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LECTURES  
ON THE  
ATONEMENT.





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LECTURES ON ATONEMENT.

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# LECTURES

ON THE

## DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT:

WITH AN APPENDIX.

BY J. SCOTT PORTER,

JUNIOR MINISTER OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION,  
BELFAST.

L O N D O N :

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TO  
MICHAEL ANDREWS, ESQ.,  
ARDOYNE, BELFAST.

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DEAR SIR,

To no other person can the following pages be so properly inscribed as to you. The *Lectures on Atonement* were delivered some years since, in the ordinary course of pulpit duty; and, having served their turn, were laid aside, among other papers, without any prospect of ever seeing the light. A few months ago, however, you expressed a wish to read them; they were accordingly placed in your hands. After perusing them, you thought them likely to be useful to a wider circle; and urged that they should be printed, with an earnestness which I felt it impossible to resist. I therefore dedicate them to you; and am happy to have this opportunity of testifying my high esteem for your public, personal, and religious character; and the gratification I have experienced in your warm, steady, and long-continued friendship.

I remain, dear Sir,

Your Faithful Friend and Pastor,

J. SCOTT PORTER.

BELFAST, 16th April, 1860.



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ERRATUM.—P. 5, l. 8. For *Hut-ta-yim*, read *Hhut-ta-woth*.





# LECTURE I.

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## THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

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THE following passages from the Sacred Scriptures will form a fitting introduction to the consideration of the Scripture Doctrine of Atonement :—

EXODUS xxxiv., 4-7. And Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto Mount Sinai, as Jehovah had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And Jehovah descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of Jehovah. And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, "Jehovah! Jehovah is a God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin."

ISAIAH lv., 6, 7. Seek ye Jehovah while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

JEREMIAH xxvi., 2, 3. Thus saith Jehovah—"Stand in the court of the house of Jehovah, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the house of Jehovah, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word: if so be that they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way: that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them, because of their evil doings."

EZEKIEL xviii., 21-23. If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord Jehovah; and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

LUKE xv., 3-7. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them: 'Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep, which was lost.' I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance."

EPHESIANS ii., 4-9. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus. For by grace ye are saved, through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.

1 JOHN i., 8, 9. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

---

MY CHRISTIAN BROTHERS,—We are about to enter upon the consideration of a subject, which is, of all subjects, the most important to us—as mortal, yet immortal—as moral and accountable beings. However we may differ from each other in various respects, there is one circumstance in which we all agree—*we are all sinners before God*. Our hearts and consciences concur with the solemn testimonies of God's Word in bearing witness to our guiltiness in His sight. We all know and feel that, unless there be acceptance, pardon, forgiveness, with our Heavenly Father, we are utterly without hope. What subject of inquiry can possess a more awful interest than that which aims to unfold the means by which our souls may be recovered from their lost condition, and brought once more into the enjoyment of communion with God? This is, indeed, a question of solemn—yea, of everlasting interest. It is one in which we have the deepest personal concern. Nor is it of

less importance to the world at large ; *for all are sinners*—“There is none righteous ; no, not one.” (Rom. iii. 10.) Let us enter upon the consideration of a subject so interesting in its nature, and so comprehensive in its object, with the deepest earnestness of mind. Let us endeavour to lay aside all partial, prejudiced, and sectarian views ; let us seek for the truth in the love of it, and in the love of it alone ; let us be prepared to embrace and profess, whatsoever—after the most diligent and impartial examination—appears to our minds to be the true and genuine teaching of God’s Holy Book ; let us be ready to renounce as error whatever seems to us, after careful inquiry, to be contrary to the doctrine of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let us not be deterred from this course by the fear of censure, or of loss, or of scorn ; nor by the desire of man’s favour or applause. Let us remember our blessed Saviour’s declaration :—“Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.” (Mark viii., 38.) And may the “very God of truth” bless our endeavours to discover His truth, and to apply it to our hearts for edification.

As the course of lectures, of which the present forms the commencement, relates generally to the *doctrine of atonement*, it may be useful to begin by a few remarks upon the Scriptural use of the *word*. It occurs several times in the Old Testament ; and there it signifies the removal of uncleanness—the cleansing, as it is called, of *ceremonial impurity*, whether from human beings or objects without life. This point requires to be briefly explained.

It pleased God, for wise reasons, to give to the Jewish people a code of laws, consisting, in great part, of ritual institutions. Their meat, their dress, their mode of living—matters which, in themselves, are neither good nor evil—were made the subject of strict rules ; and the violation of these minute and positive, or ceremonial rules, whether the violation were consciously committed or otherwise, rendered the violator an unclean person for the time—defiled him—made him in the eye of

the law, unfit, so long as the defilement lasted, to join with his brethren in the common affairs of life, and excluded him from the solemnities of the public worship of God. For example, whoever partook of the flesh of any land animal that does not part the hoof and chew the cud, was defiled. Whoever ate of any fish that is not covered with scales, was defiled. Whoever wore a garment in which two sorts of materials—such as wool and linen—were woven together, was defiled. Whoever touched a corpse, though by accident, or without knowing that he had done so, was defