I will be sanctified in them that
 “ come nigh me, and before all the people
 “ will I be glorified *.”

Divine goodness, so far from being incompatible with punishment in the case of transgression, or with the necessity of atonement for sin in order to its remission, furnishes us with the following arguments in their support.

First, Were judicial infliction in the case of transgression not necessary for the vindication of God’s honour, we could not reconcile its existence at all with the benignity of his nature.

God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, yet we find that, even in this world, a very large share of penal evil exists. The history of mankind is replete with examples of Divine retribution. In every age, by means of his desolating judgments, the wrath of God has been revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. But how could this be accounted for, consistently with Divine goodness or benignity, were judicial infliction not necessary for the vindica-

* Lev. x. 1, 2, 3.

tion of God's moral administration? Had there been no examples of penal evil in the moral world, the objection against its necessity, founded upon the benignity of the Divine character, would have had some plausibility; but since exemplary punishment has been inflicted even in this life, in countless instances, the argument taken from Divine benignity proves the reverse. Had punishment in the case of transgression not been indispensably requisite for the vindication of God's honour, a Being of such pure benevolence, would never have destroyed the old world with a flood; Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone from heaven, and made the earth open her mouth, and swallow up Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their company. Nor would death in its natural course ever have obtained such a universal reign over the human race.

Secondly, Since penal infliction exists in the Divine administration, its moral necessity cannot be denied without charging the Father of Mercies with cruelty towards his rational offspring.

That God has inflicted condign punishment upon his guilty creatures in numberless instances, must be admitted by all parties ; but unless we grant that in every instance wherein punishment has occurred, it was necessary for some important moral purpose, we, implicitly at least, charge God with cruelty. We can conceive of no medium in judicial infliction, between the moral necessity pleaded, and cruelty. Human governors may be incapable of drawing the line of distinction ; this however cannot be the case with regard to God. But every species of cruelty must be infinitely remote from a Being of such exalted benevolence : the existence of penal evil in his government is therefore an incontestible proof of its necessity for the vindication of the honour of his law and moral administration.

Thirdly, The goodness or benignity of God towards the upright parts of the intelligent creation, demands that exemplary punishment be inflicted upon transgressors. A governor among men cannot extend the blessings connected with a good government to his dutiful subjects, and at the same time permit the transgressors of his laws to escape the punishment

due to their crimes. There is but one alternative. He must either withhold the blessing of protection and motives to rectitude from the former, or inflict exemplary punishment upon the latter. But who can doubt which of these two belongs to the side of goodness in an earthly governor? Every person capable of reflection will see at once, that a good governor must protect and cherish the sober and righteous class of his subjects, and punish the disorderly and unruly part of the community, for the public welfare. As God is a good governor, he must therefore punish those who have introduced disorder and crime into the vast empire over which he presides; else he would be chargeable with the want of goodness towards the upright part of the intelligent creation. God's vindictive justice, so far from being incompatible with his goodness, is actually a branch of it. "And he said, I will
 " make all my goodness pass before thee, and
 " I will proclaim the name of the Lord before
 " thee, and will be gracious to whom I will
 " be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom
 " I will shew mercy *."—"And the Lord

“ passed by before him, and proclaimed the
 “ Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gra-
 “ cious, longsuffering, and abundant in good-
 “ ness and truth: keeping mercy for thou-
 “ sands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and
 “ sin, and that will by no means clear the
 “ guilty: visiting the iniquity of the fathers
 “ upon the children, unto the third and fourth
 “ generation †.”

5thly, The Necessity of an Atonement appears from the well-attested facts respecting the painful sufferings, and ignominious death of the Son of God in our nature; taken in connection with the justice and goodness of God.

Were we even to admit, for the sake of argument, the Socinian opinion concerning the person of Christ, or that he is a mere man, it is impossible to reconcile his sufferings and death with Divine benignity, but by admitting that they were vicarious and penal. If any credit at all be attached to the gospel history, it must be granted that Jesus of Nazareth was a just and righteous person; one, who

* Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

had done no violence, neither was guile found in his mouth; a person of unequalled piety, and unparalleled generosity; one who went about doing good, and extending his benefactions even to his enemies; one, whom even his most inveterate foes could not convince of sin; and who, twice by an audible voice from heaven, had the most pointed testimony that he pleased God. But this man was subjected to unparalleled sufferings, and a most shameful death; and all this happened according to the determinate council and foreknowledge of God *. If he did not suffer, therefore, as a substitute, it is impossible to reconcile his sufferings with divine equity and benignity. In this case he must have suffered without cause, even in so far as the righteous Judge of the world was concerned. But such an idea is equally repugnant to his justice and his goodness. His sufferings must therefore have been vicarious to reconcile them with the justice, and indispensably necessary to reconcile them with the goodness, of God.

But when we bring into view the real cha-

* Acts ii. 23.

racter of Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, his fellow and equal, the argument assumes vast additional importance. He is his Son, his only begotten Son, his Son in whom he is, was, and ever will be well pleased; yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief. Not only his innocence, therefore, but also his personal dignity and intimate relation to the Father of Mercies, must have rendered it incompatible with the justice and benignity of the Divine nature and government, to subject him to sufferings and death, had not these been indispensably necessary to the vindication of the moral perfections of God in the salvation of sinners. He suffered without cause from the Jews, and on that account the hand which they had in his sufferings has fixed an indelible stain upon their character, as monsters of injustice and cruelty; but does not the denial of our Lord's substitution in the room of the guilty, and of the necessity of his death in order to the remission of their sins, virtually transfer the same charge of cruelty and injustice to God himself, and that also towards his own Son, who always merited his approbation and complacent regard?

The argument derives greater weight still, from the consideration of what he suffered. He suffered not only from men and devils, but also, in his soul, from the immediate hand of God, as an offended Judge. His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. This is denied by the Socinians, who make example the sole end of his sufferings. They resolve the whole of his sufferings into the endurance of human infliction, or terror arising from the prospect of it. But that he did suffer immediately from God, is evident from the express testimony of Scripture. “It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief*.” No satisfactory reason can be assigned for his agonies in the garden of Gethsemane, unless it be admitted that he suffered immediately from God in his soul. To tell us that his amazement and bloody sweat proceeded from agitation of mind, in prospect of what he was about to endure from men, is to degrade the Son of God, in respect of patience and fortitude, below the level of thousands of his followers, who have ascended the scaffold,

* Isa. liii. 10.

and embraced the stake, not only without dismay, but even rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for his name's sake. Besides, the end assigned for his sufferings by the Socinians, was, in this case, completely defeated. For it is only in the way of viewing his principal sufferings as immediately from God, that we contemplate in him unparalleled patience and resignation under suffering; since it was in this particular, especially, that his sufferings exceeded, in their intensity, the sufferings of others who have been placed in similar external circumstances. That he suffered from the hiding of his Father's countenance on the cross is beyond a doubt, if we attach any credit to gospel history. "My God, my God, (said he) why hast thou forsaken me*?" But would ever the Father of Mercies have sheathed the sword of justice in the bowels of his own Son, had his death not been necessary—indispensably necessary, for the vindication of his honour in the salvation of guilty men?

From these considerations we must infer,

* Mat. xxvii. 46.

First, That Jesus suffered and died in the room of others. In no other way can his death, since he had no personal sin, be reconciled either with the goodness or justice of God. *Secondly*, That these sufferings in all their extent must have been absolutely necessary to expiate human guilt, so as to render its remission compatible with the honour of God's moral character and government. To suppose them unnecessary in the smallest degree, is to affix a stain upon Divine goodness, or to charge God with cruelty to his only begotten Son.

6thly, The Necessity of an Atonement may be also demonstrated from the Wisdom of God.

The present question regards not only the Socinians, who deny the atonement altogether, but also those who admit the fact of atonement by the blood of Christ, but deny that it would have been inconsistent with the moral character of God to have conferred forgiveness in any other way; and it is in opposition to the sentiments of the latter, that the present argument is brought forward.

It is here admitted, on both sides, that Christ made a true and proper atonement for sin;

and also that the scheme of mercy, as manifested through the atonement, affords an admirable display of wisdom, as it makes the most effectual provision for the illustration of the glory of the Divine character. But we apprehend this cannot be granted consistently, without admitting the necessity here pleaded for. This may be proved from the peculiar character of Divine Wisdom.

The attribute of Wisdom is exercised in fixing upon the best ends, and devising the most proper means for accomplishing these ends. Taking the Scripture doctrine of the atonement for granted in this argument, it will be admitted, that the end proposed by God was the advancement of his own honour in man's salvation, and that the means devised by his wisdom for effecting this end, was the vicarious death of his own Son in human nature. Now, we think it may be proved, reasoning *a posteriori*, or from what He has done, that he could not consistently with his infinite wisdom have saved sinners in any other way.

To fix upon a means for accomplishing a proposed end, which is either inadequate or

superfluous, argues folly, not wisdom. It will be granted in the present case, that the *means* determined upon by God for vindicating his own honour in man's salvation is wonderfully great—the greatest, or speaking after the manner of men, the most expensive that he could have employed. In giving his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, he gave the greatest gift he could give. But if God could have accomplished the same end by an inferior *means*, then the death of Christ must have been unnecessary; and consequently the appointment of his death for the remission of our sins, would argue a defect of wisdom in God. In this case, Christ crucified could no longer be the wisdom of God; nor could it any longer be affirmed, that in the plan of redemption through his blood, God hath *abounded* towards us in all wisdom and prudence. We must therefore conclude, that since the glory of God is the end to which he must always act, else he could not be a holy Being; so the death of Christ must have been the only adequate expedient for securing this end in man's salvation; otherwise it would have been inconsistent with his infinite wisdom to have fixed

upon it. Had some other expedient been sufficient for this purpose, not only his wisdom but also his goodness would have required that his own Son should have been spared; but God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. His death must therefore have been necessary, in order that sin might be remitted, and the sinner restored to the divine favour.

Do some still insist, Though it be admitted, that atonement for sin by the death of Christ is an expedient calculated to secure the ends of God's glory to the best advantage, yet might He not have, had he pleased, admitted of a less illustrious display of his glory in man's salvation, and then an expedient less fit would have been sufficient? All the works of God do not display his glory in the same degree; yet in wisdom hath he made them all. Might he not, in this case, have proposed to himself the same end in an inferior degree, and brought it about by inferior means, consistently with his infinite wisdom?

To these queries we reply in the negative. We readily admit that God's works do not all display his glory in the same degree; but

we maintain, that they all display it in the highest degree of which they are capable, from their nature and the station which they hold in the universe. This holds true of the meanest reptile that crawls, as well as the seraphim of glory who encircle God's eternal throne. It would have been inconsistent with his zeal for his own honour, to have proposed to himself any thing short of this from their creation and preservation. It would, for the same reason, have been inconsistent with his wisdom, to have proposed to himself a less share of honour from the salvation of guilty men, than the nature of the case would admit. No *means*, therefore, inferior to those which his wisdom has actually devised, namely, the substitution and death of his own Son, could have secured the ends of his glory in the eternal salvation of sinners of our race.

7thly, The Necessity of an Atonement may also be illustrated from the character of divine Sovereignty.

Though the character of divine sovereignty does not of itself furnish a proof of the necessity of the atonement, yet, when taken in connection with the evidences of that necessity

already adduced from the holiness, justice, and veracity of God, it serves to shew the untenable nature of the opinion, that God might, had he pleased, have pardoned sin without an atonement. It is proper that this be kept in view, in order to see the force of the following remarks in the present question. Those who plead that God might, under a constitution of things different from the present, have pardoned sin without a satisfaction to his justice, appear to ground their principal objection to the necessity which we are endeavouring to support, upon the particular view which they take of the freedom and sovereignty of the divine will. Hence, they load those who argue for this necessity with the obloquy of setting limits to the sovereignty of the Almighty. But care should be taken, lest, by attempting to exalt one divine attribute, we detract from the glory of another. God is sovereign in dispensing his favours, but his sovereignty must ever be regulated by unerring wisdom, and bounded by a supreme regard to holiness and universal equity. This will appear from a slight view of the nature and moral character of the will of every rational agent.

The moving causes of every volition in all moral determinations, are the intellect and moral disposition of the agent willing. This holds true of men, of angels, and of God himself. A wicked man, or a fallen angel, invariably wills what is evil, because his intellect is blinded, and his dispositions totally depraved. A holy angel, or a glorified saint, uniformly wills what is good and agreeable to the divine law, because his intellect is pure, and his dispositions completely holy. The general train of the believer's volitions in this world are on the side of rectitude, because he is renewed in the spirit of his mind; and when he wills otherwise, it is owing to remaining ignorance and depravity of disposition. God is a being infinitely wise and infinitely holy: all his volitions or purposes, therefore, must be under the guidance of unerring wisdom, and in strict accordance with his immutable holiness and justice. This being the case, his sovereignty is bounded in its exercise, not indeed by any creature; "For who hath resisted his will?" nor by any thing extrinsic to himself, but by his own supreme regard to rectitude, and his own unerring wisdom, which

disposes of all events so as to render them subservient to the advancement of the honour of his moral perfections. Were this not the case, the sovereignty of God would be no better than whim or caprice. It would be willing without reason, and acting without any end worthy of a rational being.

God's sovereignty may be defined a supreme right to will and to do whatever is not inconsistent with his own purity and righteousness. Such being the character of divine sovereignty, it must be inconsistent even in Him as a Sovereign, to dispense pardon, except in the way of vindicating his delight in holiness, and manifesting his supreme regard to righteousness, by the punishment of sin according to its demerit. A righteous man values moral character above life; and, accordingly, all his volitions and operations are made subservient to its preservation and advancement. His power, however great, is limited in its operations, by his regard to moral rectitude; yea, even his benignity yields to a sense of justice. He is first just, and then bountiful. If such is the character, if such the tendency of righteousness, as found in a creature, it must be

possessed in an infinitely greater degree by God, who is necessarily and independently holy. And if such is the influence that rectitude of disposition has upon human volitions, what must be the influence of God's immutable holiness upon all his sovereign volitions and operations? His holiness is his glory, and to affirm that he cannot will or act contrary to it, is to say no more than the Scripture asserts, when we are told that he cannot deny himself. In fine, the intellectual and moral character of the Divine nature must enter into every act of the divine will. But, to affirm, with our opponents, that God might, by a sovereign act of mercy, have dispensed with the claims of justice, and set sinners free from condemnation without ransom, is to set God's will at variance with his nature, which is equally unphilosophical and unscriptural. Besides, it is to rob divine sovereignty of its brightest ornaments; namely, wisdom and purity. The first property of divine sovereignty must be purity; but this property his sovereign mercy could not have possessed, as extended to guilty men, had it not vented through the atonement. It must also be wise; but this property could

not have belonged to God's sovereign purpose of saving sinners, had it not made provision for the vindication of the honour of his moral perfections, by the condign punishment of sin. In Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement, mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other, in the salvation of sinners.

8thly, The Necessity of an Atonement may be illustrated from the history of God's moral government in every age.

If in any instance we found that God had pardoned sin without an atonement, there might be some reason for suspecting the justice of the above conclusions; but no instance of this kind can be produced in the history of the moral government of God. A great proportion of the angelic family fell from their first estate, but for them there was no remission; because, for them no atonement was provided. "The angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day." The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of

men; not only in the penal sentence of the law, but also by means of his terrible judgments inflicted upon individuals on account of their personal sins, and nations on account of their national transgressions. But in no instance do we find his judicial displeasure ultimately turned away, but through the blood of an atoning sacrifice.

Let us first attend to man as an individual, and we will find that no instance can be produced of his obtaining the pardon of sin, as pertaining to the conscience, but through the blood of the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God. We have several instances of Divine forbearance being extended to notorious offenders, on account of their humbling themselves before God; as in the case of Ahab, and the inhabitants of Nineveh. But we have already shewn, that forbearance does not in the smallest degree partake of the nature of forgiveness. Nor are we to infer from certain instances wherein pardon was conferred under the former dispensation, for crimes for which the law of Moses provided no sacrifices, that it was bestowed without an atonement for sin. No; these crimes, as well as those for which

that law provided a sacrifice, were pardoned, so far as pertained to the conscience, only through the blood of Christ; which, though shed in the end of the world, existed in respect of its efficacy from the beginning of time. God did not require a legal sacrifice for David's sin, else he would have given it; but can we hesitate for a moment, whether he received forgiveness through the atoning Sacrifice of his Son and Lord? Christ shed his blood for the remission of the sins of his elect, who lived under the old as well as under the new dispensation. "And for this cause He
 " is the Mediator of the New Testament, that
 " by means of death, for the transgressions
 " which were under the first Testament, they
 " who are called might receive the promise
 " of eternal inheritance *."

Though the history of God's moral government in this world will not be completed till the end of time, yet we are not left at an uncertainty respecting his future procedure in dispensing pardon. Scripture assures us that at the close of the scene none will be exempted

* Heb. ix. 15.

from eternal perdition, but those who have fled for refuge to the blood of atonement. “ The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power *.”

With respect to nations or bodies politic, it will be readily granted that they are the aggregate of individuals. But it does not follow, that they are not in their social capacity amenable for their conduct to God, as the Governor among the nations. When the laws of society, therefore, are contrary to the eternal rule of righteousness; when public faith is violated; when iniquity is practised under the colour of public law, and with the general consent of the community; and when the influence of a commonwealth is afforded for the subversion of truth and the propagation of error, and for the suppression of piety and

* 2 Thess. i. 7—9.

righteousness, and the advancement of vice, irreligion, and profaneness; it must subject the guilty to the most severe national judgments.

Though God has, in this life, inflicted exemplary punishment upon some individuals, to keep up upon the minds of men a sense of their responsibility, and to shew that even in time, there is a God who judgeth in the earth; yet there is no necessity that this should uniformly take place, for the vindication of the purity and rectitude of the Divine government. Individuals are to exist in a future world, where they will be punished with an everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power. This renders the exercise of Divine forbearance towards them in this world compatible with the equity of God's moral administration. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished *." But nations, as such, exist only in this world, so that it is only in time that they can, in

* 2 Pet. ii. 9.

this capacity, be subjected to punishment. Hence, national sins, when persisted in, have invariably been punished in time, by the political destruction of those by whom they were committed. “The indignation of the Lord” has been “upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies; he hath utterly destroyed them; he hath delivered them to the slaughter*.” Where now are the powerful kingdoms and mighty empires that flourished in ancient times? They have each in their turn been overthrown in the righteous judgment of God, for their public sins, yea, their very names are extinct, save in the page of the historian, where they only exist as monuments of the direful consequences of national crimes. The same observation applies to all those religious associations, of whatever designation, which have departed from the faith and profession of our Lord’s supreme deity, and proper atonement for sin. No society or individual departing from beneath the covert of atoning blood, can escape God’s righteous vengeance. It was under this covert,

as exhibited in symbol by the blood of the Paschal Lamb, that the Israelites were safe in that dreadful night, when the destroying angel passed through, and slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt. Their existence as an organised nation, and their connection as a church with the true olive-tree, were preserved, so long as they adhered, in any degree, to the doctrine of salvation through the atonement; but as soon as they totally rejected this doctrine, wrath came upon them to the uttermost. It was not even the crucifixion of Jesus that filled up the cup of their iniquity; but the rejection of the offers of salvation through the blood of the cross, exhibited to them by the ministry of his apostles. This brought down the vengeance of Heaven upon them, till they were consumed from off that good land which God gave to their fathers. As long as the churches of Asia adhered to the doctrines of Christ's supreme deity and proper atonement for sin, they flourished amidst the hottest persecution. The power and policy of hell could not prevail against them. But the Arian here-y, which struck at the foundation of both, brought on first their decline and then

their ruin. It requires but a small degree of discernment to trace similar judgments in modern Europe to similar causes.

In fine, there is only one society under Heaven, the true church of Christ, which has existed from age to age, and survived amidst the wreck of nations and bodies politic. A society, indeed, which is not now confined to any particular place or people, but which has, notwithstanding, distinctive characteristics by which it is known from all others; namely, its attachment to the doctrines of revealed religion in general, and its stedfast adherence, in particular, to the grand truths of the divinity of Christ, his true and proper satisfaction for sin, and salvation by free grace as it reigns through his righteousness. Of this society, we are told in the Scriptures of truth, that it is a kingdom which shall never be destroyed—that it shall not be left to other people—that it shall flourish on the ruin of all opposite interests, and that it shall stand for ever*. Concerning this highly favoured society, God has said, “ Though I make a full end of all

* Dan. ii. 44.

“nations, yet will I not make a full end of thee*.” The existence of this society from age to age, can only be accounted for from its interest in the atonement. Innocent it is not. The sins committed by this society, from the privileges which it possesses, are of all others the most aggravated: yet it is the only corporate body under Heaven, which has escaped the overflowing scourge of God’s avenging wrath. It has, indeed, been chastened, but not killed, cast down, but not forsaken.

From the above view of the history of God’s moral government, we apprehend it must be obvious to every unprejudiced mind, that in no instance, pardon has been bestowed upon a guilty creature, but through the atonement of Christ. But if we consider the pure benignity of God’s nature, and his delight in the exercise of mercy,—we can only account for this fact by admitting that, in order to forgiveness, atonement is necessary from his moral perfections. Had no such necessity existed, we might have expected, that in some instances, if not in the case of men for whom a

* Jer. xxx. 11.

ransom is provided, at least among fallen angels, God would have displayed his supposed sovereign right to dispense with his justice, by setting his guilty creature free without ransom. But since no example of this kind is to be found, and since the Scriptures assure us that none exist, we must conclude, that without an atonement for sin there can be no remission.

9thly, The Necessity of an Atonement may also be proved from the express testimony of Scripture.

In stating this argument, we may first adduce a few passages which assert the inseparable connection between moral and penal evil; and then we shall bring forward some other texts, which bear more particularly upon the necessity of the atonement by the death of Christ, in order to the remission of sin. That penal evil is a necessary consequent of moral evil, is obvious from the whole tenor of Scripture. The proofs are so numerous that it is difficult to fix upon a few, in the way of omitting others no less clear and explicit. When the Lord passed by and proclaimed his name to Moses, we find that one prominent part of it was his inflexible justice. “ Keeping mercy

“ for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgres-
 “ sion, and sin, and that will by no means clear
 “ the guilty *.” We grant that the word
guilty, is a supplement, but without it the pas-
 sage cannot make sense. Besides, that it is of
 guilt that he will not clear the sinner, is obvi-
 ous from what follows: “ Visiting the iniqui-
 “ ties of the fathers upon their children unto
 “ the third and fourth generation.” Punish-
 ment is mentioned not only as the desert of
 sin, but as that which will without fail be in-
 flicted upon the guilty. “ Though hand join
 “ in hand, the wicked shall not be unpun-
 “ nished †.” The same thing is inferred from
 the moral character of God, and the delight
 which he necessarily has in moral rectitude.
 “ Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire,
 “ and brimstone, and an horrible tempest;
 “ this shall be the portion of their cup. *For*
 “ the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his
 “ countenance doth behold the upright *.”
 God will render to all their due, but death is
 the desert of sin; it must, therefore, be its ne-

* Exod. xxxiv. 7. † Prov. xi. 21. ‡ Psal. xi. 6, 7.

cessary result. “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life †.”

We shall now adduce some passages which bear more particularly upon the necessity of the atonement by the death of Christ, in order to the remission of sin; and with these we shall close the chain of evidence in its support.

Luke xxiv. 26.—“Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?” The things that he suffered are obvious. “Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” But we are told that it was fit or becoming, and, consequently, necessary in a moral point of view, that he should suffer these things. It was not, however, necessary on his own account. No, he was without sin. But since death is the wages of sin, he must have suffered even unto the death for the sins of others; and his sufferings must have been necessary to procure the remission of their sins.

Heb. ii. 10. “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in

* Rom. vi. 23.

“ bringing many sons unto glory ; to make
“ the Captain of their salvation perfect through
“ sufferings.” Some may admit the necessity
of the death of Christ intimated in the passage
formerly quoted, on certain grounds, who deny
it on others. They may allow that it is
necessary to our forgiveness from the appoint-
ment of God, and the present scheme of the
Divine government, yet deny any such neces-
sity arising from his natural or moral perfec-
tions. But the text before us will not admit
of this explanation, as will appear if we attend
a little to its import. In this passage God is
presented to our view as the first cause, and
last end of all things. As all things exist from
him, as their first cause ; so all things must ex-
ist to him and for him, as their last and high-
est end : “ For of him, and through him, and
“ to him, are all things ; to whom be glory for
“ ever, Amen.” This must be the case, since
it would have been utterly inconsistent with
his wisdom and the supreme regard he has to
his own honour, to have made creatures for
any chief end inferior to that of his own glory.
We have also in the words, a particular work
of God to which the general rule is applicable,

namely, the bringing of many sons from among our fallen race to glory, under the conduct of Christ as a Captain of salvation; and concerning this Captain we are told, that he was perfected or set apart to his work of saving these sons by his sufferings. But we are further told that this was necessary from the character of God, as the first cause, and last end of all things: "For it became him for whom are all things," &c. This passage sets aside completely every constitution of things different from the present, under which, it is supposed, God might have dispensed pardon without an atonement for sin. For there can be no supposable constitution of things of which God must not have been the first cause, and the last end. Under no form of the Divine government, therefore, could God have pardoned sinners without a satisfaction to his justice, consistently with his own honour. That the verb here rendered *became*, denotes necessity, cannot be disputed, if we attend to its general use in Scripture. It was morally necessary from God's appointment, and his own undertaking, that our Lord, when made under the law as our Surety, should act up to that law

in all its demands; but this necessity is expressed by the same verb *, “ And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it *becometh* us to fulfil all righteousness.” To act like saints, it must be morally necessary to avoid fornication; but this necessity is also expressed by the same word †. “ But fornication and covetousness, and all uncleanness, let it not be once named among you as *becometh* saints.” Now, if it was necessary that our Lord should be baptized to fulfil all righteousness, as the Surety of the church; and if it was necessary that the Ephesians should avoid fornication, and all uncleanness, in order to their acting as saints; and if the necessity in both cases is intimated by the word *became*; then, in the passage under consideration it must denote a corresponding necessity in God, arising from his moral perfection, to accomplish his gracious purpose of saving sinners through an expiatory sacrifice.

Let none object to this reasoning, that God is above all law, and, therefore, is not bound by any law, as Christ was when acting as our

* Mat. iii. 15.

† Eph. v. 3.

Surety, or, as the Ephesians were, being necessarily accountable beings. God's essential rectitude, is to Him instead of a law; and were He not invariably to act agreeably to his own immutable rectitude, He would no more be a holy Being, than his creatures can be holy, in the way of violating the law He has prescribed for the rule of their conduct.

Heb. ix. 22, 23.—“ Without shedding of blood is no remission. It was, therefore, necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” As this passage furnishes us not only with a proof of the necessity of the atonement, but also with a number of useful deductions respecting its nature and end; we shall submit a more particular explanation of it to our readers, than would otherwise have been proper in this place.

The Sinaic transaction, to which the writer to the Hebrews obviously refers in the preceding context, contained a revelation of God's covenant of grace, both in its promise, and in its condition, as it was to be fulfilled by the promised Messiah. The promise of the covenant was ex-

hibited in the preface to the law, in these words, "I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage." The ten precepts, armed with a penal sentence, and promulgated with awful displays of God's majesty, as a Lawgiver and Judge, contained an exhibition of its condition. This is the law which Christ was made under as our Surety, and in this form it was addressed to him, out of the midst of the flames of Horeb, through the Israelites, from whom he was to descend according to the flesh. It is the law which Christ came, not to destroy but to fulfil. This view of the law, is in no respect inconsistent with its use as a rule of righteousness; for it also bears this form considered as grafted upon the promise with which it was prefaced, ordained in the hand of a Mediator, and along with the promise dedicated with the blood of an atoning sacrifice. Accordingly, when Moses had spoken every precept, the transaction at Horeb, which, viewed as promulgated from the midst of the fire, had a federal form, was rendered testamentary by the blood of an atoning sacrifice.

This is the transaction to which the inspired writer to the Hebrews refers, in the preceding context, verses 18, 19, 20.—“Where-
“ upon, neither the first Testament was dedi-
“ cated without blood. For when Moses had
“ spoken every precept to all the people ac-
“ cording to the law; he took the blood of
“ calves, and of goats, with water and scarlet-
“ wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the
“ book and all the people, saying, This is
“ the blood of the Testament which God
“ hath enjoined unto you.” The same rite
was afterwards extended to the tabernacle, the
vessels of the ministry, and almost every thing
connected with the service of the earthly sanc-
tuary, verses 21, 22.—“Moreover, he sprinkled
“ likewise with blood both the tabernacle, and
“ all the vessels of the ministry,” &c.

The sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifices was, without doubt, the sign of its application, by means of intercession, for the purpose of the removal of their guilt for whom it was shed. This being admitted, we see, at once, the reason why Moses sprinkled the people. They were guilty, and the rite of sprinkling was the sign of the remission of their sins

through the shedding of that blood with which they were sprinkled. The reason of the sprinkling of the book, the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry, is not so obvious; as, from their nature, they were not capable of moral contamination. If we attend, however, to the reason assigned by the Spirit of God for the application of the blood of atonement to the holy place, it will appear that the sprinkling of blood upon inanimate things, had still a relation to its main design, which was the removal of human guilt and impurity. “And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness *.” The same reference is made to human guilt as the reason of the atonement being extended to the altar, verses 18, 19.—“And he shall go out to the altar that is before the Lord, and make an atonement for it, and shall take of

* Lev. xvi. 16.

“ the blood of the bullock, and of the blood
 “ of the goat, and shall put it upon the horns
 “ of the altar round about: and he shall
 “ sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger,
 “ seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it
 “ from the uncleanness of the children of
 “ Israel.” From these passages, it appears,
 that the application of the blood of atonement
 to those inanimate objects, was, with regard
 to its use or design, only relative; and that
 the uncleanness to be removed, was still the
 guilt or impurity of the people.

But the question still recurs, why was the
 sign of their remission extended to the taber-
 nacle, the altar, and the vessels of service, and
 not confined to themselves, the proper sub-
 jects of moral and ceremonial defilement?
 Some account for it by supposing, “ that the
 “ sins of the people were considered as cleav-
 “ ing to, and polluting and unfitting for the
 “ service of God, the places and instruments
 “ of their worship.” But we apprehend that
 even this does not account for it in a satisfac-
 tory manner; more especially, as this view
 cannot be admitted with respect to those
 heavenly things of which the tabernacle and

its furniture were patterns; and which, answering to the type, are said to be purified with better sacrifices. Their purification by the blood of Christ, cannot be supposed to proceed upon the *idea* of their being tainted or polluted by the sins of the people.

To see the significancy of sprinkling in all its variety, we must attend to the ends of the atonement itself, of the application of which sprinkling was the sign. The atonement was not only expiatory but also propitiatory. It did not only cancel the guilt of the offender, or disannul his obligation to punishment; but it was also the means of his access to, and favourable acceptance with, God. Keeping these two ends of the atonement in view, they will furnish us with a key to the use of sprinkling in all its variety. The sprinkling of the blood upon the people when the first Testament was dedicated, was the sign of the efficacy of the atonement for absolving them from punishment. But the sprinkling of the book, was the sign not only of their deliverance from the curses, but also of their access to all the blessings contained in it, by means of that blood; not indeed from its own intrinsic value, as we

shall presently see, but as the symbol of the blood of that sacrifice which the Messiah was to offer in the end of the world. The tabernacle, the altar, and all the vessels of service, were symbols of new covenant privileges, or patterns of things in the heavens, and for the time being, means of intercourse with God in his character as the God of the church. They were, therefore, sprinkled for the same reason that the book of the covenant was sprinkled; or to shew that the access of the worshippers to God, and their acceptance with him, as residing in the tabernacle and served by the vessels of the ministry, were only through the blood of an atoning sacrifice. The justness of these remarks will appear, if we attend to the rite of sprinkling, as applied to the several parts of this sacred edifice.

The first thing that comes under our observation here, is the Holy of Holies, the place of God's special residence, where he is represented as having his throne above the mercy-seat, and between the cherubims. This throne was to be sprinkled with blood, and that blood was considered as propitiatory, or

that which procured access to the throne, and favourable acceptance with Him who sat upon it, both to the officiating priest, and to the people represented by him. This appears from its name, the propitiatory, and also from God's promise, respecting the manifestation of his favour from this throne sprinkled with blood. "And thou shalt put the mercy-seat
"above upon the ark; and in the ark thou
"shalt put the testimony which I shall give
"thee. And there I will meet with thee, and
"I will commune with thee, from above the
"mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims
"which are upon the ark of the testimony, of
"all things I will give thee in commandment
"unto the children of Israel *." The tabernacle, or that part of it in which the inferior priests ministered, and through which the high-priest passed on his way to the oracle, was sprinkled for the same reason, or to signify the way of their access to and acceptance with God, in the discharge of holy duties. The rite of sprinkling was extended to the vessels of the ministry for a similar purpose;

* Exod. xxv. 21, 22.

or to intimate that the service in which they were employed, was acceptable to God only through the atonement. Not only the tabernacle and its furniture, but also the altar before the door of the tabernacle, on which the offerings of the people at large were presented to God, was, on the great day of atonement, to be sprinkled with blood; to shew that their personal services without, as well as the services of their representatives within the tabernacle, were holy and acceptable to God, only through the same atoning sacrifice. In one word, the meaning of the rite of sprinkling as applied to these inanimate things which led to the oracle, is explained by the antitype. They were all connected with the way to the oracle, or the Holy of Holies, which was a type of Heaven, and it is in allusion to them that our access to Heaven is signified by “a way;” but this way is consecrated for us by the blood of Christ. “Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh*,” &c.

* Heb. x. 19, 20.

Hence also, the sense in which we are to understand the verb rendered to *purge* (verse 22), with reference to the patterns of things in the heavens, and to *purify* (verse 23) with respect to the heavenly things themselves. In both cases it denotes the preparation of access to these things, by the removal of that which excluded the worshippers from them; namely, ceremonial uncleanness in the one case, and moral guilt and impurity in the other.

The rite of sprinkling, therefore, in all its variety, amounted to this, "Without shedding
" of blood is no remission." This was the import or significancy of the whole, that the sin of the offender could be expiated, his person restored to favour, and his services accepted with God, only through the blood of an atoning sacrifice. The blood of the sacrifices under the law could not put away sin as pertaining to the conscience. It could only remove ceremonial impurity, and avert the temporal punishments to which this subjected the offender. This is clearly pointed out by the inspired writer in another part of this Epistle *. The whole system of sacrificial service had an insti-

* Chap. x. 1, 2, 3.

tuted meaning, and was intended to prefigure that sacrifice in its grand results which Christ was to offer up once in the end of the world.

This is evident from verse 22, “ It was “ therefore necessary, that the patterns of “ things in the heavens should be purified “ with these, but the heavenly things them- “ selves with better sacrifices than these.”

The first thing that claims our attention in these words, is the designation given to the inanimate objects sprinkled with the blood of the Levitical sacrifices. They were “patterns,” that is, figures, or symbolical representations of things in the heavens. By “the heavenly “ things themselves,” we are to understand the substantial realities of a future and better economy, of which these things were types or figures. If we consider the word *patterns*, as including the first Testament itself, then, in so far as regarded its Mediator, and the sacrifice with which it was dedicated, it was only a typical dispensation of God’s covenant. Hence, when contrasted with it, the new dispensation is called “a better Testament*.”

* Heb. vii. 22.

The tabernacle was also a figure of the true tabernacle which God hath pitched and not man, or of the human nature of Christ, in which the true Schechinah dwells by a personal union. The Holy of Holies was only a figure of Heaven itself, into which Christ has entered as our forerunner; and the ceremonial services, figures of the more pure and spiritual ministrations of a better dispensation.

It was necessary, we are told, that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified by those legal sacrifices. It was necessary to constitute them patterns. Destitute of this purification, they would have been figures of things in the heavens, without the sign of the means by which sinners have access to them. But from the necessity of the purification of those patterns, the inspired writer infers the superior necessity of the purification of the heavenly things themselves, or their separation to the use of sinful creatures, by the blood of a better sacrifice:—"But the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."

It is evident, that the one sacrifice of Christ is here meant by better sacrifices. The use of the plural number denotes, first, that his

sacrifice, though only offered once, realized all the sacrifices under the law; and, secondly, that it exceeded them all in value or dignity.

The heavenly things themselves are purified or set apart to the use of sinful creatures by the blood of this better sacrifice. This is necessary to our access to them, and to God himself by means of them. That the new covenant might become a confirmed deed of conveyance of all spiritual blessings to men, it was necessary that it should be ratified by the blood of Christ, verses 15, 16, 17. It was absolutely necessary to our Lord's consecration, as our advocate, ministering in the tabernacle of his own human nature, that He should suffer unto death. He entered Heaven by his own blood: there was no access for him there as our High-Priest, but by his own atoning sacrifice, verses 11, 12. And it is through the same blood that we have access to the holiest, and that God is pleased to accept of our persons and services. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest through the blood of Jesus*," &c. "Ye

* Heb. x. 19.

“ also as lively stones are built up a spiritual
 “ house, an holy Priesthood, to offer up spirit-
 “ ual sacrifices, acceptable to God through
 “ Jesus Christ *.”—This passage serves to
 illustrate the following important truths con-
 nected with the doctrine of the atonement.

First, It shews us the unscriptural nature of the Socinian tenet, that repentance is the only prerequisite to the pardon of sin. It presents us with this general maxim: “ Without shedding of blood is no remission.” This is a maxim applicable to both dispensations.—Under the former economy, ceremonial uncleanness could not be removed, nor the temporal judgments to which it subjected the offender averted, unless by the blood of a sacrifice. But this was also intended to instruct the worshippers respecting the absolute necessity of the infinitely more precious sacrifice of Christ, to put away sin as pertaining to the conscience.—No pretensions to repentance could supersede the necessity of a sacrifice for sin in the case of those who violated the ceremonial law; and much less can this plea be sus-

* 1 Pet. ii. 5.

tained, as a sufficient reparation for the dishonour done to God by moral transgression.

In vain is it pleaded by the Socinians, that God offers pardon to the penitent, and that pardon is promised on the ground of repentance. It is granted, that repentance is mentioned in Scripture as characteristic of the pardoned, or of those who are warranted to conclude that they are possessed of this privilege. But it is impossible that repentance can be the ground of the Divine procedure in dispensing pardon. Man is bound to exert all his powers in the service of God for the present, according to the circumstances in which he is placed, and the moral relations in which he stands to the great Supreme arising out of those circumstances. Is he a sinner? It is his bounden duty for the present to break off his sins by repentance; and, consequently, were his repentance possible without a regard to the atonement, in repenting he would do no more than what was his present duty. But if in the case supposed he only fulfilled present duty, how could this atone for past crimes? It has never been alleged that present repentance atones for

future sins ; but this might be argued with as much reason, as that it atones for past transgressions.

The opinion that repentance atones for past transgressions with respect to God, the supreme Lawgiver of Heaven and earth, is contrary to the views universally entertained by men, respecting its efficacy with reference to crimes committed against the laws of a civil state. It has never yet entered into the mind of a civil magistrate, or come under the deliberation of any legislative body under Heaven, that repentance should be admitted as a sufficient compensation for murder, robbery, or any other gross immorality committed against the public law. Were it proposed it would only provoke their scorn and derision. But, strange to relate ! it has been thought a proper reparation for the most heinous offences committed against the Lord of the universe. May not God put the question to the advocates for repentance as meritorious of forgiveness, which he put to the Jews respecting their torn and their lame offerings ? “ And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice is it not evil ? and if ye offer the lame and sick is it not evil ? offer it-

now unto thy Governor; will he be pleased with thee or accept thy person, saith the Lord of Hosts *?" Yes, he has done more than put this question to the advocates for human merit. He has even pronounced them all accursed. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse. For it is written, cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them †."

In fine, pardon through the blood of Christ and repentance, are inseparably connected, as the faith of the former leads to the latter: and it is for this reason that the pardoned are characterised by their penitency; and that none are warranted, from Scripture, to conclude that they are interested in the one who continue strangers to the other. "I will pour upon the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall *look* upon *me* whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for *Him*, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for *Him* as one that is in bitterness for his first born †."

* Mal. i. 8.

† Gal. iii. 10.

† Zech. xii. 10.

Secondly, This passage contains a clear proof of the necessity of the atonement by the death of Christ; in order to the remission of our sins, and our access to all the blessings of God's covenant.

The tabernacle and its furniture did not exist on their own account, but to prefigure the glorious privileges of a future and better dispensation. They were shadows of good things to come—patterns of things in the heavens. The ceremonial preparation of access to these patterns, by the blood of slain beasts, was constituted necessary by the appointment of God; for the express purpose of shadowing forth the necessity of the moral preparation of access to the heavenly things themselves, by our Lord's obedience even unto the death.—The former was a necessity arising from the appointment of God, and intended to typify a moral necessity founded on the purity of his nature, and the rectitude of his administration. The argument, therefore, is from the less to the greater. If the blood of bulls and goats was necessary to remove ceremonial uncleanness which excluded the ancient Israelites from the patterns of things in the heavens;

how much more necessary the precious blood of Christ to expiate moral guilt which excludes sinners of every age and nation from the heavenly things themselves.—That this is the tenor of the argument in the text now under consideration, appears, from the subsequent context, where we are told, that Christ, as the representative and forerunner of his people, realized the type by his entrance into heaven with his own blood. “ For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us.”

Thirdly, It shews that our Lord, in his death, is the only true and proper sacrifice for sin.

The formal nature of a sacrifice for sin, is the offering up of a life for the purpose of its expiation ; and it is obvious, that the life offered must correspond in value to the desert of the offence to be expiated by it. But the life of a beast could have no fitness as a vicarious sacrifice, in the room of the life of a man, forfeited by transgression. Nor, could even the life of a man, which is only of finite value, possess moral worth for expiating his own sin,

and much less the sins of a great multitude which no man can number, out of all nations, kindreds, and tongues and people; since every sin is of infinite demerit. No man "can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." All the sacrifices under the law could not put away one sin as pertaining to the conscience. They possessed reality as sacrifices only so far as related to ceremonial pollution. They only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh. In so far as moral guilt, or access to special benefits were concerned, they were only typical sacrifices. This is evident from the passage now under consideration. These sacrifices must have been of the same specific nature with the things purified by them; but these, we are told, were only patterns or types of things in the heavens; the sacrifices with which they were purified, must therefore have been mere types of the better sacrifice of Christ, through which fallen creatures have access to the heavenly things themselves. And hence we see, the absurdity of the notion vented, and keenly propagated by the enemies of the atonement, that the sacrificial language of the new Testa-

ment, as applied to the death of Christ, is mere figure or allusion, borrowed from the economy of Moses. What is figurative, on the contrary, belongs to the Levitical sacrifices, what is real to the sacrifice of Christ. These sacrifices only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh ; his sacrifice purges the conscience from dead works. The former only brought sin to remembrance ; the latter puts it away. “ But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself *.”

Fourthly, This passage also shews the absurdity of the scheme of atonement by pure intercession.

The rejection of atonement by mediation altogether, seems to have been considered by some Socinian writers as too glaring an outrage upon Scripture phraseology. To get rid of the doctrine in the way of retaining the terms by which it is expressed in Scripture, they have fallen upon the scheme of atonement by pure intercession. How far they have succeeded, the intelligent and candid reader of

* Verse 26.

Scripture will be able to judge. He must know that under the law blood-shedding was indispensably requisite to atonement. “ For
“ the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I
“ have given it to you upon the altar to make
“ an atonement for your souls, for it is the
“ blood that maketh an atonement for the
“ soul *.” The high-priest’s entrance with blood within the vail, is no doubt said to be for the purpose of making atonement, but it is obvious from what has been advanced concerning the use of sprinkling as applied to the mercy-seat, that this rite did not make atonement of itself, but only as it was the means of carrying into effect the sacrifice of atonement offered without the vail.—The making of atonement for sin formally lay in shedding the blood of the victim, and presenting it on the altar. This is evident from atonement being completed by this rite in other cases. Atonement was made for sin by the blood of all the sin-offerings and trespass-offerings, but in no instance was the blood carried within the vail, but in the case of the great anniver-

* Lev. xvii. 11.

sary sacrifices offered by the high-priest, first for himself, and then for the errors of the people.—But even in the sense in which the high-priest is said to have made atonement within the vail, it was not by pure intercession, but by intercession on the ground of an expiatory sacrifice. His advocacy was signified by the burning of the incense, the cloud of which ascended and covered the mercy-seat; and the sprinkling of blood which accompanied it denoted his plea as an intercessor. He was an intercessor within the vail on the ground of the sacrifice offered without the vail for the whole congregation of Israel.

Let us apply these remarks to the great antitype; Jesus, the High-Priest of our profession. Satisfaction for sin is universally ascribed in Scripture to his obedience unto the death in our world. “He put away sin
 “by the sacrifice of himself*.” “He gave
 “his life a ransom for many †.” “He was
 “once offered to bear the sins of many ‡.”
 He purged our sins by the sacrifice of himself on earth, and it was in consequence of this

* Heb. ix. 26.

† Matt. xx. 28.

‡ Heb. ix. 28.

that he sat down at the right hand of God in heaven. “When he had by himself purged “our sins,” he “sat down on the right hand “of the majesty on high*.” To the same purpose forgiveness, we are told, is through his blood, and not on the ground of mere intercession. “In whom we have redemption “through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, “according to the riches of his grace †.”—Our Lord’s intercession in heaven is, without doubt, held out to us in the New Testament Scriptures as an encouragement to expect forgiveness; but it is so only as the means of carrying into effect the sacrifice which he offered on Calvary. “If any man sin we have “an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the “righteous: And he is the *propitiation* for “our sins ‡.”—In the passage we have been considering, our Lord’s sacrifice on earth is presented to our view as necessary not only to the success of his advocacy, but also to his access to heaven in the character of our advocate.—“But the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ

* Heb. i. 3.

† Eph. i. 7.

‡ 1 John ii. 1, 2.

is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

To speak of atonement through the mediation of Christ, whether while on earth, or now that he is exalted to heaven, so long as his suretiship is rejected, is evidently intended to mislead the simple and unwary. Our Lord's mediation as a Priest involves in it suretiship—and in so far as his mediation respects atonement for sin, it was accomplished by suretiship, or by giving his life a ransom for many. Such is the account given us in Scripture of the mediation of Christ. It is not simply mediation by power, or by intercession; but at first instance, in the order of nature, it is by death. "And 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 might receive the promise of eternal inheritance*." It is upon the ground of this grand act of mediation, inten-

* Heb. ix. 15.

tionally overlooked by the advocates of the scheme of atonement by pure intercession, that all his other acts of mediation proceed.— We grant that he mediates in heaven by intercession; but it is in virtue of the perfection of his sacrifice on earth, that he is, as an advocate in heaven, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him *. He mediates also by power as a king, but his mediation as a king proceeds on the ground of the perfection of his sacrifice as a priest. “ For
 “ it became him for whom are all things, and
 “ by whom are all things, in bringing many
 “ sons unto glory, to make the Captain of
 “ their salvation perfect through sufferings †.”

Fifthly, The view which we have taken of the rite of sprinkling, particularly as applied to the mercy-seat, serves to illustrate the connection which our Lord's intercession in heaven has with the atonement.

Is it asked, What relation then has our Lord's advocacy in heaven to the atonement, since atonement is not by simple intercession? In reply, we may notice three grand ends of

* Heb. vii. 25.

† Heb. ii. 10.

his intercession with reference to the atonement. *First*, His presence in heaven as our advocate, serves to evince the perfection of his sacrifice in earth as a propitiation for sin. He died as the surety and representative of his people on earth, and it was as their representative that he entered heaven; but had his sacrifice on earth not been accepted in their room, he would never have been admitted as their representative into the presence of God.

Secondly, It is the grand means by which the atonement is carried into effect in the salvation of all those for whom he died. Christ appears in the presence of God in the twofold character of an Advocate and a Prince. He is a Priest upon his throne. Both respect the official administration of the blessings of that covenant which was ratified by his death. As an Advocate he intercedes for, and receives these blessings from the Father, and as a Prince and a Saviour he bestows them upon his people.—John xiv. 16. “ I will pray the
 “ Father and he will send you another Com-
 “ forter,” &c.—Acts ii. 33. “ Therefore be-
 “ ing 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.” But,

Thirdly, His continual intercession in heaven, serves to demonstrate to rational creatures in general, and to those higher orders of intelligence who encircle God’s eternal throne in particular, the connection which his death has with the whole of God’s gracious administration towards our fallen race. By our Lord’s death on earth, the justice of God was satisfied, and his law magnified and made honourable. But the ends of his declarative glory required that the means by which all this was accomplished, should not only be published to mankind on earth by the preaching of the cross; but also displayed in heaven by our Lord’s appearance there as a Lamb that had been slain. Heaven is God’s throne, from which he dispenses pardon and all spiritual blessings to sinners of mankind: it was therefore necessary that the higher orders of rational beings, who surround that throne, and are employed as ministering spirits to those who shall be the heirs of salvation, should enjoy the means of contemplating the consistency of a dispensation of mercy with God’s unspotted righteousness as the

Judge of the universe. These means are afforded them by our Lord's entrance into the Holiest with his own blood. That this is one end of his public advocacy in heaven, on the ground of the sacrifice he offered on earth, appears from the pattern of it in the earthly sanctuary. The sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice of atonement upon the mercy-seat, represented the connection the atonement has with a dispensation of mercy towards fallen creatures; as it renders it compatible with the claims of justice and the honour of the law.—But to ascertain fully the end of this ceremonial observance, we must attend to the symbolical witnesses of it. These were the cherubim which overshadowed the mercy-seat, and had their faces towards it, and their eyes fixed upon it. And it is beyond a doubt, that they represented those principalities and powers in heavenly places, who study with ardour, and contemplate with admiration, the manifold wisdom, boundless mercy, and unspotted righteousness of God, as displayed in man's redemption through the atoning blood of Christ. “To the intent that now, un-
 “to the principalities and powers in heavenly

“ places, might be known by the church the
 “ manifold wisdom of God *.”—“ Which
 “ things the angels desire to look into †.”

Sixthly, The passage which we have been considering serves also to illustrate the meaning of several terms used in the New Testament, to denote the grand effects of our Lord's sacrifice; such as *propitiation* and *reconciliation*.

These effects were prefigured by the rite of sprinkling under the law,—and the type and the antitype serve, when compared, to cast light upon each other.

Sin exposes the sinner to all the effects of God's judicial displeasure. “ The wrath of
 “ God is revealed from heaven against all
 “ ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men.” Though God purposed from everlasting to save a certain number of our race, the accomplishment of that purpose, as we have already proved, is incompatible with the untainted holiness, and unspotted righteousness of God, but in the way of sin being expiated. Hence the meaning of the word *propitiation* ‡, as applied to the death of Christ in the New

* Eph. iii. 10.

† 1 Pet. i. 12.

‡ ἰλασμος.

Testament. His death does not incline God to favour sinners; but it opens up the channel in which his eternal love vents to them, by removing the guilt of sin, the cause of his judicial displeasure. “He is the propitiation for our sins*.” “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins †.” That this is the exact sense of the term, appears from the pattern of it in the earthly sanctuary. The relation which the death of Christ has to the favour of God and its rich fruits, was prefigured by the atonement under the law being extended to the holy place or the oracle. Though it is not said that God was atoned by the blood of the sacrifice offered for the literal Israel, yet atonement was made for the holy place. The blood of the sacrifice for sin on the great day of atonement, was carried within the vail, and sprinkled upon the mercy-seat. This was the pattern or figure of God’s throne of grace. This typical throne was above upon the ark which contained the law, to shew that God’s

* 1 John ii. 2.

† Chap. iv. 19.

gracious administration is founded on justice; and it was sprinkled with blood, to shew that mercy can be extended to the guilty, only in the way of sin being punished according to its desert. Thus prepared, justice and judgment were the habitation of God's throne, while mercy and truth went in glorious procession before his face. The whole figure went to shew, that the blood of an atoning sacrifice, is the means through which God manifests his mercy towards our guilty race, as by that blood, the exercise of mercy is rendered compatible with his holiness, and the unspotted righteousness of his administration, as the moral Governor of the world. But Christ, viewed as the author of a perfect righteousness, for the justification of the church, is that in substance of which the mercy-seat was only a symbol. Hence, he is called the propitiatory *. “Whom God hath set forth a *propitiatory* through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins †.” And as in the type, by the throne being sprinkled with the blood of an atoning

* *ἱλαστήριον.*

† Rom. iii. 25.

sacrifice, from which mercy emanated, the honour of justice was preserved inviolate; so through the blood of Christ, mercy is manifested from the throne of God, in pardoning the chief of sinners, in the way of justice being also brought into view in all its majesty and grandeur. Hence, the apostle adds, in the way of explaining how He is a propitiatory, (verse 26.) “ To declare I say at this time his
 “ righteousness, that he might be just, and
 “ the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.”

We now proceed to the consideration of the word *reconciliation*. Even the friends of the doctrine of the atonement differ in opinion about the application of this term. Some maintain that, as used in the New Testament with reference to the death of Christ, it is only applicable to sinners; and denotes the moral influence of his death upon their hearts, in changing their dispositions towards God and his law. It is pleaded by others, that reconciliation by the death of Christ is mutual; or that we are not only reconciled to God, but that God is also reconciled to us through his atoning sacrifice.

We apprehend much confusion of thought has arisen upon this subject from inattention to the meaning of the terms, anger, wrath, and displeasure, as ascribed to God, with regard to sinners; together with the character in which God is said on the one hand to be angry with them, and on the other to be pacified toward them. In entering on this question these points should be fixed, and then the difficulty of the subject would in a great measure be removed.

First, God is to be viewed in the present inquiry in the character of a Lawgiver and Judge. It is in this character that he gives laws to his rational creatures, exacts obedience from them, is displeased with them when they commit iniquity, and punishes them for their transgressions: it must be in the same character that he is reconciled, or said to be pacified towards sinners of our race, through the death of Christ. Secondly, The terms, wrath, anger, and displeasure, do not imply any thing like passion in God, as in the creature; but only denote his holy aversion to moral evil, and his determinate purpose, as a righteous Judge, to punish it, for the vin-

dication of the honour of his law, and moral administration. Thirdly, Men are the objects of God's judicial displeasure, not as creatures but as sinners. These remarks, if properly understood and applied, will, we apprehend, go far to remove the seeming difficulties in the way of admitting the application of the term reconciliation to God.

First, It has been objected, that those for whom Christ died were the objects of God's eternal love, and consequently no reconciliation is necessary on his part towards them. That this select number were the objects of God's benevolent regard from everlasting, will be readily admitted. They were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and predestinated through him unto the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of God's will. But in what character did God in purpose love them? Not in the same character in which they are the objects of his displeasure, viewed as in their sins; or in which he is reconciled to them through the atonement. He set his love upon them from everlasting as a gracious Sovereign; but they are the objects of his judicial displeasure, as

in their sins, in the character of a righteous Judge. Besides, God did not set his love upon them as a Sovereign, to the prejudice of his judicial honours; for redemption through the blood of Christ, is a plan devised by his infinite wisdom for restoring the objects of his benevolent regard to a state of friendship with him as a judge, by the removal of sin, the cause of his judicial displeasure.

Secondly, The doctrine of mutual reconciliation has also been thought incompatible with divine immutability.

The objection brought forward by the Socinians against the doctrine of the atonement itself, upon this ground, will be attended to more fully in another part of this Treatise. We shall only remark here, that if the reconciliation pleaded for on the part of God, implied any change in him, it behoved to be in that specific character in which he is said to be reconciled, namely, in the character of a Judge. But, since this reconciliation is through a true and proper satisfaction for sin, it implies no such change. There is, indeed, a change of administration on the part of God as a Judge, relative to his fallen creatures; but this infers

no change in God himself, since the law loses none of its righteous claims, nor the Lawgiver any of his moral honours.—Though the same persons who were the objects of God's judicial displeasure become, by reconciliation, the objects of his judicial approbation and love—though they are beloved who were not beloved, and accepted who were not accepted; yet this is effected, not by bringing down the law to the moral condition of the sinner, but by the condition of the sinner being brought up to the law by sovereign mercy through the atonement. God, in the character of a righteous Judge, can only approve of and accept his creatures as righteous: but those who were once sinners, and, viewed as such, the objects of his judicial displeasure, are constituted righteous by the imputation of the righteousness of the Surety to them; so that he absolves them from condemnation, and receives them into favour in the way of preserving inviolate all his honours as a righteous Judge. He is just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.

Thirdly, Another objection has been brought forward, grounded on the language of Scripture.

It is pleaded by those who deny mutual reconciliation, that God is no where in Scripture said to be reconciled to us, but that every where we are said to be reconciled to God. This objection has been ably refuted by several modern writers on the atonement. They have made it appear in a most satisfactory manner, that, in the original language of the New Testament, and in the Greek version of the Old; the offending party is said to be reconciled to the offended, not by laying aside his enmity against him, but by giving him satisfaction in some way or other for the offence committed. Our Lord's own direction, respecting the removal of offences between brethren, furnishes us with an appropriate example. "Therefore
 " if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there
 " rememberest that thy brother hath ought
 " AGAINST THEE; leave there thy gift before
 " the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled
 " to thy brother, and then come and offer
 " thy gift *." Here the offending party is said to be reconciled to the offended, while it must be obvious to every one, that this was to

* Mat. v. 23, 24.

be done by his giving him satisfaction, in order to the removal of his displeasure. In the case before us, God is the offended party—the offence is wholly on our part; so that even when we are said to be reconciled to God, the primary idea must be the removal, by satisfaction, of the offence which had incurred his displeasure. This is accomplished by the death of Christ as our Surety. “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 *.”

But there is another reason for this mode of expression, which we the rather mention here, as we apprehend it has not been sufficiently attended to by others. In the wonderful economy of redemption God sustains the twofold character of *righteous Judge*, and a *gracious Sovereign*. As a righteous judge he demands satisfaction for sin, in order to the sinner's restoration to favour. It was to him as a Judge that reconciliation was made for iniquity by the sacrifice of Christ. And it is in the same

* Col. i. 20.

character that he absolves the sinner from guilt, and receives him into favour on the ground of that sacrifice. As a gracious Sovereign, however, it was with him that the plan of reconciliation originated:—and it is by him in that character it is carried into effect through the mediation of his own Son. As a Sovereign he found out the ransom by which the claims of justice are satisfied, in the appointment and mission of Christ to be the propitiation for our sins: and it is as a Sovereign that he applies the reconciliation, by imputing the righteousness of the Surety to the sinner, on the ground of which, as a Judge, he absolves him from condemnation and restores him to favour. This accounts for his being described in Scripture, as the party *reconciling*; while it is to *Him* the satisfaction is given by which the reconciliation is brought about. “ And all things are of God 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 *.”

We shall only add, that, in the expres language of Scripture, God is said to be *pacified* towards sinners, and this involves all that is included in reconciliation. “ That thou
 “ mayest remember and be confounded, and
 “ never open thy mouth any more because of
 “ thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee,
 “ for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord
 “ God †.” We are aware that it has also been denied that this word is applicable to God. We are told that the passage may be read, When I have prepared a covering for thee. But this translation comes to the same thing; for reconciliation, as it respects God, consists in his judicial displeasure being turned away from sinners, by their guilt being covered or cancelled by the atoning blood of Christ.

Fourthly, The only remaining objection to the application of the term reconciliation to God, which we can at present recollect, arises from the time when, in some passages

* 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.

† Ezek. xvi. 63.

of Scripture, it is said to be effected.—It may be supposed that if reconciliation had referred to the turning away of God's judicial displeasure, it would have been limited to the period of our Lord's death, when he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; which is not the case. To remove this difficulty, we need only attend to the obvious distinction between the making of reconciliation and its application. Reconciliation is made by removing the ground of quarrel, by means of satisfaction. This was done, completely done by Christ at his death. He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. He punished transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness.—This he accomplished, once for all, not only for those who had lived under the former economy, but also for those who should be brought forth, and live in different and distant ages. This reconciliation, therefore, needs to be applied to them, individually, for whom it was made; in order to their enjoying the benefit of it. This is done in their justification. Prior to this change of their state before God, they are in their sins,

under condemnation, and children of wrath even as others. But when God imputes righteousness without works, or reckons the righteousness of the Surety to them, they become the righteousness of God in him; and on this ground, and simply on this ground, they are absolved from condemnation, and introduced into a state of peace with God.—This peace is realised in the heart and conscience by faith, as it improves the righteousness of Christ as the alone ground of our justification before God.—It is to the application of reconciliation that the Apostle refers, when he mentions it as consisting in pardon: “To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*.” And also when he connects peace with justifying faith: “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ†.”

Having offered these remarks for removing difficulties, we now proceed to state a few arguments in support of reconciliation on the part of God as already explained.

* 2 Cor. v. 19.

† Rom. v. 1.

First, It appears from the state of sinners before God prior to their interest in Christ, compared with their condition posterior to it. Sinners, as such, are every where represented as the objects of God's judicial displeasure or wrath. "God is angry with the wicked every day *." The foolish shall not stand in his "sight"—he "hateth all the workers of iniquity †." But this is the condition of God's elect, as well as of the rest of mankind, considered as in their sins. "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind. And were by nature the children of *wrath* even as others ‡." Compare this with their state when justified through the redemption which is in Christ. "They have *peace* with God §. They are freed from condemnation ||. They are *accepted* in the Beloved ¶." But to what does this change amount? Most certainly to reconciliation on the part of God, or the turning away of his judicial displeasure from the

* Ps. vii. 11.

§ Rom. v. 1.

† Ps. v. 5.

|| Rom. viii. 1.

‡ Eph. ii. 3.

¶ Eph. i. 6.

sinner. It is not a change of heart or disposition produced in the sinner, but the change of his state before God in the character of a Judge: reconciliation must therefore respect God in that character

Secondly, It appears from the character in which Christ acted when he made the reconciliation, which is carried into effect with regard to the sinner in his justification. The making of reconciliation, as we have seen already, lies in the removal of the ground of quarrel by satisfaction. But in the present case, this is invariably ascribed to Christ as a Priest. Sin is the ground of the quarrel between God and his fallen creatures; but Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and thereby made reconciliation for all those for whom he shed his precious blood. But *to whom* did he make this reconciliation? Not, certainly, *to the sinner*, but *to God*. God had done sinners no wrong, they had no just claim against God, the offence was wholly on their part; it was therefore from them that satisfaction was due, and this satisfaction Christ gave to Divine justice as our Surety when he offered up himself. Besides, this was done by Christ in the character

of a Priest; but his sacerdotal functions, though exercised for man, have God for their object. He is a High-Priest for men in things pertaining to God. It was to God He offered his sacrifice, it is with God he intercedes; it must therefore have been to God he made reconciliation for iniquity. God must therefore be the party whose displeasure is turned away in all cases where reconciliation is said to be effected by the sacrifice of Christ. Reconciliation, as it respects the removal of the sinner's enmity against God, though connected with his sacrifice, is more immediately the effect of his power as a king. It is referred accordingly in Scripture, not to his oblation on Calvary, but to his administration from the throne of the heavens. "The Lord said unto my lord, " sit thou at my right hand, &c.—The Lord " shall send the rod of thy strength out of " Zion, rule thou in the midst of thine ene- " mies. Thy people shall be *willing* in the day " of thy power, &c *."

Thirdly, This also appears from the reconciliation of which we are speaking being represented as actually made, when Christ shed

* Ps. cx. 1, 2, 5.

his blood on Calvary, and that, too, when those for whom he died were yet sinners. The application of this reconciliation on the part of God to the sinner, as we have already seen, takes place only when he is brought into a justified state; but the making of it by satisfaction was completed at once, when Christ suffered without the gates of Jerusalem. It cannot therefore respect a change of disposition in the sinner, but the removal of God's judicial displeasure by satisfaction for sin. In this sense it must be understood when the Apostle tells us, "Wherefore in all things
 " it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and
 " faithful High-Priest, in things pertaining
 " to God, to make *reconciliation* for the sins
 " of the people *." And likewise when he says,
 " We also joy in God, through our Lord
 " Jesus Christ, by whom we have *now* received
 " the *reconciliation* †." This also must be the reconciliation foretold in ancient Prophecy, which was to be made at the end of seventy prophetic weeks. "Seventy weeks are de-

* ἰλατκεσθαι Heb. ii. 17. † καταλλαγην Rom. v. 11.

“terminated upon thy people, and upon thy
 “holy city, to finish the transgression, and
 “to make an end of sins, and to make recon-
 “ciliation for iniquity*,” &c. Moreover,
 this reconciliation was made while we were
 yet sinners, it cannot therefore respect a
 change of heart in the sinner, since this
 change upon an enemy makes him a friend. In
 fine, this reconciliation is distinguished from
 salvation; but that reconciliation which lies
 in a change of the sinner’s heart with reference
 to God and his law, is one principal part of
 salvation: it cannot therefore, with any pro-
 priety, be distinguished from it. “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 †.” We must therefore conclude, that
 the reconciliation made by the death of Christ
 respects God, and that it regards the turning
 away of his judicial displeasure by a true and
 proper satisfaction for sin.

Fourthly, Reconciliation by the death of
 Christ, as it respects God in the character of

* Dan. ix. 24.

† Rom. v. 10.

an offended Judge, may also be confirmed and illustrated by its type in the earthly sanctuary. The word atonement, as used in the Old Testament with respect to the Levitical sacrifices, exactly corresponds to the term reconciliation, as used in the New with reference to the death of Christ. But atonement by the blood of the former respected the throne or administration of God as a Judge in the earthly sanctuary. The blood of the sacrifice of atonement was carried within the vail, and sprinkled on the mercy-seat; and, by this rite, atonement is said to have been made for the holy place*. In like manner, by performing this rite, the priest is said to have reconciled the holy place †. All this was intended to point out the reference which the atonement had to God as the means of turning away his judicial displeasure, to make room for the manifestation of his sovereign mercy towards his fallen creatures. But the mercy-seat was only a figure of God's throne in heaven, from which he dispenses pardon to guilty men; and its reconciliation by the blood of bulls and of

* Lev xvi 15, 16.

† Verse 20.

goats, a type of the great *reconciliation* by the blood of Christ, as it respects God as a Judge in the heavenly sanctuary. “ It was 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 Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us*.” Reconciliation by the blood of Christ, therefore, regards God, viewed as dispensing pardon to sinners from the throne of the heavens, in a way exactly corresponding to that in which atonement respected him as manifesting himself as gracious to them, by the symbol of his presence in the earthly sanctuary. The word translated *atonement*, signifies *covering*. The blood of the legal sacrifice, as sprinkled on the people, pointed out its efficacy for protecting them from vengeance. But as the sinner could only be protected in the way of the honour of the law being supported; the atonement was

* Heb. ix. 25, 24.

extended to the book of the law, when the first covenant was dedicated, and afterwards to the mercy-seat which was above upon the ark which contained it. This served to shew, that all the claims of the law were satisfied, and its honours vindicated, while mercy was extended to guilty men. But what this was in type, reconciliation by the blood of Christ is in substance. The wrath of God is revealed from his throne in heaven against our race viewed as fallen in Adam : but through Christ peace is proclaimed to them from the same throne ; and the blood of Christ is the means of this favourable change of divine administration towards them, which is called reconciliation, as it put away sin, the cause of God's judicial displeasure.

We now proceed to consider reconciliation as it respects the sinner, or denotes a change of his heart and disposition towards God and his laws.—Reconciliation, as it respects God, paves the way for the reconciliation of the sinner. As under the law the book of the covenant was first sprinkled and then the people ; or the mercy-seat and then the altar : so our Lord's entrance into heaven with his

own blood, paved the way for the sprinkling of the nations by the application of the efficacy of the atonement to their consciences, to purge them from dead works to the service of the living God. This is to be distinguished, however, from the application of reconciliation as it respects God in conferring pardon on the sinner. That only changes his state before God in the character of a Judge. The change now to be considered is a change of heart or disposition produced in the sinner towards God and his law—a change from enmity to love. It is to be considered at the same time as the effect of divine power in regeneration, and as produced by the moral influence of the atonement in conversion.

First, Let us attend to it as the effect of divine power in regeneration. Man, in his natural state, is dead in trespasses and sins, and to every good work reprobate. But in regeneration the stony heart is taken out of his flesh, and God gives him an heart of flesh. This is a change produced by divine power. “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works *.” “It is God who

* Eph. ii. 10.

“worketh in you both to will and to do of his
 “good pleasure*.”—The exercise of this
 power, however, has an express reference
 to the atonement. That supernatural influ-
 ence which changes the sinner’s heart, and of
 an enemy and a rebel against God, makes
 him a friend and an obedient subject, flows
 in the channel of Christ’s righteousness.
 “Not by works of righteousness which we
 “have done, but according to his mercy he
 “saved us, by the washing of regeneration,
 “and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;
 “which he *shed* on us abundantly *through*
 “Jesus Christ our Saviour †.”

Secondly, We may now attend to it as pro-
 duced, in conversion, by the moral influence
 of the atonement. Conversion, as well as re-
 generation, is the work of God. The same
 divine power necessary for renewing the
 faculties of the mind, is necessary to draw
 them forth to exercise in turning from sin to
 the service of the living God. But, as the
 sinner becomes active in conversion, so he is
 influenced by motives, in a way corresponding

* Phil. ii. 13.

† Tit. iii. 5, 6.

to his rational nature ; and these motives are connected, inseparably connected, with the atonement.—Formerly his heart was enmity against God, but now he loves God with a supreme love ; and this change of disposition arises from a believing improvement of God’s love to sinners of our race, as displayed in the mission of his own Son to be the Saviour of the world. “ We love him because he first loved “ us *.” Formerly the enmity of the sinner against God was fostered by guilt in the conscience ; so that all his attempts to serve God proceeded, not from love to him as a Father, but from the dread of his avenging wrath. But the faith of pardon through the atoning blood of Christ at once pacifies and purges the conscience from dead works. “ How much more “ shall the blood of Christ, who through the eter- “ nal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, “ purge your conscience from dead works to “ serve the living God †.” Formerly he lived to himself ;—the honour of God constituted no part of the end of his conduct. But now the amazing love of God in sending his Son to be

* 1 John iv. 19.

† Heb ix. 14.

the propitiation for our sins, and the love of Christ in giving his life a ransom for many, fill his heart with the most lively sentiments of gratitude, and powerfully incline him to live no longer to himself, but to him who died and rose again.—This is reconciliation as it respects the sinner—that reconciliation which is without doubt inculcated in the pathetic address of Paul to the Corinthians. “Now
“then we are ambassadors for Christ, as
“though God did beseech you by us; we
“pray you in Christ’s stead be ye reconciled
“to God*.”

* 2 Cor. v. 20.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

PART SECOND.

ON THE NATURE AND TRUTH OF THE
ATONEMENT OF CHRIST.

THE Necessity of an Atonement for sin, in order to its remission, has been evinced by several arguments in the preceding part of this Treatise. It is now proposed to consider the origin of the Atonement revealed in the gospel, its nature, and the manner in which it has been carried into effect.

To atone for transgression was not in the power of sinners themselves. No man can redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him. The redemption of the soul is precious, and would have ceased for ever, had it depended on the wisdom or power of any creature. The discoveries made by man in natural science are truly astonishing ; but how God should be glorified, and sinners saved, is a discovery which far exceeds his powers.

These were exerted for ages to no effect. The most barbarous nations under heaven have manifested a conviction of the necessity of an atonement for sin; and the thinking part of mankind, in every nation, have, though in vain, exerted their powers to discover an adequate means for its accomplishment. But after all their researches, the question remains unsolved in every region of the globe where the gospel is unknown. “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul *?”

The doctrine of the atonement by the death of Christ is wholly supernatural. As God found out this knowledge of witty invention, so it is to the inspiration of the Almighty that we are indebted for all that we know of its nature and results: As it is written, “Eye hath

* Micah. vi. 6, 7.

“ not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered
 “ into the heart of man, the things which God
 “ hath prepared for them that love him. But
 “ God hath revealed them unto us by his
 “ Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things,
 “ yea, the deep things of God*.” In the
 gospel, “ God hath set forth” his Son Christ
 Jesus, “ a propitiation through faith in his
 “ blood; to declare his righteousness for the
 “ remission of sins that are past through the
 “ forbearance of God: To declare, I say, at
 “ this time, his righteousness, that he might
 “ be just, and the Justifier of him who believ-
 “ eth in Jesus †.” We now proceed to in-
 quire into the essential properties of an atone-
 ment for sin; and to shew that all these are
 included in our Lord’s obedience unto death,
 as the Surety of the church.

In the prosecution of this part of our sub-
 ject, the first thing that comes under our con-
 sideration is the doctrine of substitution. The
 idea of atonement by substitution has prevailed
 wherever the rite of animal sacrifice has been
 observed; and, as the latter has been practised

* 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

† Rom, iii. 25, 26.

among all nations, so the former has been discarded by no class of men under heaven, except the avowed enemies of the cross of Christ. This opinion must have been coeval with the law of sacrifice, since it is involved in the very design of its institution. It is obvious, from the Mosaic history, that the rite of sacrifice, as a part of religious worship, obtained as early as the days of Abel. That this rite does not belong to moral-natural worship, all will admit; it must, therefore, have had, even at this early period, a divine sanction, as a rite of instituted worship. God will approve and accept of those religious observances only which have the sanction of his authority; but he had a respect to Abel, and to his offering: it must therefore have been presented in obedience to his express commandment*. It is no less evident, that Abel viewed his offering as slain by substitution, to prefigure the vicarious death of the Seed promised to his parents in paradise; for he offered his sacrifice in faith; and his faith, without doubt, had a respect to the mediation of Christ, as the

* Gen. iv. 4.

alone ground of the acceptance of his person and services with God. Had this not been the case, the example of Abel had been brought forward by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, for illustrating the efficacy of faith in Christ, to no purpose. “ By faith
 “ Abel offered unto God a more excellent
 “ sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained
 “ witness that he was righteous; God testify-
 “ ing of his gifts, and by it he being dead yet
 “ speaketh *.”

The universal practice of offering sacrifice in the heathen world, was, without doubt, the result of this original Divine appointment. The Gentiles soon lost sight of the proper object of worship, and the instituted meaning of the rite of sacrifice, or its typical reference to the death of Christ; but the constant challenges of a guilty conscience, kept alive among them the idea of expiation for sin by a vicarious sacrifice. It was under the impression that offended Deity might be pleased with a vicarious sacrifice, as an atonement for their crimes, that they conducted their numerous victims to the altars of their gods.

* Heb. xi. 4.

The whole system of sacrificial rites, under the economy of Moses, proceeded upon the principle of atonement by substitution. It was merely the original law of sacrifice upon a larger scale, directing the views of the worshippers forward to the same object ; namely, the vicarious death of the Son of God in human nature. The Paschal Lamb was a sacrifice for sin, and slain as a substitute for the first-born of Israel, as appears from its blood being the appointed means of their deliverance from the destroying angel. The sacrifice offered for sin on the great day of atonement, was also of vicarious import. This appears from the emblematical transference of the guilt of all the people, by the laying on of the hands of the priest, to the scape-goat, and from the blood of the other goat being actually shed for the specified purpose of making atonement for the whole congregation. The figure was double, the more effectually to represent the nature and efficacy of the death of Christ. The one goat was slain, to shew that Jesus was to expiate sin by the shedding of his blood ; the other, with the load of atoned guilt, was sent by the hand of

a stranger into the wilderness, to point out the efficacy of his death, for cancelling and bearing away the sins of his people; so that they should never more be brought against them in judgment*. All the sin-offerings, and trespass-offerings, under that dispensation, were slain in sacrifice instead of the guilty. They all died as substitutes, or under the load of imputed guilt.

But, to what purpose was all the waste of animal life, for such it really was, unless we admit that the rite of sacrifice was appointed for the express purpose of typifying the substitution and death of the Son of God in human nature, in the room of guilty men? The typical relation of these sacrifices to the death of Christ, is frequently marked in the inspired volume. To shew that Christ was the anti-type of the Paschal Lamb, the Baptist pointed him out to his disciples by that designation; “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world †.” To the same purpose we are told, that we “were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, from our vain conversation received

* Lev. xvi. 5—26.

† John i. 29.

“ by tradition from our fathers, but with the
 “ precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb with-
 “ out blemish and without spot*.” That
 He is the antitype of all the sin-offerings and
 trespass-offerings under the law, appears from
 their names, when devoted to be slain in sacri-
 fice, being transferred to him. Thus we are
 told, that he was made sin for us: “ For He
 “ hath made him to be sin for us, who knew
 “ no sin; that we might be made the righte-
 “ ousness of God in him †.” Also, that He
 was made a curse for us: “ Christ hath re-
 “ deemed us from the curse of the law, being
 “ made a curse for us ‡.” These animals are
 said to have borne the sin or iniquity of those
 in whose stead they were substituted, as they
 endured, in figure, its penal consequences, by
 a violent death. “ Wherefore have ye not
 “ eaten the sin-offering in the holy place,
 “ seeing it is most holy, and God hath given
 “ it to you to *bear* the iniquity of the con-
 “ gregation, to make atonement for them
 “ before the Lord §.” The same word is used
 in the original, with reference to the suf-

* 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

† Gal. iii. 13.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 21.

§ Lev. x. 17.

ferings and death of Christ, to denote, that He, as the antitype of the sin-offering, died under the load of imputed guilt, or in the way of enduring its penal consequences: “ Surely He hath *borne* our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” Therefore, will I 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; and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He *bare* the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors*.” A similar expression is used by the Apostle Peter, to denote, that the death of Christ was penal and vicarious. “ Who his ownself *bare* our sins in his own body, on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed †.”

In fine, the substitution of Christ in the room of the guilty, and the vicarious nature of his death, are asserted in passages almost innumerable throughout the New Testament.

* Isa. liii. 4, 12.

† 1 Pet. ii. 24.

“ He gave his life a ransom for many *.”
 “ He was once offered to bear the sins of
 “ many †.” “ He suffered for sin, the just
 “ for the unjust ‡.” “ He, by himself, purged
 “ our sins §.” “ He was delivered for our
 “ offences ||.” “ He gave himself for us, an
 “ offering and a sacrifice to God ¶.” “ His
 “ blood was shed for the remission of sins **.”

Thus far, we have considered it proper to state the doctrine of our Lord's substitution from Scripture; but the consistency of the doctrine, with the view we have given of the necessity of punishment in the case of transgression, is the point to which we mean, more particularly, to turn the attention of our readers.

We admit, that punishment by substitution, is not according to the ordinary course of justice, or the precise letter of the divine law, which awards indignation and wrath to the soul that doth evil. But if it be found that it is a plan by which the ends of justice are more effectually gained, and the moral purposes of

* Mat. xx. 28.

† Heb. ix. 28.

‡ 1 Pet. iii. 18.

§ Heb. i. 5.

|| Rom. iv. 25.

¶ Eph. v. 2.

** Mat. xxvi. 28.

the sanction of the law more effectually secured, than they could possibly have been by the personal punishment of transgressors; then it will appear, that it is a plan not only consistent with the untainted holiness, unspotted righteousness, and immutable truth of God, but also declarative of his unsearchable wisdom.

1st, That this is the case will appear, if we attend to the moral ends of punishment, whether considered as only denounced in the penal sentence of the law, or as actually inflicted upon transgressors.

The design of a penal sentence as annexed to the divine law, may be considered, *First*, As it regards the Lawgiver himself. The moral law is a transcript of God's moral perfections—a mirror in which we contemplate him in the beauties of holiness. The penal sentence of the law, is an expression of his supreme delight in his own rectitude, and his determinate purpose to vindicate its honour, when insulted, by the condign punishment of transgression. *Secondly*, It may be viewed as it regards the subjects of the law. In this case, it has for its end to deter men from sin-

ning, and not their punishment; for the power of the Lawgiver was sufficient to have secured this, independently of any such threatening. The threatenings of the law, without doubt, hold out to the subjects of the Divine government, what will be the fatal consequences of transgression; but what we assert is, that the immediate end of their denunciation is not punishment, but the prevention of it, by deterring men from sinning, and consequently, from incurring the punishment due to transgression, “ God does not threaten, (says a celebrated divine), that men may sin and be punished; but that they may not sin, and so escape the punishment threatened; and therefore, the higher the threatening runs, so much the more mercy and goodness there is in it; because it is so much the more likely to hinder men from incurring the penalty threatened *.”

This being the direct and immediate end of Divine threatenings, let us advert to what has been advanced in the former part of this Dissertation, concerning the moral end of punishment †. It was there shewn, that the execu-

* Tillotson's Sermons.

† See page 42, 43.

tion of the penalty of the law upon transgressors, has not for its end their destruction, but the vindication of the honour of the law, and the moral character and administration of the Lawgiver. Had the penalty of the law as threatened, had for its end the punishment of the subjects of the Divine government, or as inflicted, the destruction of the sinner; then its design could not have been followed out, or the end of justice gained, but by the personal punishment of transgressors. But since this is the end of neither, and since the supreme end of both, is the vindication of God's honour; atonement by substitution, is fully adequate to its accomplishment, and, consequently, consistent with the holiness, justice, and veracity of God.

2dly, If it be found that the ends of punishment are more effectually gained by the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, than they could have been by the personal punishment of transgressors; then this plan will appear, not only consistent with the holiness and justice of God, but also eminently illustrative of his boundless wisdom.

It has been already admitted, that the punishment of sin by a vicarious sacrifice, is a deviation from the ordinary course of justice. That such a deviation is worthy of God, when it tends to secure more effectually the moral ends of punishment, may be vindicated from analogy. A miracle is a deviation from the ordinary laws of the Divine government in the natural world ; but such a deviation indicates, not only the power, but also the wisdom of the Supreme Governor of the universe, when made subservient to the more full illustration of his glory. A corresponding end is gained by this miracle in the moral system. For,

First, By the substitution, and vicarious death of the Son of God, the supreme end of judicial infliction, namely, the vindication of God's honour, is more effectually promoted, than it could possibly have been by the personal punishment of transgressors.

Is one end of judicial infliction the vindication of God's holiness ? This end is more effectually promoted by the death of Christ, than it could have been by the eternal destruction of the whole of our fallen race. Nothing short of

punishment infinite in kind, or in degree, can afford a full expression of God's hatred of sin ; and of such punishment, the wicked themselves are utterly incapable, from the limited nature of their powers. But in the death of Christ, we have an adequate expression of God's supreme delight in holiness, and his irreconcilable aversion to moral evil. He must have an infinite delight in rectitude, and an infinite hatred of sin, since, when our iniquities were laid upon Christ, though his Son, his only begotten Son, his beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased, He spared him not. " God " *spared* not his own Son *." " It *pleased* " the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to " grief †." For a similar reason, the personal punishment of the wicked can, in no limited period of duration, fully display the glory, or vindicate the injured honours of Divine justice. Sin, as we shall presently see, is a violation of infinite obligation ; it must, therefore, be an evil of infinite demerit. But such a crime, the sufferings of no creature can expiate in any period of duration. Justice will

* Rom. viii. 32.

† Isa. liii. 10.

be prosecuting its righteous claims upon fallen angels, and reprobate men, while eternal ages revolve: but at no assignable period will these claims be satisfied, or their debt paid. By the death of Christ, however, the claims of justice are fully satisfied, and the law not only fulfilled, but also magnified and made honourable. If, in this case, we take into the account the dignity of the sufferer, the punishment was fully adequate to the offence. The same observation applies to Divine veracity, as pledged in the sanction of the law. In the case of wicked men, and fallen angels, God will be eternally executing the penal sentence of his holy law, but at no assignable period will that sentence be fully executed; and, consequently, at no period will complete reparation be made by their sufferings to the insulted honours of Divine truth. But this is completely effected by the death of Christ. Upon him the penal sentence of the law has taken full effect. He drank the cup of suffering which it awards to transgression, and wrung out the bitter dregs thereof.

Secondly, All the subordinate ends of punishment are also more effectually promoted by the

vicarious death of Christ, than they otherwise could have been.

One end of punishment, as it respects society, is to deter others from the commission of those crimes which subject to it, and to promote their attachment to rectitude and social order. And the more striking the display which the examples of judicial infliction afford of the energy and purity of the law, and the justice of the government, the greater their tendency to promote these ends. But the whole of the Divine procedure in punishing moral evil in the persons of transgressors, whether human or angelic, in time and eternity, will fall infinitely short of affording such a display of the exceeding evil of sin, and the spotless holiness and untainted righteousness of God, as that which is exhibited to the view of the moral creation in the death of Christ. By his death, therefore, as a Surety, this end of penal infliction is more effectually promoted, than it could have been, had the whole of our fallen family been subjected to eternal punishment in their own persons.

Another end of punishment, as it respects society, is the protection of the upright and

orderly part of the community. In other cases, this end can seldom, if ever, be gained by vicarious punishment. Though a righteous man were to die in the room of his wicked neighbour, who had forfeited his life to the injured laws of his country,—his death would give no security to society against future injury, and that, too, from the same person, as long as the malefactor survived. Unless his dispositions were changed, society would still be exposed to new injuries from him. But the moral world has ample security against future injury from those for whom Christ died; since He did not shed his blood for them that they may sin with impunity, but that He might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*. From these remarks, it is evident, that all the moral ends of punishment are more effectually promoted by the vicarious death of Christ, than they could have been by the personal punishment of transgressors; and consequently, the plan of substitution must be worthy of God, not

* Tit. ii. 14.

only as a holy, but also as an infinitely wise, Being.

3dly, The wisdom of this plan will farther appear, if we consider that thereby provision is made for a more full discovery of the glory of the Divine character, and, at the same time, for a greater accession of good to the rational creation.

Had the whole of our fallen race been left to perish, like the angels who kept not their first estate, there would have been no room for the manifestation of God's special mercy. This attribute of Deity, which now diffuses such a glorious lustre over the Divine character, and which swells the notes of holy angels and the redeemed from among men, could have had no place in his moral administration, had satisfaction not been made for sin by the vicarious death of the Son of God in our nature. Grace reigns, but then it reigns, and only could reign, through righteousness, in the salvation of sinners *. Mercy goes in glorious procession before God's face; but it emanates from a throne sprinkled with the blood of an

* Rom. v. 21.

atonement sacrifice. “ Justice and judgment
 “ are the habitation of thy throne; mercy
 “ and truth shall go before thy face *.” “ He
 “ is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver
 “ him from going down to the pit; I have
 “ found a ransom †.” In the salvation of
 sinners through the mediation of Christ,
 “ Mercy and truth are met together: righte-
 “ ousness and peace have embraced each
 “ other ‡.”

The beneficial results of the death of Christ to the human race, must be obvious to all who believe the doctrines of Scripture. He came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. The personal punishment of transgressors is utterly incompatible with their salvation. Had atonement by substitution not been devised and carried into effect, our whole family must have sunk into eternal perdition; and one species of rational beings must have been forever cut off from the society of the blessed, and consigned to the regions of endless misery

* Psal. lxxxix. 14.

† Job xxxiii. 24.

‡ Psal. lxxxv. 10, 11.

and despair. But, by means of this wonderful device, God is glorified, and a great company of the human race, which no man can number, are saved with an everlasting salvation. Satan is spoiled of his captives—hell of its victims, and heaven is replenished with the ransomed throng, who, associated with holy angels, serve God day and night in his temple.

But the human race do not constitute the only species of rational beings who have derived advantage from the death of Christ. He shed his blood for the redemption of men only, but the advantages resulting from his death are not confined to the human race. We have already noticed the benefit resulting to the moral creation in general from the death of Christ, so far as it regards protection and example. By his death, and the development of the scheme of man's salvation connected with it, they have acquired more knowledge, and consequently, more intellectual enjoyment, than from the contemplation of all the other works of God. Hence the angels, as represented by the cherubim above the mercy-seat, had their eyes inward, and fixed upon that symbol of the atonement.

To the same purpose we are told, that these celestial spirits desire to look or pry into what relates to the redemption of the church. “Which things the angels desire to look into *.” It is for this reason that they strike in, and join with the ransomed about the throne, in celebrating the praises of the Redeemer. They cannot join with them in saying, “Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood †:” but still they make the death of Christ the burden of their song, as it is the grand medium through which they have attained, as students of Divine mysteries, to a great proportion of their knowledge of the nature, persons, and perfections of that God-head whom they adore. It is for the same reason that they delight in ministering to the saints on earth, and mingling in their assemblies; for in these they are constantly receiving additional discoveries of the rich mercy, and boundless wisdom of their Creator. “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created

* 1 Pet. i. 12.

† Rev. v. 9.

“ all things by Jesus Christ. To the intent
 “ that now unto the principalities and powers,
 “ in heavenly places, might be known by the
 “ church the manifold wisdom of God *.”
 From these hints, it must be evident, that
 through atonement for sin, by the vicarious
 death of the Son of God, there is at the same
 time a more full discovery of the glory of the
 Divine character, and a greater accession of
 good to the rational creation, than if the
 whole of our race had been subjected to punish-
 ment for their own sins. The plan of substi-
 tution must, therefore, be worthy of God as an
 infinitely good and infinitely wise Being.

4thly, The equity, as well as the wisdom, of
 this plan, will further appear, if we consider,
 that no injury ultimately results to any one
 from its execution. No injury ultimately re-
 sults to the Son of God, by whom the atone-
 ment is made. It would have been inconsis-
 tent with the justice of God, to have laid
 such an appointment upon his own Son, with-
 out his consent; and with his goodness, had
 the fulfilment of that appointment been to

* Eph. iii. 9, 10.

issue in his own ruin, or the ultimate destruction of his human nature. But none of these obstructions stood in the way of this wonderful plan, either in design or in execution. His constitution from eternity, as the Surety of the church, was not more the result of his Father's appointment, than of his own choice and undertaking. The redemption of the church, so far from being a task imposed upon him against his will, was contemplated by him in purpose with great delight. It is in relation to this appointment that He says, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was *." And it is, as thus set up, that he adds, "Then I was by him as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him. Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men †." This appointment was the object of his delight, not only in design, but also in execution. Hence, in the immediate prospect

* Prov. viii. 22, 25.

† Verses 30, 31.

of entering upon the work which the Father had given him to do, He said, “Lo I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me; I delight to do thy will, O my God! Yea, thy law is within my heart*.” And when actually engaged in it, we find him declaring, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work †.”

It would also have been inconsistent, not only with the justice, but also with the goodness of God, to have exacted from him the punishment of our iniquities, had it been to issue in his own ruin. But this was so far from being the case, that the work given him to do, was to redound to his honour, and to issue in the glorious exaltation of that nature in which he was to suffer. “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour ‡.” It is from the accomplishment of this arduous undertaking, in the character of a servant, as it tends to illustrate his distinct personality, and supreme Deity, as the Son of God, that He receives an eter-

* Psal. xl. 7, 8.

† John iv. 34.

‡ Heb. ii. 9.

nal revenue of praise from the grateful redeemed from among men, and from the admiring angels who surround God's eternal throne. "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. 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 *." "And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures, and four and twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the four living creatures,

* Phil. ii. 8, 9, 10, 11.

“ and the elders; and the number of them
 “ was ten thousand times ten thousand, and
 “ thousands of thousands; saying with a loud
 “ voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,
 “ to receive power, and riches, and wisdom,
 “ and strength, and honour, and glory, and
 “ blessing *.”

As no injury was done to the Son of God by his Father in the appointment to his office and work of redeeming the church, so the Son himself, in his eternal undertaking, and its accomplishment in time in our nature, did not violate any prior obligations. Considered as God, he had a supreme right to engage to redeem the church. Viewed as incarnate, he accomplished his eternal undertaking by his obedience unto death, in the character of a Surety, without violating any prior obligations of his own. As man he was never under the law for himself, since his human nature never subsisted by itself, but from its first formation was united to his divine person. He obeyed the law, therefore, for others as a Surety; without neglecting any duties, or violating

* Rev. v. 8, 9—11, 12.

any obligations that he was under for himself. Besides, he was supreme Lord of his own life; for though the Father, according to eternal compact, prepared him a body or human nature, that human nature became his own by the act of assumption; he had therefore an undoubted right to lay it down for the redemption of his people.

5thly, The equity and consistency of this plan of substitution will appear further, if we take into account, the divinely constituted relation between Christ and those for whom he shed his blood to expiate their sins.

The substitution of Christ in the room of the guilty, to make satisfaction for their sin, is an act of sovereign mercy. It is our business, in the present argument, to point out the consistency of this act of divine sovereignty with the veracity of God, as pledged in the penal sentence of the law, which awards condign punishment to transgressors. Though the law, as we have noticed already, admits of an innocent substitute, as the subject of judicial infliction in the room of the guilty; as all the moral ends of punishment may be thereby more effectually promoted; yet, this substitu-

tion must be accomplished, so as to preserve in view the moral relation pointed out, by the sanction of the law, between sin and punishment. In order to this, the substitute must be so connected with those in whose stead he is to endure the penalty of the law, as, in a legal and federal sense, to be regarded as one with them.—The Son of God was so connected, by a divine constitution, with those whom he came to redeem.

First, In the eternal covenant. In that federal transaction, God, in the person of the Father, and in the character of the representative of Deity in the economy of grace, laid the help of the elect from among men upon his own Son, pre-ordaining him to endure in human nature, all the penal consequences of their iniquities, and to fulfil all righteousness in their stead. This appointment the Son engaged to fulfil: “He said, Lo, I come, in
“the volume of the book it is written of me,
“to do thy will, O God.” By his Father’s appointment, and his own engagement, a federal connection was thus formed between Christ and his people, which laid the foundation of all that intercommunity of relation.

ship, obligations, and benefits, which subsists between him and them in time. They were by this eternal transaction constituted one with him in federal representation. As he took upon himself their legal obligations, so they received in him all the blessings and benefits which were to result from the fulfilment of these obligations. Hence, the promises of that covenant are said to have been made to them in him before the world was: “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began*.” In like manner, they are said, in that eternal transaction, to have received grace in him. “Who hath saved us, and called us with an 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 †.”

Secondly, In consequence of this federal union, the moment that he became incarnate, he was identified with them in law. All the obligations they were under to the law, as a broken law, and violated covenant, were

* Tit. i. 2.

† 2 Tim. i. 9.

transferred to him, and exacted of him, as their Surety. He had all their guilt laid upon him; that is, he was subjected to all the penal consequences of their sin to procure its remission. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*.” He was also made under the precept of the law, that he might fulfil it in their stead, as the condition of their eternal happiness. “When the fulness of the 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 †.”

Thirdly, He became one with them in nature. That federal union formed between Christ and those for whom he was to lay down his life, which we have already considered, laid a sufficient foundation for a change of person as the subject of judicial infliction, so as to answer all the moral purposes of punishment. But still we may discern a fitness, and consequently, a moral necessity, that the nature which had sinned should suffer the

* Gal. iii. 13.

† Gal. iv. 4.

punishment due to sin. And that the price of redemption should be paid in the nature of those who were to be redeemed. This is necessary, fully to preserve in view the moral connection established, in the sanction of the law, between punishment and crime; and consequently, for preserving inviolate the veracity of God pledged in that sanction. We are accordingly taught in Scripture, that our Lord assumed human nature, and in that nature fulfilled all the claims of the law; and also, that it was expedient or becoming that he should do so. “For, both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. For, verily, he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore, in all things, it *behoved* him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-Priest in things pertaining to God; to make reconciliation for the sins of the people*.” These remarks serve to illustrate the consistency of our Lord’s

* Heb. ii. 11, 16, 17.

substitution in the room of the guilty, with the veracity of God pledged in the sanction of the law ; since, by the constituted unity of Christ, with those for whom he died, in federal establishment, in legal exaction, and in nature, through his death though vicarious, the moral connection which the sanction of the law establishes between punishment and crime is maintained, and Divine veracity preserved inviolate.

Some may still insist, that the Scriptures militate against this doctrine, for they expressly assert, The soul that sinneth shall die : Every one shall die for his own iniquity. “ Behold all souls are mine, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine ; “ the soul that sinneth it shall die *.” To see the design of this pointed declaration, and the whole of the subsequent context, we must attend to the false hypothesis which the Spirit of God brings it forward to refute. The Jews at this time were subjected to heavy judicial inflictions on account of their sins. But, instead of acknowledging their personal

* Ezek. xviii. 4.

iniquities, they considered the sins of their fathers as the cause of all their sufferings, and arraigned the conduct of God as unjust, in punishing them for the sins of their ancestors. This is the meaning of the proverb used by them, verse 2. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." In refutation of this false conclusion, and to convince them of their personal iniquities, God proceeds to shew what he invariably does in dealing with a people in the ordinary course of justice. He subjects the soul that sinneth to personal punishment. But this has no reference to the question before us, as it does not regard a dispensation of Divine sovereignty. It was Divine equity only that was accused, and the defence is only a defence of God's equity in the distribution of punishment in the usual course of justice. Nor does it militate against what is asserted in the second commandment; for God only visits the iniquities of the fathers upon their children, when the children make them their own, by a practical approbation of them in following the same evil courses.

Finally, It has been admitted that the penal sanction of the law awards punishment to transgressors; and that, in the ordinary course of retributive justice, the soul that sinneth must die. But it is positively denied that God does, in any sanction annexed to his law, bind himself up from exercising sovereign mercy, by admitting a substitute to satisfy the claims of justice, that sin may be expiated, and the sinner saved; those threatenings excepted which regard persons who finally reject the atonement of Christ. For such, we are assured, “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins: But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries *.”

We now proceed to shew more particularly, that all that is necessary to a true and proper atonement for sin, belongs to the death of Christ, as the Surety of the church.

1st, This will appear, if we consider that his death, in the room of transgressors, was appointed and authorised by God in the character of Supreme Lawgiver.

* Heb. x. 26, 27.

We have attempted to shew at some length, that atonement by a vicarious sacrifice answers all the moral purposes of punishment. It must always be kept in mind, however, that the power of admitting a substitute, to satisfy the claims of the law in the room of transgressors, belongs exclusively to the Lawgiver. The death of Christ could have had no validity in law, as a propitiation for the sins of the elect, had it not been appointed and authorised by God for that purpose. The formal reason of obedience is the will of the Lawgiver, his death could not, therefore, have been sustained in law on their account, had he not been specially appointed by God, to lay down his life for them. That he was so appointed and authorised, appears from what the Scriptures relate concerning his death, as the matter of an eternal purpose. They tell us, that he who shed his blood for us in time, was pre-ordained from everlasting to do this. “ Forasmuch as ye know that ye
 “ were not redeemed with corruptible things,
 “ as silver and gold, from your vain conver-
 “ sation received by tradition from your fa-
 “ thers ; but with the precious blood of Christ,

“ as of a lamb without blemish and without
 “ spot. Who, verily, was fore-ordained be-
 “ fore the foundation of the world, but was
 “ manifest in these last times for you*.” As
 he was pre-ordained from everlasting to put
 away sin by the sacrifice of himself, so he was
 expressly sent into our world for this purpose
 in time. “ Herein is love, not that we loved
 “ God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son
 “ to be the propitiation for our sins †.” He
 did not run un-sent in the grand work of our
 redemption;—he acted by a Divine warrant,
 and under the authority of a Divine commis-
 sion. “ 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 an High-Priest; but he that
 “ said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day
 “ have I begotten thee ‡.” Hence, the whole
 of his work on earth, is resolved by himself
 into the will of his Father: “ For I came
 “ down from Heaven, not to do mine own
 “ will, but the will of him who sent me §.”

* 1 Pet. i. 18, 19, 20.

† Heb. v. 4, 5.

† 1 John iv. 10.

§ John vi. 58.

Our Lord's death, therefore, possessed this fundamental property of a true atonement for sin; namely, the special appointment of God. This rendered it valid and pleadable by Christ, on the behalf of that select company given him by his Father; whereas, independently of this appointment, his death could have had no more relation to them than to fallen angels.

Care must be taken, however, to distinguish between what gives our Lord's death validity in law in the room of transgressors, and that which renders it a satisfaction for sin corresponding to the extensive claims of the law. The former proceeds from the appointment of God, the latter arises from its own intrinsic value. To refer, as some have done, the whole value or fitness of the death of Christ, for expiating sin, to the appointment of God, is to put his sacrifice on a level with the Levitical sacrifices. They were as really offered by Divine appointment as the sacrifice of Christ; yet they could not put away sin as pertaining to the conscience. The Spirit of God, however, assigns as the reason of their insufficiency for that purpose, not their want of a divine appointment, but of inherent value:

“ For it is not possible that the blood of bulls
 “ and of goats should take away sins *.” On
 the other hand, he refers us to the intrinsic
 value of Christ’s death, arising from the dig-
 nity of his person, as the reason of its suffi-
 ciency for this purpose. “ How much more
 “ shall the blood of Christ, who through the
 “ eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to
 “ God, purge your conscience from dead works
 “ to serve the living God † !”

In referring to the appointment of God the
 whole fitness of the death of Christ to expiate
 sin, there seems to be a wish to exalt the glory
 of Divine sovereignty. But we should beware
 of seeking to magnify one attribute of God at
 the expence of another. In this case there is
 an attempt to exalt his sovereignty to the dis-
 honour of his wisdom, his holiness, and his
 goodness. The purpose of redemption was a
 sovereign purpose, but then it was also wise,
 as appears from the adaption of the means to
 such a weighty and important end. “ Thou
 “ spakest in vision to thy holy One, and saidst
 “ I have laid help upon one that is *mighty* ‡.”

* Heb. x. 4.

† Heb. ix. 14.

‡ Ps. lxxxix. 18.

It was a holy purpose, which it could not have been, had it not proportionated the punishment to the demerit of the crime. It was also good ; but this property it could not have possessed had it assigned judicial infliction to God's dear Son in the smallest degree beyond what was absolutely necessary to vindicate God's honour in man's salvation. But had the fitness of the blood of Christ arisen solely from the arbitrary appointment of God, the blood of a goat, or even of a young pigeon, might have served the purpose of expiation equally well ; and consequently, his excruciating sufferings and death were superfluous and vain. An idea utterly repugnant not only to the wisdom, but also to the goodness of God.

2dly, The sufficiency of his death for the purpose of atonement will also appear when we consider, That the death to which he submitted was that death, in all its extent, which the sanction of the law awarded as the punishment due to transgression.

Death, in the judgment of God which is always according to truth, is the punishment due to sin. “ In the day that thou eatest thereof

“thou shalt surely die*.” “The wages of sin is death †.” And, as we have noticed already, there was a moral fitness, or necessity, that sin should be expiated by death in the same nature in which it had been committed. The Son of God, accordingly, made expiation for sin in human nature, by the painful and accursed death of the cross. “He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many ‡.”

When atonement for sin is said to have been effected by the death of Christ, or the shedding of his blood, it is to be understood as including not only the decease which he accomplished at Jerusalem, but also the whole of his privations and sufferings during his humbled state. These were typified under the former dispensation by the burning of the whole or a part of the sacrifices offered for sin. That took place after the death of the victims, because it was impossible in the nature of things that it could precede it. Besides, had they been put to death by burning, their blood could not have been preserved for the purpose of be-

* Gen. ii. 17.

† Rom. vi. 23.

‡ Mat. xx. 28.

ing applied to the several objects for whose purification it was shed. His whole life was one continued scene of suffering, and all that he did suffer in our nature, and in our world, was vicarious and penal; and, consequently, entered into the matter of the atonement. But to expiate sin, and procure its remission, it was necessary not only that he should suffer, but also that he should die. “ Without shedding of blood is no remission *.” “ When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost †.” Since the sanction of the law awards death as the punishment due to transgression, nothing short of death could expiate human crimes. The law admits of the translation of punishment from sinners to their Surety, because all the ends of punishment may be more effectually gained by the death of a substitute than they could have been by the eternal destruction of transgressors; but it can admit of no commutation or change of the punishment itself, which it assigns as the wages of sin. The penal sen-

* Heb. ix. 22.

† John xix. 30.

tence of the law, which makes death the wages of unrighteousness, either does or does not contain a suitable expression of God's abhorrence of moral evil. If it does not, it cannot be a holy sanction; but if it does, then the same immutable holiness which dictated it must require that it take full effect in the punishment of transgressors. If we reason the matter upon the principle of equity, we must arrive at the same conclusion. Death pronounced by the Judge of all as the punishment due to sin, must either be a just sentence or not. If it be unjust, how could a righteous God pronounce it? But if just, the same justice which dictated the sentence, must peremptorily demand its execution when incurred by transgression. In fine, since the sentence was pronounced in truth, God's immutable veracity must render its execution absolutely necessary.

Some may be ready to suppose that, in the present case, there must have been not only a change of person, but also a change of punishment; from the obvious difference between the sufferings and death of Christ, and the sufferings of the wicked in this world and that which is to come. That there is an ob-

vious difference we readily admit ; but it does not follow that there was a change of punishment, in the case of Christ as a Surety, from that awarded by the penal sentence of the law to transgressors. We are evidently, in this case, to distinguish between these sufferings which necessarily arise from judicial infliction on the part of God, in executing the penal sentence of the law, and those which proceed from the limited powers and moral depravity of the wicked, when subjected to punishment for their own crimes. Our blessed Lord was subjected, as a Surety, to the former in all their extent and intensity ; but he could not in the smallest degree experience the latter, owing to his personal dignity and purity. A few instances will render the truth of this observation obvious to persons of every capacity.

The wicked, when subjected to personal punishment, will suffer all the horrors of remorse. In this world their consciences are often seared as with a hot iron ; but when they lift up their eyes in hell, they will stand convicted, before the tribunal of their own minds, of all the wickedness they have committed in this life ; and this conviction, con-

nected with the painful recollection of the many opportunities of salvation which they have slighted, and the means of grace they once enjoyed, but despised, will fill them with inexpressible horror. But whence will all this arise? Not directly from judicial infliction on the part of God as a judge; but from self-reproach, as the authors of their own ruin. They will also feel all the horrors of despair arising from a conviction that their misery will be eternal; but neither does the eternity of punishment arise necessarily from the penal sentence of the law, but from the limited capacity of the creature. The law demands infinite satisfaction, corresponding to the infinite demerit of sin; and since no creature can give this satisfaction in kind or degree by temporary suffering, the sufferings of the wicked in hell must be eternal. To these we may add, the misery which will spring directly out of their own depravity of disposition. Misery and sin are interwoven in their very nature. Every deviation of heart from the law of God as a righteous governor, is inseparably connected with an alienation of soul from him as the supreme good; but, cut off

from the fountain of happiness, the rational creature must be miserable. Hence, even in this world, the sinful passions of the human heart, such as pride, malice, envy, and wrath, are sources of real misery to wicked men. If they are so now, what must they be in a future state, when infuriated by disappointment and despair !

But it was not necessary that our Lord should, in making atonement for sin, be subjected to suffering from these causes ; since they arise not necessarily from the law, but from the limited capacity or moral depravity of the wicked themselves.

As it was not necessary he should, so it was not possible he could, suffer from these sources. He could not feel the horror of remorse, since it proceeds from self-condemnation for personal guilt ; for he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners. Neither could he experience the anguish of despair, which arises from the certain prospect of eternal misery. His faith, on the one hand, in his Father's promise of support under his sufferings till finished ; and his consciousness, on the other, of his own personal dignity, which

rendered his sufferings, though temporary, of infinite value for expiating sin, completely fortified his mind against despair. Hence he is introduced by the prophet saying, “ For
 “ the Lord God will help me, therefore shall
 “ I not be confounded ; therefore have I set
 “ my face like a flint, and I know that I shall
 “ not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth
 “ me, who shall contend with me ? Let us
 “ stand together, who is mine adversary ?
 “ Let him come near to me *.” Nor was it
 either possible or necessary he should experience that misery which springs out of the operations of the inherent depravity of the heart. Sin is the transgression of the law, and though the penal sentence of the law delivers over the sinner to the dominion of sin, till its righteous claims are satisfied ; it would be absurd in the extreme to suppose, that it required the effects of the operations of sin, as a part of satisfaction for transgression. This would be to suppose that sin was necessary to expiate itself. Nor was it possible Christ could feel this species of misery, owing

* Isa. 1. 7, 8.

to his personal innocency, and untainted purity. Being completely free from sin, he could not experience any of those direful effects, which spring out of its power and operations in the heart of the sinner.

But our Lord was not only subjected to temporal death, and the sufferings in his body which preceded and accompanied it, but also to spiritual death, as far as it is strictly penal. We must here, however, carefully distinguish between what in spiritual death belongs formally to the nature of sin, and that which is the effect of judicial infliction. To the former belongs the privation of rectitude, and the corruption of the whole man; to the latter pungent sorrow, and the privation of mental enjoyment. The former constitutes the sinfulness of man's fallen state, the latter its misery. That the former is not strictly penal must be obvious to every person of discernment. Whatever is strictly penal in spiritual death must be from God; but were this death, as it lies in the privation of moral rectitude, the effect of divine infliction, God would be the author of sin. Man sunk into spiritual death by his own delinquency, and not by ju-

dicial infliction on the part of God. By the same act of transgression which constituted him a sinner, he fell under the power of this death. The law and justice of God, it is true, gave him up when thus fallen to its dominion; so that, by the force of his own depravity, he sinks more and more under its power; unless that power be counteracted and overcome by supernatural grace; as in the case of those who are recovered from the ruins of the fall through the atonement. But this is a consequent of judicial permission, and not an effect of judicial infliction; and must be referred to that misery which springs out of the being of sin, and not to that which arises from penal infliction on the part of God. Besides, this could not obtain in the case of Christ, an innocent substitute, suffering the penal consequences of sin in the room of others; for God gives up none judicially to the power of moral depravity, till they have first, by their own apostacy, sold themselves to the service of unrighteousness. Is it still insisted, that the dominion of sin must involve in it the idea of penal infliction; since the Scripture asserts, that the strength of sin is the law, and since

the reason it assigns why sin shall not have dominion over believers, is, that they are not under the law but under grace ?

In reply, we shall only observe, that to suppose that the curse of the law binds over the sinner to the dominion of sin by authoritative injunction, or positive influence, would not only be absurd but also blasphemous. It retains him under its dominion only as it constitutes a legal bar in the way of the communication of that supernatural influence to his heart, which alone can extricate him from its power. This being the case, the power of sin in all its degrees must be referred to that misery and wretchedness which spring out of sin itself, and not to that punishment by positive infliction on the part of God, which the law requires in order to its expiation.

Our Lord did not, in this view, taste in any degree of spiritual death, nor was it necessary he should do so, when enduring the penal consequences of sin in the stead of his people. On the contrary, his righteousness lay in avoiding it. The first Adam was formed after God's image, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. This con-

stituted his spiritual life; and had he stood the period of his probationary state, the retention of that life, in the active discharge of the duties of the law which he was under as a representative, would have constituted his federal obedience; whereas, his first transgression, by which he lost his spiritual life, constituted that sin by which he entailed the curse on himself and all his posterity. God, in the person of the Father, prepared a holy human nature for Christ, the second Adam; and his righteousness, as the Surety of the church, lay in his retaining that nature in its primitive integrity, and in the active discharge of all the duties of the law he was made under,—and that, too, amidst circumstances of unparalleled temptation and trial, arising from the penal consequences of sin to which he was subjected.

But our Lord did endure spiritual death, so far as that death is the effect of judicial infliction. Spiritual death, in this view, includes the two following ingredients.

1st, A deep and painful sensation of the penal consequences of sin produced in the mind by the immediate power of God. This

our Lord felt in an inconceivable degree in the garden of Gethsemane. As intellectual happiness arises from the knowledge and contemplation of objects agreeable and interesting to the mind, and mental distress proceeds from a discovery to the understanding of objects of a disagreeable and alarming nature, so the agony of soul which our Lord experienced, when enduring the penal consequences of our iniquities, must have been great in proportion to his aversion to moral evil, and his comprehensive knowledge of the extent, purity, and spirituality of the Divine law. But his knowledge was only the medium, and not the impulsive cause of his mental suffering. The painful sensation itself, was the effect of the power of God's judicial displeasure upon his holy soul, which accompanied the discovery which he had of the dreadful desert of sin charged upon him as our Surety; the energies of which penetrated the inmost recesses of the heart, and produced that extreme sorrow and amazement which forced the blood from every pore of his blessed body. In these consisted the quintessence of that death which the sanction of the law awards as the punish-

ment of transgression :—That death of which our Lord spoke, and which he actually endured in the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross ; a death with which the separation of soul and body, accompanied by the strongest convulsions of animal nature, may not once be brought into comparison. “ And he taketh
 “ with him Peter, and James, and John, and
 “ began to be amazed and very heavy. And
 “ saith unto them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death *.” “ And being
 “ in an agony, he prayed most earnestly ; and
 “ his sweat was as it were great drops of
 “ blood falling down to the ground †.”

2dly, Another ingredient of this death is the suspension of the sweet manifestations of the Divine favour. This also, our Lord experienced in the garden and on the cross. As his supreme happiness arose from the sweet manifestations of his Father’s love ; so the felt suspension of these for a season, must have constituted the very essence of mental death. This made him cry out upon the cross, “ My God, my God, why hast thou

* Mat. xiv. 53, 54.

† Luke xxii. 44.

“forsaken me *?” We must not suppose, however, that even then, there was any abatement of the Father’s love to Christ. No; he never loved him more than when, as a Judge, he was exacting from him the punishment of our iniquities. Nor are we to suppose, that, at this moment, there was a total interruption of supporting influence from the Father to the soul of Christ. No; even then, with him God’s hand was established, and his arm did strengthen him. The suspension lay in the withholding of the smiles of his countenance, or the sensible communications of his favour. This must have produced in the holy soul of Christ, a degree of distress proportionate to the high value he put upon communion with his Father and his God. As the communications of his Father’s love constituted the essence of his felicity, so the felt suspension of these must have consummated the anguish of his spirit, in this hour and power of darkness. From these remarks, it will appear, that our Lord, in making atonement for sin, was subjected to the whole

* Mat. xxvii. 46.

of that death which is the wages of transgression.

Thirdly, Our Lord's death was obediential; and he died in the actual discharge of his official functions as the High-Priest of the church. Hitherto, our views have been confined principally to Christ as a sacrifice, or the subject of judicial infliction; but had he not been also the Priest, who gave himself in sacrifice to God, his death could have been of no avail for vindicating the Divine honour in man's salvation. His death was the matter of a Divine appointment, and that appointment, as it regards him, bore the form of a law or commandment. Had he not, therefore, been active and voluntary in laying down his life, his death could not have been obediential; and had it not been obediential, it could not have been of avail for vindicating God's honour as a Lawgiver; and, of consequence, it must have been unavailing for the redemption of the church. But Christ "humbled himself, "and became obedient unto death, even the "death of the cross*." Destitute of this

* Phil. ii. 8.

form, the death of Christ could have had no moral fitness for expiating sin. Sin is a violation of moral obligation ; consequently, nothing but a moral act, or course of acting, can possess a moral fitness for expiating it ; and this character our Lord's death could not have possessed, had he not died in the active discharge of his official functions as a Priest.

It is not our design to enter upon the consideration of our Lord's obedience to the whole law, which constituted that righteousness on the ground of which his people obtain a title to eternal life. Our business at present, is to consider his obedience, as it regarded that particular commandment which he received from the Father, to lay down his life to make atonement for sin, in order to the forgiveness of his people, or to procure their freedom from condemnation. His obediential acting, in laying down his life in submission to God's commandment, formed a principal part of his work as a Priest. " He gave himself for us, an offering " and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour *." Viewed as the subject of judicial

* Eph. v. 2.

infliction in his death, and in all the sufferings that preceded it, he was a sacrifice. But he was not only a sacrifice, but also an offering, and his obediential acting as a Priest constituted him such. “Every Priest standeth
 “daily ministering, and offering oftentimes
 “the same sacrifices, which can never take
 “away sins: But this man, after he had offer-
 “ed one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down
 “on the right hand of God*.”

The High-Priest under the law was an eminent type of Christ in his priestly character, and his functions at the altar, of Christ's sacerdotal service in offering himself to God a sacrifice for sin. But such is the plenitude of our Lord's office and work, that they could not be fully represented in type by any one person, or by the official duties of any particular class of persons. Hence the appropriate acts of priest-hood were divided among the several orders of the family of Levi. The High-Priest was assisted in the discharge of his functions by the inferior priests, and these again by the Levites. And, after all, some of

* Heb. x. 11, 12.

these acts were occasionally performed by the people at large; such as providing the offerings at their own expence, conducting them to the place where they were to be slain in sacrifice, and solemnly devoting them to God for that purpose. But all the appropriate acts of priest-hood entered into our Lord's sacerdotal service in giving his life a ransom for many. For,

1st, The sacrifice by which Atonement was made was provided at his own expence. We have seen already that the Father provided him a body in his miraculous conception. But that body, or human nature, became his own by the act of assumption; and he gave it freely as a ransom for the church. "The
 " Son of man came not to be ministered unto,
 " but to minister, and to give his life a ransom
 " for many*."

2dly, He conducted his offering to the place where it was to be slain in sacrifice, and solemnly dedicated it to God for that purpose. Till the period determined by God when he should lay down his life, we find him

* Mat xx. 28.

avoiding the snares laid for him by his enemies. But no sooner did this arrive than he stedfastly set his face to go up to Jerusalem: “ I have a baptism (says he) to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished * ?” He freely left the guest-chamber where he had observed the last pass-over, and instituted the ordinance of the supper, and entered the garden of Gethsemane, where his last passion commenced ; and where, perhaps, he drank the bitterest potion of the cup given him by his Father. “ But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence †.” It was evident from what befel the soldiers, when they came to apprehend him, that, independently of his own choice, they could not have accomplished their purpose. When he said, “ I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground ‡.” Thus he conveyed his offering to the place where it was to be slain in sacrifice. His internal exercise corresponded with these external acts,

* Luke xii. 50.

† John xiv. 51.

‡ Jchn xviii. 6.

and in it his solemn devotement of himself to God as an offering for sin principally consisted. He gave himself up to suffer and die in humble submission to his Father's will, and actuated by ardent zeal for his glory in men's salvation. This is expressed by his sanctifying or dedicating himself. "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth*." And also by his engaging his heart to approach unto God, of which act of our great High-Priest, both as it regards his eternal undertaking, and his accomplishment of it in time, God himself is introduced speaking in the language of wonder. "Their nobles shall be of themselves, and their Governor shall proceed from the midst of them, and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me; for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord †."

3dly, His death itself was also official and voluntary. In vain the Socinians tell us, that if his death was a sacrifice, the Jews and

* John xvii. 19.

† Jer. xxx. 21.

the Roman soldiers who crucified him, must have been the priests who offered it up to God. The violence to which he was subjected from the Jews, the conflicts he had with the powers of darkness, and, we may add, that which he endured before his death from the immediate hand of God, belonged to his vicarious sufferings, and were prefigured under the law by the burning of the whole or a part of the sacrifices upon the altar. But that which constituted our Lord a sacrifice was his own voluntary act, or his laying down his life in obedience to his Father's commandment. "He bowed his head, and gave up "the ghost *." "He poured out his soul "unto death †." "He became obedient "unto death, even the death of the cross ‡." "No man taketh" my life "from me, I lay "it down of myself; I have power to lay it "down, and I have power to take it again; "this commandment have I received of my "Father §."

* John xix. 30.

† Isa. liii. 10—12.

‡ 1 hil. i 8.

§ John x. 18.

In fine, the combined exercise of all the graces of the Spirit, which he had received without measure, entered deeply into our Lord's oblation, and stamped upon his death that moral character, without which it could have had no moral fitness for vindicating the honour of God's law in the salvation of guilty men. He offered himself in the exercise of a firm and unshaken faith in God, as his God in covenant, for support under his sufferings, and the acceptance of his work when finished. "Who in the days of his flesh when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, to him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared *." He also offered himself under a deep sense of the majesty and purity of God, and the infinite contrariety of sin to his nature and will, connected with the most pungent sorrow on account of the dishonour done to God by it. He is the person who was poor and of a contrite heart, to whom God looks with approbation and delight; as having vindicated the rights of his justice, the claims

* Heb. x. 7.

of his law, the honour of his holiness, and the dignity of his moral administration in the salvation of sinners. Purposes for effecting which, all the sacrifices that bled, and all the sacerdotal services performed in the Jewish temple, had proved abortive and vain. “ Thus saith
 “ the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and
 “ the earth is my footstool; where is the house
 “ that ye build unto me, and where is the
 “ place of my rest? For all those things have
 “ mine hand made, and all those things have
 “ been, saith the Lord: but to this man will
 “ I look, even to him that is poor and of a
 “ contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word*.”
 He presented his offering in the vigorous exercise of supreme love to God, and ardent zeal for his glory, accompanied with unparelled love to his people. “ I am become a stranger
 “ unto my brethren, and an alien unto my
 “ mother’s children: for the zeal of thine house
 “ hath eaten me up, and the reproaches of
 “ them that reproached thee are fallen upon
 “ me †.” “ Christ also hath loved us, and
 “ hath given himself for us ‡.” He was sup-

* Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.

† Ps. lxix. 8, 9.

‡ Eph. v. 2.

ported and animated in his work by a lively hope in God, for the accomplishment of the promissory part of the eternal covenant, both as it respected his own exaltation, and the salvation of his people. “ Jesus, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame *.” “ Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth ; my flesh also shall rest in hope ; for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life ; in thy presence is fullness of joy ; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore †.” The exercise of these and other graces constituted what was represented under the law, in symbol, by the meat-offering, which accompanied the sin-offering, and rendered it of a sweet savour to God. “ Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour ‡.”

Fourthly, His death was of infinite value

* Heb. xii. 2. † Ps. xvi. 9, 10, 11, ‡ Eph. v. 2.

for expiating sin, owing to the dignity of his person.

It was necessary that the sacrifice of Christ should correspond in value to the degree of the offence to be expiated by it. But whatever view we take of sin as committed against God, it is an evil of infinite desert, and could only be expiated by a sacrifice of infinite value. If the holiness of God require an expression of his detestation at sin by judicial infliction, that expression must be adequate to the malignity of the offence, fully to vindicate its injured honours ; but nothing short of an atonement of infinite value can afford an expression of God's infinite abhorrence of moral evil. If we examine the matter on the ground of equity we must arrive at the same conclusion. Since sin is an offence committed against the majesty and authority of God as a Lawgiver, justice must require that the punishment correspond with the degree of the crime ; but sin is an infinite evil objectively considered ; nothing less, therefore, can expiate it than a sacrifice of infinite value.

That sin is an evil of infinite desert, appears from its irreconcilable contrariety to the obli-

gations we are under to love and serve God. The higher our obligations to duty, the greater must be the evil of counteracting them. The more a being deserves to be honoured and obeyed, the greater must be the evil of withholding honour or obedience from him; but God is a being infinitely deserving of our love, honour, and obedience; to withhold these from him must therefore be a crime of infinite demerit. The Socinians themselves will admit of the soundness of this reasoning, as applied to crimes committed against the laws of a civil state. Human legislators constantly make a distinction among crimes with regard to the degree of their criminality, and they proportionate their respective punishments to their supposed desert. They have also uniformly computed the degree of demerit attached to crime, by the degree of obligation supposed to be violated, and the dignity of the party against whom the crime is supposed to be committed. Hence, in every country, high treason has been accounted the greatest offence against society; because committed more directly against the majesty of the state, in the person of its supreme governor. But every sin is an

act of treason against the Supreme Ruler of the universe ; and, if we allow that he is infinitely superior to all earthly potentates, we must also admit, that every violation of his law is a crime of infinite demerit.

But if such is the desert of every sin as committed against God, nothing short of an atonement of infinite value must be necessary to vindicate God's honour in man's salvation. That the death of Christ possesses this value, will appear if we consider the nature of the sacrifice, and the dignity of the person who offered it to God for the expiation of human guilt. Under the law the priest and the sacrifice were distinct, but both are conjoined in the great High-Priest of our profession. "He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." But to see the value of our Lord's death as an atonement for sin, we must attend,

First, To the unity of his person though incarnate. His assumption of human nature did not destroy his personal unity. He is God and man in one person. The child born is still the son given *. He who is made of

* Isa. ix. 6.

the fathers according to the flesh, is God over all blessed for ever *.

Secondly, We must also keep in view the communion between these natures in personal agency. Though these natures are distinct, yet, in consequence of their personal union, the agency in both is but one personal agency. Hence, these acts which belong more properly to his Godhead, are ascribed to him when pointed out by designations descriptive of his human nature: such as the pardon of sin †; and the judgment of the world ‡. For the same reason those acts which are effected in and by the human nature, are ascribed to him when described by characters expressive of his divinity; such as obedience and suffering: “ Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered §.”

Let us now apply these remarks to our Lord's sacrifice, and his agency as a Priest in presenting it to God; in order to see the superlative excellence of the one, and the infinite moral worth of the other.

* Rom. ix. 5.

A cts xvii. 31.

† Mat. ix. 6.

§ Heb. v. 8.

With respect to his sacrifice; if we allow that his person is divine, we must also admit that it possessed a value corresponding to the dignity of his person; and if the latter be possessed of infinite dignity, the former must have possessed infinite value. The matter of his sacrifice was his human nature, but its value must have been infinitely more than human, arising from its subsistence in his Divine person. What he gave was *himself*, though in the human nature; his sacrifice must therefore have been of value corresponding to his dignity as the Son of God. “He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*.” “He gave himself for us a sacrifice and an offering to God †.” Such is the account the Scriptures make of the value of our Lord’s sacrifice, when they tell us that the church was purchased by the blood of God. His divinity could not suffer or die; but he, who is God, bled and died in that nature which subsisted in himself by a personal union. “Feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood ‡.” To the

* Heb. ix. 26.

† Eph. v. 2.

‡ Acts-xx. 28.

same purpose we are told, “ that the Lord of
 “ glory was crucified * ;” and that he who by
 himself purged our sins, “ is the brightness
 “ of his Father’s glory, and the express image
 “ of his person †.” His sacrifice must there-
 fore be of infinite value and efficacy for expiat-
 ing transgression.

But to set the matter in its true light, we
 must also apply what was said respecting his
 personal agency, viewed as incarnate, to his
 functions as a priest in offering up his human
 nature in sacrifice to God. This agency, con-
 sidered as obediential, was in the human na-
 ture, for it was in that nature he was made un-
 der the law ; but it was not the less on that
 account the agency of a Divine person. The
 human nature of Christ had never any distinct
 subsistence of its own ; it could never, there-
 fore, have any distinct personal agency. As
 the superlative excellency of our Lord’s Priest-
 hood arises from its being vested in a Divine
 person ; so all his official functions must pos-
 sess infinite moral worth, from their being
 discharged by a Divine person ; though bear-

* 1 Cor. ii. 8.

† Heb. i. 3, 4.

ing an official character, and acting in his inferior and assumed nature. “ The law
 “ maketh high-priests which have infirmity ;
 “ but the word of the oath which was since
 “ the law, maketh the Son who is consecrated
 “ for evermore *.” These two must never be
 viewed separately, in contemplating the death
 of Christ as a propitiation for sin. It was not
 his sufferings abstractly, however intense, or
 his death, though ignominious, that purged
 our sins ; but his suffering unto death, con-
 nected with his obediencial acting under suf-
 fering, and in laying down his life ; and both
 as deriving infinite value and efficacy from the
 divinity of his person.

We may add, that although his agency in
 the human nature, strictly speaking, constitut-
 ed his obedience as a Surety in his life and at
 his death ; yet, in computing its moral worth,
 we must take into account his acts of conde-
 scension prior to his bearing the form of a
 servant, and to his being made under the law,
 such as his eternal undertaking, and his com-
 ing into our world by the assumption of hu-

* Heb. vii. 28.

man nature. Although these acts did not enter into the matter of his obedience as a Surety, still they infused into it real value in the eye of the law and justice of God, since they had in design for their object, his entrance upon that service, and were preparatory to it. This is plainly intimated by the Apostle: “ Who being in the form of God, thought it “ not robbery to be equal with God: But “ made himself of no reputation, and took “ upon him the form of a servant, and was “ made in the likeness of men. And being “ found in fashion as a man, he humbled “ himself, and became obedient unto death, “ even the death of the cross *.”

From all these considerations, it will appear that the death of Christ possessed every thing necessary to a true and proper atonement for sin. His death was authorised by God for this purpose. He died the death awarded by the law as the punishment due to transgression. His death was obediential, and of infinite value, arising from the dignity of his person.—We shall only add,

* Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

Fifthly, That the satisfactory nature of our Lord's death, as an expiation for sin, appears from the Father's approbation of his work, both in progress and when finished. The law made nothing perfect. The blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin: they served only as shadows of that better sacrifice which Christ was to offer up once in the end of the world. His sacrifice is the truth or substance of all the typical sacrifices, which were consumed upon the Levitical altar. In these sacrifices God had no pleasure; but when our Lord entered upon his work in human nature, as our great High-Priest, agreeably to ancient prediction, a righteous God looked down with approbation and delight upon the truth of moral obedience and satisfaction for sin, "springing out of the earth *." Hence, while his work was only in progress, there came, at his baptism, a voice from Heaven, which said, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased †." The same testimony of the Divine approbation was renewed

* Psal. lxxxv. 11.

† Luke iii. 22.

at his transfiguration: "For he received from
 " God the Father, honour and glory, when
 " there came such a voice to him from the
 " excellent glory: This is my beloved Son in
 " whom I am well pleased*." After his
 work was finished, his Father declared his
 approbation of it in raising him from the
 dead. He was in his resurrection taken by
 God, in the character of a righteous Judge,
 from prison and from judgment; but had his
 death not been availing for the payment of
 the whole of our debt, a holy and righteous
 God would not have acquitted him. In his re-
 surrection he was justified as our representa-
 tive, as having finished the whole work given
 him to do; but had his work not been satisfac-
 tory, God had never given him this signal testi-
 mony of his approbation. Hence, the im-
 portance which the Spirit of God attaches to
 the resurrection of Christ, as a ground of our
 security from condemnation. He procured
 our deliverance from the curse by his death;
 but we could have had no evidence that his
 death was efficacious for that purpose had he

* 2 Pet. i. 17.

not risen from the dead ; for had the Surety failed to accomplish his work, we must have for ever remained in our sins. “ 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 *.” The Father also gave him glory in our nature and as our representative ; but had his work not been complete he would never have been crowned with his glorious reward †. Had the blood which he shed on earth, as a Priest at the altar, not been efficacious for purging our sins, he had never appeared in Heaven as a Priest upon his throne ; for he entered Heaven by his own blood ‡. Had his sacrifice not been accepted, he would not have received the Spirit to be shed down on the church, nor would he have conferred gifts for the edification of her members. All these belong to the promissory part of the covenant, and suppose the efficacy of his sacrifice for its ratification. In fine, the propagation of the gospel in our

* Rom. viii. 33, 34.

† Phil. ii. 8, 9.

‡ Heb. ix. 11, 12.

world, its permanency, and the success with which it has been accompanied from age to age, in the religious and moral reformation of mankind, are standing proofs of the perfection of the atonement. It is in consequence of his death having received the Divine approbation as a true and proper satisfaction for sin, that as a Priest on his throne he sprinkles the nations, by applying to them the precious fruits of his mediation: Agreeably to ancient prediction, “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 *.” “As many were astonished at
 “ thee; his visage was so marred more than
 “ any man, and his form more than the sons
 “ of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations;
 “ the kings shall shut their mouths at him:
 “ for that which had not been told them shall
 “ they see, and that which they had not heard
 “ shall they consider †.”

* Isa. liii. 10, 11.

† Isa. lii. 14, 15.

PART THIRD.

GENERAL REMARKS, TENDING TO OBVIATE
 DIFFICULTIES, AND ILLUSTRATE THE
 IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT.

HAVING finished what was intended on the Necessity of an Atonement, and the Nature of the Atonement actually made by Christ, we shall now conclude the discussion with a few general remarks, tending to obviate difficulties, and to point out the vast importance of the subject.

1st, The doctrine of the atonement, as now stated, is no way inconsistent with the gratuitous nature of forgiveness. Those who insist that it is so, betray total ignorance of the doctrine as laid down in the holy Scriptures. Had the atonement been represented as the moving cause of forgiveness, there might have been some reason for the objection; but this is not the case. The sacred

writers represent the plan of redemption as taking its rise from the sovereign will or good pleasure of God. The purpose of pardon was a purpose of rich, free, and sovereign grace. The same boundless grace is manifested in bestowing it on the sinner. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace *.” God is no where in Scripture represented as moved, or inclined by the death of Christ to save sinners; on the contrary, the mediation of Christ is set forth in the sacred oracles, as a plan devised by his infinite wisdom, to give effect to his purpose of mercy in their salvation, in a way consistent with the honour of his law, and the claims of his justice. The same God who in rich grace purposed to save sinners, provided, in boundless wisdom and love, the ransom through which salvation is conferred. “He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom †.” The atonement, therefore, instead of lessening, enhances the mani-

* Eph. i. 7.

† Job xxxiii. 24.

festation of Divine grace in the bestowing of forgiveness. Great as the grace of God appears in conferring pardon, the display of this grace is still greater in providing the medium of its conveyance. “ God so loved the world “ that he gave his only begotten Son, that “ whosoever believeth in him should not perish, “ but have everlasting life*.” “ Herein is “ love, not that we loved God, but that he “ loved us, and sent his Son to be the propi- “ tiation for our sins †.” Nor does the necessity of the atonement which we have attempted to establish militate at all against this freedom; since it does not respect pardon itself, but the mode of its conveyance. God might or might not have pardoned sinners; this depended solely on his sovereign pleasure. But having purposed to do so, it was absolutely necessary that this purpose should be carried into effect in a way consistent with his own honour.

It may still be asked, Does not the atonement lay the foundation of a claim of right to forgiveness? And is not such a claim in-

* John iii. 16.

† 1 John iv. 10.

compatible with this freedom in bestowing it? We reply, That the atonement lays a foundation for such a claim to the Surety we grant; but that it does so to the sinner we deny. The sinner has ample warrant to plead for pardon at God's throne through the atonement; but this warrant proceeds on the ground of God's gracious offer of pardon in the gospel, and not upon any claim he has to it as matter of right. Besides, the claim of right to forgiveness on the part of the Surety, on behalf of those for whom he died, arises from a prior act of grace. It is a right founded on a gracious constitution, or the free promise of God to the Mediator in the eternal covenant, rendered pleadable as matter of right by his fulfilment of its condition.

Moreover, a just view of the subject would require us to take into account the personal dignity of the Mediator. The claim of right is between two Divine persons, though acting in distinct economical characters. It is, therefore, a claim not extrinsic to the Deity, and, consequently, cannot lessen the gratuitous nature of pardon to the sinner.

In fine, the atonement, so far from obscuring, brings into view this grace as displayed by each of the persons of Trinity by means of their personal operations. As the appointment and mission of the Son, to make atonement for sin, serve to illustrate the sovereign love of the Father, so the undertaking of the Son to finish the work given him to do, is no less illustrative of his grace. “Ye know the “ grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that “ though he was rich, yet for your sakes he “ became poor, that ye through his poverty “ might be made rich *.” Pardon, therefore, is of grace, free, sovereign, and unsolicited grace, though it flows to sinners through a spiritual redemption. “ In whom we have “ redemption through his blood, the forgive- “ ness of sins, according to the riches of his “ grace †.”

2dly, This doctrine is falsely charged with setting limits to the power of God, and representing him as acting from a fatal necessity.

We have assigned no limits to the power of God but those of his own holiness, justice,

* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

† Eph. i. 7.

and veracity. Power is a vague term as used by those who on this ground reject the necessity of the atonement. We must certainly make a distinction, in this case, between power in the abstract, and the use of it by a moral agent. A good man may possess physical strength sufficient for assassinating his neighbour, as really as the wicked man who has actually cut his throat. But we say, in common language, that a good man is incapable of this atrocious deed, and we only say the truth; for retaining his goodness, he cannot commit such a crime. This, surely, is not to set limits to his power, but to commend him for the proper use which he makes of it. Let us apply this reasoning to the case now under consideration. In saying that God cannot pardon sin without a satisfaction to his justice, we do not set limits to his power of acting, but only assert that he is too holy and just to abuse it. The power of acting in the case of every moral agent derives all its real excellence from the use which he makes of it; and were the power of God not uniformly put forth in support of the cause of righteousness,

it would be a defect, and not a perfection, in the Divine character.

Neither does the necessity of the atonement, as now stated, ascribe any thing like fatality to God. No rational being acts from fatal necessity who retains the power of choice; and the highest degree of rational liberty consists in the agent who wills possessing a power to choose what is most agreeable to his dispositions. But the necessity pleaded in the present question, with reference to God, is a necessity founded on his moral perfection. It is a mode of acting, therefore, which God chooses, and cannot but choose, else he would do violence to his adorable nature.

3dly, This doctrine is equally remote from ascribing mutability to God. It has been charged by some as inferring change or mutability in God. Could this charge be substantiated, it would furnish a sufficient reason for rejecting the doctrine. Mutability is incompatible with absolute perfection. Were God to change, it behoved to be either to the better or to the worse. Were the change to the better, it would suppose imperfection in God prior to it; were it to the

worse, then, posterior to it, he could not be a perfect Being. This attribute of immutability must belong to every property of the Divine nature. God must be immutable in his holiness, in his justice, and in his veracity; but his law and moral administration are merely a transcript of these perfections; and it is on this very account we plead for the necessity of an atonement for sin in order to its forgiveness; or because the exercise of mercy in the bestowing of pardon, independently of an atonement, would produce a change in the moral system, incompatible with the perfection of the law, and the immutability of the Lawgiver. The charge applies in all its force to every other scheme of forgiveness, but that of remission through the blood of Christ; since no other method which has been suggested, makes provision for the vindication of the immutable perfection of the character and moral administration of God.

But the objection seems to respect, not so properly the holiness and justice of God, as his special love displayed in dispensing his favours to his fallen creatures. These are conferred, according to our statement,

through the atonement; and on that account the objectors consider it as effecting a change of mind in God towards the objects of this dispensation. To obviate this objection, it may be necessary again to remind our readers, that fallen men are the objects of God's displeasure, not as creatures, but as sinners. By keeping this in view, and attending to the following distinctions, it will be found that there is no real change in God, amidst all the changes which his sovereign mercy produces upon the objects of his special regard.

First, We must attend to the distinction between Divine benevolence and complacency. The former, as it regards sinners of mankind, flows purely from his sovereignty. "He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy." The latter arises from his nature. As he is a holy Being, he must delight in the image of his own purity in his creatures, and abhor whatever is contrary to it.

Secondly, Let us inquire whether pardon through the atonement argues any change in God's benevolent regard. That it does not will appear if we consider, that pardon is neither more nor less than the benevolent

purpose of God towards sinners from everlasting, taking effect in time in their deliverance from condemnation. Nor does it alter the case, that the remission of sin is only through the atonement, for God only purposed to save sinners in this way; the means and the end being embodied in the same Divine purpose. Neither does it alter the case, that the state of the sinner before God is changed by the act of pardon, from what it was before; for the moment when this change should take place was also fixed in the same eternal purpose. In pardon, there is a change of Divine acting towards the sinner, but no change of God's benevolent regard towards him. This change of acting involves no change in the mind of God, since it is merely a following out of his one immutable purpose. "He is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth even that he doeth *."

Thirdly, Let us also inquire whether the atonement produces any change in God's complacent regard. The sinner, as a sinner, can-

* Job xxiii. 13.

not be an object of Divine complacency ; but he becomes an object of it when interested in the atonement and its grand results. He is accepted who was not accepted, and beloved who was not beloved ; but all this does not infer any change in God. God does not now love what he did not love before. He always delights in rectitude, and now, by grace, the sinner by nature possesses that rectitude, both as imputed and inherent, being not only justified through the righteousness, but regenerated by the Spirit of Christ. God must, therefore, delight in his own comeliness put upon him. Still, the change is wholly in the sinner, not in God. He esteems nothing now that he did not always esteem ; and if his esteem now terminates on a creature on whom it did not formerly terminate, it is owing to a change in the creature relative to God, and not to any change in God himself. While it is day in our horizon, our part of the world is warmed, beautified, and fertilized by the rays of the sun ; but during the night we neither enjoy his light nor heat. This does not, however, arise from any real change in the sun. He is the same in himself, and his influences during

our night are the same as during our day, but he is not so to us, or to that part of the world which we inhabit, owing to its being turned away from him. No sooner, however, does the diurnal revolution of the globe turn our part of the earth towards the sun, than we again fall under his benign influences. Just so it is with God, the Sun of the rational and moral system. Amidst all the changes which his grace produces upon the hearts of his people, he remains “the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

We now proceed to make a few remarks on the importance of the subject.

First, The importance of the view we have taken of the Necessity of the Atonement will appear, from the tendency which the opposite opinion has to leave us at a total uncertainty respecting the moral character of the Supreme Being.

All we know about God is through the medium of his works, taken in connection with his Word. The work of creation clearly evinces the existence and eternal power of God. “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being

“understood by the things that are made,
“even his eternal power and Godhead*.”
But the principal source of our knowledge of what may be more properly called his moral perfections, is the moral law, either as engraven on the heart of man, or as made known by special revelation in the Bible; taken in connection with his moral administration in the kingdoms of grace and providence. In the precept of that law, he is exhibited as a Being of untainted holiness, and, in its sanction, as a Being of unspotted righteousness; and we have no certain means of knowing that he is immutably holy and inflexibly just, but from his strict adherence to this law in the whole of his administration as the moral Governor of the world. But to say that God might, had he pleased, have pardoned sin without a satisfaction to his justice, is to destroy the law as a criterion of his moral character. However holy the law is, and however righteous the moral administration of God, according to the present constitution of things; if it might have been otherwise, consistently with his nature,

* Rom. i. 20.

the present form of his administration can be no real test of his moral excellence. If the present form of God's moral administration, according to which he exacts an atonement in order to forgiveness, be just and equal; then forgiveness, without an atonement, must, under any supposable constitution of things, have been wrong: for moral evil must be moral evil under every supposed form of the Divine government. To say that God might, under a different constitution of things from the present, have pardoned sin without a satisfaction, is therefore to suppose that he is mutable in holiness and justice: an idea from which we should shrink with horror.

This, as well as many other false notions in divinity, obviously proceeds from the absurd hypothesis respecting the self-determining power of the will. This hypothesis applied to the will of man, has been employed for overturning the whole plan of salvation by grace as it reigns through the righteousness of Christ. In this case, as applied to the Divine will, it leads, not only to the subversion of the necessity of the atonement, but also to the overthrow of the whole moral system,

by shaking the grand pillars on which it rests; namely, the infinite holiness, justice, and veracity of the Supreme Being. As we have noticed already, the reason of every act of will in all moral determinations, is the moral disposition of the agent willing *. God's will, therefore, as it respects the mode of conferring pardon through the atonement, must be an index of his moral character. But to maintain that God might have dispensed pardon without an atonement, is to suppose that he might have been, in a moral point of view, a Being altogether different from what he is represented to be by the Scripture doctrine of redemption through the blood of Christ. This doctrine presents him to the view of his rational creatures in all the beauties of untainted holiness; but, according to the notion we are now confuting, he might have announced himself to his creatures in a character, resembling more the fictitious deities of Greece and Rome, than the Holy One of Israel. In the glass of the atonement he appears, as a governor, in all the majesty of

* See Page 59.

inflexible justice: but, according to the hypothesis of our opponents, he might have appeared perverting the eternal laws of justice, by conniving at the most flagrant crimes, and cherishing as his favourites the greatest monsters of wickedness. These are some of the consequences to which the opinion leads, that God might, had he pleased, under a supposed constitution of things different from the present, have pardoned sinners without a satisfaction to his justice. We are far from thinking that the advocates of that opinion, designedly give their support to such an insult upon the Divine character; but we have to do, not with the designs of those who maintain the theory, but with the dangerous consequences to which it natively leads.

Secondly, The importance of the view we have taken of the Necessity of the Atonement, will further appear, from the tendency which the opposite opinion has to support the immoral doctrine of universal restoration.

That it has this tendency will appear from the light in which it represents the law of God. It places the moral-natural law on the same footing with positive laws or institutions,

which is a great mistake. A positive law is an institution which depends solely upon the will of God, and derives all its fitness as a rule of conduct from his sovereign appointment. Of this description was the precept given to Adam in paradise respecting the tree of knowledge, and the ceremonial law given to Israel. A moral-natural law is a rule of conduct, founded on God's immutable holiness. The former is just and reasonable, because commanded; the latter is commanded, because just and reasonable. The former is only obligatory during the pleasure of the Lawgiver; the latter is of perpetual obligation, as it springs from God's supremacy and man's dependance. Man may exist without being under a positive law; but exist he cannot, without being under a moral-natural law; since his obligation to it springs out of those moral relations which necessarily subsist between God and his rational creatures. This being the case, under no constitution of things could man have existed independently of obligation to the moral law; and if its sanction for the present be just and equal, which awards death as the punishment of sin; then, under

every supposable constitution of things, sin must have deserved that punishment.

But the scheme we have been endeavouring to refute, supposes that the law might have been otherwise. At present it does not admit of pardon without satisfaction for sin ; but the advocates for that scheme plead that it might have done so, under a constitution of things different from the present. Is not this to make the moral-natural law a mere arbitrary appointment of God, which may be repealed at pleasure, and, consequently, to put it on the same footing with a positive institution ? This being once admitted, the cause of universal restoration is more than half established. The inference is plain, if the present plan of the Divine government, which makes death the wages of sin, might not have existed, had it so pleased God ; it may be altered, as the ceremonial law was, at some future period, and devils and wicked men may be set free from judicial infliction, as the Jews were from the yoke of ceremonies. This is a native inference from the doctrine we are now examining, whether its advocates will admit it or not. But whatever tends to countenance that

scheme must give a deep wound to the interests of morality; since it removes one of the principal bulwarks against the inroads of vice and profaneness.

Thirdly, The importance of the view we have taken of the Atonement will also appear, if we attend to its bearings upon practical religion and moral conduct. This part of our subject deserves particular illustration, as it meets one grand objection to the atonement, and enables us to shew that, instead of weakening, it strengthens the motives to the study of universal holiness.

1st, The connection between the atonement and the interests of pure religion and moral conduct, appears from the relation which it bears to all gracious communications between God and his fallen creatures.

Man, in his fallen state, is destitute of moral rectitude. “The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*.” This enmity can be subdued, and that love which is the fulfilment of the law implanted, only by supernatural grace. “It is God who

* Rom. viii 7.

“worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure *.” But the curse of the law prevents all gracious communications from God to the heart of the sinner, till removed by an act of pardoning mercy; and, as we have seen already, pardon can be conferred only through the atonement; the atonement, therefore, must be fundamental to the restoration of holiness, as well as happiness, to our fallen race. The death of Christ opened up the fountain of supernatural influence for the removal of the filth as well as the guilt of sin: “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness †.” The church is sanctified by the will of God. His gracious purpose is the moving cause of our sanctification, as well as the remission of our sins; but this purpose takes effect in our spiritual renovation only through the atonement. “By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all ‡.” Christ sanctifies the church by the joint energies of

* Phil. ii. 13.

† Zech. xiii. 1.

‡ Heb. x. 10.

his prophetic and kingly offices; but the exercise of both proceeds upon the ground of the perfection of his atonement for sin as a priest. Hence he is said to have been sanctified, or set apart to his work, as the Captain of salvation, through his sufferings. “For it
“ became him for whom are all things, and
“ by whom are all things, in bringing many
“ sons unto glory, to make the Captain of
“ their salvation perfect through sufferings*.” To the same purpose we are told, that “he
“ gave himself for us, that he might redeem
“ us from all iniquity, and purify unto him-
“ self a peculiar people, zealous of good
“ works †.” Also, that “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 ‡.” In fine, the church is sanctified by the personal agency of the Spirit; but the Spirit, in his

* Heb. ii. 10.

† Tit. ii. 14.

‡ Eph. v. 25, 26, 27.

grace and influences, is conferred only through the mediation of Christ. “ But after that
 “ the kindness and love of God our Saviour
 “ toward man appeared: Not by works of
 “ righteousness which we have done, but ac-
 “ cording to his mercy he saved us, by the
 “ washing of regeneration, and renewing of
 “ the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us
 “ abundantly through Jesus Christ our Sa-
 “ viour *.”

2dly, This connection will appear if we consider the powerful motives to a holy life, which arise from the atonement, and from the display it affords of the Divine character.

Though all that is morally excellent in man is from God; yet, in conferring holiness, He does not act upon man as a piece of inanimate matter, but as a rational being. It is only as a rational creature that man is a capable subject of moral qualities, and it is only so far as his obligations to duty are apprehended by his intellect, and are the matter of his choice, that he is capable of discharging the duties which he owes to God and his neighbour.

* Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6.

That the view which we have given of the Necessity of the Atonement furnishes us with the most powerful motives to holiness will appear, if we consider,

First, The display which it affords of the Divine character. Whatever tends to exalt God in the estimation of his rational creatures, must have a tendency to promote the interests of religion and morality. Rational creatures cannot be easy in the commission of sin so long as they retain, in any degree, just conceptions of the majesty and purity of the Supreme Being. Sin entered into the world through the influence of a temptation calculated to degrade the Divine character in the estimation of our first parents. “ The serpent
 “ said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely
 “ die. For God doth know that in the day
 “ ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be
 “ opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing
 “ good and evil *.” These words contain several insinuations degrading to the character of God. His veracity, as pledged in the sanction of the law, is expressly denied: “ Ye

* Gen. iii. 4, 5.

“ shall not surely die.” His equity and goodness are arraigned, and it is insinuated that the prohibition was intended by God to prevent the intellectual improvement of his creatures. In fine, our first mother was tempted to consider that God was not so far exalted above his creatures, but that they might become equal with him in respect of intellectual endowments. “ God doth know that in the
 “ day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be
 “ opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing
 “ good and evil.” These suggestions first drew the human intellect from the contemplation of the majesty and purity of God, which had hitherto impressed the minds of our first parents with reverential awe, humble submission, and the most lively sentiments of gratitude and esteem for their Creator. And this blaze of celestial light was extinguished in the cloud of error respecting the Divine character, which led to their apostacy. The same process marks the progress of their posterity in a course of wickedness. Hence the propensity which wicked men have uniformly discovered to work themselves into false notions of the Supreme Being. They seek ease in the com-

mission of sin, and they can find it only by fostering mean and unbecoming thoughts of God. “ These things hast thou done, and I
“ kept silence ; thou thoughtest I was alto-
“ gether such an one as thyself, and did ap-
“ prove of thy sin *.” Without a change of views respecting the Divine character, it is impossible, in the nature of things, to bring man back to a state of allegiance to God. But no discovery of God, disconnected with the doctrine of the atonement, is calculated to engage the heart of a fallen creature in his service ; as it is only through the atonement that he is exhibited as a God of grace and mercy towards our ruined race. Every manifestation of God’s moral character, disconnected with the display he has given of his sovereign mercy through the atonement, instead of conciliating the affection of a fallen creature to his Maker, fills him with terror ; and terror of God as an enemy and avenger uniformly produces hatred. “ The carnal mind
“ is enmity against God, for it is not subject
“ to the law of God, neither indeed can be †.”

* Ps. l. 21.

† Rom. viii. 7.

The moral law is a transcript of the Divine image. It presents God to our view in the beauties of untainted holiness and unspotted righteousness. But till the conscience of the sinner is purified by the atoning blood of Christ, his knowledge of the Divine law, instead of subduing, only irritates his corruptions, and gives a new impulse to them in the service of sin: “For when we were in the
 “flesh, the motions of sins which were by the
 “law did work in our members, to bring
 “forth fruit unto death*.”

As even the portrait of a man has been found to draw forth every latent principle of hostility, in the breast of his adversary, into the most violent emotions of rage and fury, so the enmity of the sinner's heart, which seemed to be dormant, begins to rage against God the moment the law is presented to his view in its extent and spirituality. “But sin taking
 “occasion by the commandment wrought in
 “me all manner of concupiscence. For with-
 “out the law sin was dead †.”

The moral perfections of God appear in

* Rom. vii. 5.

† Rom. vii. 8.

their brightest lustre in the cross of Christ. In this medium he is seen in all the glory of spotless holiness, and in all the majesty of inflexible justice; but even this display of the glory of the Divine character, disconnected with the relation his death has to the egress of mercy towards our guilty race, could have had no influence in converting them from the evil of their ways. Devils, without doubt, discern in the cross of Christ the holiness and righteousness of God; but this discovery has no influence in subduing their enmity against God. On the contrary, it increases their malice and hatred in proportion as it tends to fill them with all the anguish arising from disappointment, and to sink them deeper in the horrors of despair. The doctrine of the cross would have the same effect upon fallen men, were it not the connection which it has with a dispensation of sovereign mercy towards our race. It is the rich mercy of God, as manifested in the remission of sin through the blood of Christ, which slays the enmity of the sinner's heart, and produces in his soul that love to God, which is the fulfilling of the law. This is the grand article of the ministry of

reconciliation, which is made effectual by the power of the Divine Spirit, for changing the disposition of the sinner, and turning him from sin to the service of the living God: “ To wit, That God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them *.” The love of God manifested in sending his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, as improved by faith, inspires the soul with the most lively sentiments of love and gratitude. “ We love him because he first loved us †.”

The conscience being once purged by a believing improvement of the blood of Christ for the remission of sin, the discovery of the holiness and justice of God in the cross of Christ, has the most powerful moral influence upon the heart. Then the whole of the Divine character assumes the most pleasing and engaging aspect. Those attributes of God's nature, which formerly filled the soul with horror, now produce esteem and veneration. While faith in the atonement casts out slavish fear, as it presents God to our view as a God

* 2 Cor. v. 19.

† 1 John iv. 19.

of mercy, it also inspires that holy awe and reverence which is fundamental to all holy obedience, as it brings into view every perfection of God in all its majesty and greatness. “After-
“wards shall the children of Israel return,
“and seek the Lord their God, and David
“their king: and shall fear the Lord and his
“goodness in the latter days*.”—Humility is a principle which enters deeply into the exercise of genuine godliness: “God resisteth
“the proud, but he giveth grace to the hum-
“ble.” “For thus saith the high and lofty
“One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name
“is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy
“place; with him also that is of a contrite
“and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of
“the humble, and to revive the heart of the
“contrite ones †.” But all the lustre of the Divine glory, as displayed by the works of nature, is insufficient to humble the loftiness, and subdue the pride of the human heart in the Divine presence. This is effected only by the contemplation of the majesty and purity of God in the face of Jesus. It was before

* Hioseá iii. 5.

† Isa. lvii. 15.

the throne of God, in the character of the Redeemer of the church, that the prophet, contrasting his own meanness with God's greatness, and his own vileness with his untainted holiness, exclaimed, "Woe is me, for I am
 " undone, because I am a man of unclean
 " lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of
 " unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the
 " King, the Lord of Hosts*." Yea, it is before the same throne that the seraphim in glory, in profound humility, cover their faces with their wings, while they adore God in the beauties of holiness. "And above it stood
 " the seraphims: each one had six wings;
 " with twain he covered his face, and with
 " twain he covered his feet, and with twain
 " he did fly. And one cried unto another,
 " and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord
 " of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his
 glory †!"—So long as we regard iniquity in our hearts, we will never shun it in our practice; but it is only so far as we have obtained saving discoveries of the pardoning mercy of God through the atonement, that

* Isa. vi. 5.

† Verses 2, 5.

we will loath sin, and abhor ourselves on account of it. “ And I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord, That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God *.”—Our diligence in duty must be exactly in proportion to the sense we have of the extent of our obligations to God. But his new covenant character in Christ, presents us with a new and powerful obligation to the study of holiness. He is not only our Maker, and our Preserver, but he is also become the God of our salvation; and this lays us under the strongest ties of love and gratitude, to be for him and not for another: “ O come! let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For he is *our God*, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To-day, if ye will hear his voice †.”—A sense of obligation, however strong, would prove but a feeble induce-

* Ezek. xvi. 63.

† Psal. xcvi. 6, 7.

ment to the performance of duty, had we no warrant to expect Divine aid in duty, and the acceptance of our services with God; but his new covenant character in Christ, furnishes us with an ample warrant to expect both. Through the blood of Jesus we have access with boldness to God's throne*. From this throne, we are warranted to expect mercy and grace, to help us in every time of need †; and our services, however imperfect in themselves, are holy and acceptable unto God, through the atoning sacrifice and prevalent advocacy of his own Son. "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved ‡." "Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ §."—Hope is a powerful principle of action: but the death of Christ taken in connection with his resurrection, opens up the pleasing prospect of a blessed immortality, as the gracious reward of all our services and

* Heb. x. 19, 20.

† Heb. iv. 16.

‡ Eph. i. 6

§ 1 Pet. ii. 5.

dignity and glory, with that external condition of meanness and abasement to which he submitted for our sakes. He who is in the form of God appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh:—He who is the Sovereign Lord of the universe, took upon him the form of a servant:—He whom angels adore, made himself of no reputation:—He who is the Lord of life, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross *. We must also take into the account the character of those for whose sake the Son of God submitted to all this abasement. It was for the creatures of his own power—not only for creatures, but for sinful creatures—rebels against his authority. “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare do die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us †.”

How free! How disinterested the love of Christ! “Ye know the grace of our Lord

* Phil. ii. 6, 7.

† Rom. v. 6, 7, 8.

“ Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet
 “ for our sakes he became poor, that ye
 “ through his poverty might be made rich *.”

How astonishingly great ! It has a height, a depth, a breadth, and a length, that passeth knowledge. In comparison of this, mere human regard is but like the drop of a bucket to the waters of the ocean. To see the extent and value of this love, we must also take into account the precious fruits of his death. He has by his one offering delivered us from hell, and opened up to us the way to the abodes of eternal bliss. He has rescued us from eternal perdition, and brought us to God the fountain of happiness. Such amazing love calls for a grateful return : and its moral influence upon the heart is powerfully felt by all who believe. They love him who first loved them ; and this love makes their duty their delight. They are constrained no less sweetly than powerfully by this love, to the practice of holy obedience. They consider themselves bound by every possible tie, to live to the honour of him who shed his precious blood for them. “ For the love of

* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

“ Christ constraineth us, because we thus
 “ judge, that if one died for all, then were all
 “ dead: and that he died for all, that they
 “ which live, should not henceforth live unto
 “ themselves, but unto him who died for them
 “ and rose again *.” The sense which they
 have of the greatness of this love produces in
 them a rooted aversion to sin. They consider
 it as that which crucified the Lord of glory, and
 put him to an open shame; and this fills them
 with self-loathing and heart contrition. Look-
 ing on him whom they have pierced, they
 mourn for him as one who mourneth for an
 only son, and are in bitterness as one who is in
 bitterness for a first-born †. This love inspires
 them with holy revenge against sin. Since he
 suffered for sin, they are determined to die to
 sin; since it put him to an open shame upon
 the accursed tree, they are determined to cru-
 cify it: “ Our old man is crucified with him,
 “ that the body of sin might be destroyed,
 “ that henceforth we should not serve sin †.”
 Love leads to imitate the object loved; the be-
 liever’s love to Christ inclines him to imitate

* 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

† Zech. xii. 10.

‡ Rom. vi. 6.

his blessed example. He grows up unto him in all things. He cultivates every part of the Christian temper, which is the same mind which was also in Christ Jesus. He studies to walk as he also walked; to imitate his zeal for God's honour, and his disinterested benevolence towards men. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*." His eye is constantly fixed upon this perfect model of excellence; and the realizing view which he obtains of his glory assimilates him to the same likeness. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit †." Supreme love to an object, gives every energy of the soul a direction towards that object: the believer's love to Christ gives a spiritual and heavenly direction to every affection and desire of his heart. Being risen with Christ, he seeks those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God ‡. His

* 1 John iii. 16.

† 2 Cor. iii. 18.

‡ Col. iii. 1.

conversation is in heaven, from whence also he looks for the Saviour*. Whom having not seen he loves; in whom, though now he sees him not, yet believing, he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory †. In fine, love seeks the presence and fellowship of the object loved. Can any lover of Jesus but hate sin, and crucify it, since it mars his comfortable fellowship with him in grace, and prevents his admission to his immediate presence in glory? Can he neglect the study of holiness, since without it no man can see the Lord? No! An assured expectation of being with Christ, will always lead to the ardent pursuit of holiness in all manner of conversation. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure ‡.”

Thirdly, It must furnish powerful motives to holiness, if we consider the display which it

* Phil. iii. 2.

† 1 Pet. i. 8.

‡ 1 John iii. 2, 3.

affords of the deep desert and awful malignity of sin. Sin is the transgression of the law; whatever, therefore, is calculated to excite our abhorrence of sin, must have a tendency to promote the study of holiness. Sin appears to be an evil thing and a bitter, in the glass of the Divine law;—in the glass of all our personal and domestic afflictions;—and of all those public judgments, which have in every age desolated our world. Its terrible consequences will be still more strikingly displayed in the eternal destruction of wicked men and fallen angels in a future state. But all these, taken together, fall far short of affording such a display of the awful desert of sin, as that presented to our view in the sufferings and death of the Son of God in our nature. Sin was judicially condemned as the object of God's abhorrence, and the execration of all upright intelligences, by its punishment in the flesh of Christ as our Surety: “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, con-
 “ demned sin in the flesh *.” In proportion

* Rom. viii. 3, 4.

as sin is lightly thought of, it will be readily committed. But who, with the agonies endured in Gethsemane and Calvary in his view, can think lightly of sin? Contemplating these, who will any longer flatter himself that he shall have peace in the practice of wickedness? If sin imputed brought the Lord of glory to the dust of death, how fearful must be the punishment which awaits the sinner and the ungodly? If such things were done in the green tree, what must be done in the dry?

Fourthly, The moral tendency of the atonement also appears from the display which it affords of the purity and immutable obligation of the Divine law. Whatever tends to impress the minds of subjects with veneration for the law, must operate as a powerful motive to obedience. In this case the governor secures obedience, not by force, but from a powerful sense of moral obligation. But the atonement affords the most striking display of the perfection and immutable obligation of the Divine law. The moral law contains a complete rule of duty: "The law of the Lord is perfect *." It enjoins what is right, and

* Psal. xix. 7.

only what is right, and prohibits what is evil, and all that is evil. Its penal sentence warns us, that we cannot violate its precepts with impunity. But in our Lord's obedience even unto the death, we have the righteousness of the law exemplified in our own nature in all its perfection. Besides, in his death we have a most striking proof of its unalterable obligation. Could the law, in any instance, have admitted of an abatement of its claims, certainly this would have been granted to God's dear Son, when enduring its sanction as our Surety: but the cup could not pass from him till he drank it. This is the tendency of the atonement, however, only when viewed as necessary from the moral perfection of God. According to the other view, the law is a mere arbitrary appointment, and may be mitigated, or even dispensed with at pleasure: it is not founded on the immutable and eternal principles of equity. The view we have taken, therefore, of the necessity of the atonement, as it serves to inspire veneration for the law, must have a powerful influence in promoting the study of holiness.

Fifthly, This view of the Necessity of the Atonement has a powerful tendency to promote holiness, as it leaves no room for the sinner to hope, that, continuing to neglect the grace of God, and to trample upon his authority, he shall escape eternal perdition. We have already seen that the opinion, that God might have pardoned sin without an atonement, gives countenance to such a presumptuous hope *. But, in proportion as it holds out to the sinner the hope of impunity, it must have a tendency to indulge him in the practice of sin. The doctrine, as here stated, leaves the sinner without the least prospect of escape, if he rejects salvation through the cross of Christ; so that it is equally calculated to operate upon his fear of punishment, continuing in the practice of sin, as upon his hope of felicity in the way of turning to God through Christ. To this purpose is the reasoning of the inspired writer to the Hebrews: “There-
 “ fore we ought to give the more earnest heed
 “ to the things that we have heard, lest at
 “ any time we should let them slip. For if

* See Page 225.

“ the word spoken by angels was steadfast,
 “ and every transgression and disobedience
 “ received a just recompence of reward, how
 “ shall we escape if we neglect so great sal-
 “ vation, which at the first began to be spoken
 “ by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us
 “ by them that heard him * ?” “ If we sin
 “ wilfully, after we have received the know-
 “ ledge of the truth, there remaineth no more
 “ sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful look-
 “ ing for of judgment, and fiery indignation,
 “ which shall devour the adversaries. He
 “ that despised Moses’ law died without
 “ mercy, under two or three witnesses ; of
 “ how much sorer punishment, suppose ye,
 “ shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden
 “ under foot the Son of God, and hath counted
 “ the blood of the covenant, wherewith he
 “ was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath
 “ done despite unto the Spirit of grace †.”

To conclude, Let the avowed enemies of
 the atonement consider the vast importance
 of the salvation of the immortal soul. “ For
 “ what is a man profited if he should gain the

* Heb. ii. 1, 2, 3.

† Heb. x. 26, 27, 28, 29.

“ whole world, and lose his soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul * ?” Do not your own consciences tell you that you are sinners? Do not they also, when solitude leaves room for reflection, dictate to you, that death is the wages of sin? And do not the Scriptures coincide, in both respects, with the testimony of conscience? How vain then the attempt to shield yourselves from the wrath to come behind your empty resolutions of repentance and reformation! resolutions which, you must be convinced, you never can be able to realize. These, are a bed shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and a covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it. Be not deceived: “ Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” And nothing less than a sacrifice of infinite value can put away sin, as pertaining to the conscience. We beseech you, in the bowels of kindness, to give the Scripture doctrines of our Lord’s divinity, and atonement for sin, an attentive and impartial consideration. Do not reject them because they are mysterious.

* Mat. xvi. 26.

Your own existence is a mystery. The great depth of these doctrines is no small proof of their Divine origin. God must be unsearchable in his counsels as well as in his nature. Yield yourselves to his authority in his Word; and submit yourselves to the reign of his grace through the atoning blood of his dear Son. Oh! remember that if you reject this great salvation, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation to devour the adversaries. Death is approaching, and judgment awaits you. In the field of controversy, when you have only to contend with fellow-mortals, your sentiments and views may put on a fair appearance; but they can yield no solid comfort in the prospect of appearing before the awful tribunal of God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. “It is
 “a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the
 “living God: *” And this punishment awaits all those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

* Heb. x. 31,

To you who profess to believe this doctrine, but in works deny it, we would say, Be not deceived, Christ is not the minister of sin. He gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it. Your faith cannot be genuine, since it does not purify your hearts, and lead you to the study of universal holiness. True faith worketh by love, and love is the fulfilling of the law. By your conduct, you harden the Deist and Socinian in their infidelity. Through you the doctrine of the cross of Christ is every day blasphemed by them. You are accessory to their ruin, as your conduct is the occasion of their stumbling at the doctrine of the atonement, through which alone they can be saved. Oh! consider that sound notions of Divine truth, when not received in the love thereof, will only add to your condemnation on a future day. Not every one who saith to Christ, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who doeth the will of his Father who is in heaven. No knowledge is saving which is not practical. The grace of God, when received and improved, teacheth us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live

soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah at the day of judgment than for you; when, with the knowledge of the way of salvation, you shall be cast into hell, because you received not the truth in the love thereof, that you might be saved.

To you who have fled to the blood of Jesus for refuge, we would say, Hail! ye highly favoured of the Lord; in you God beholds no iniquity; ye are the peculiar favourites of heaven. You are safe in life. The dreadful scourge of Divine wrath cannot reach you, because you have made the Lord your refuge, even the most High your habitation. There shall no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling. Even what is afflictive in your outward lot shall yield to you the peaceable fruits of righteousness. You shall be happy at death. The way to heaven is consecrated for you by the blood of Christ, and heaven itself prepared for your reception. The great High-Priest of our profession is there ready to receive you. He has gone to prepare a place for you. Study then in the mean time to walk worthy of your holy vocation.

Exemplify in your lives the moral tendency of the doctrine of the atonement ; and let it appear that you daily feel the obligations which it lays you under to the study of holiness. “ Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

THE END.

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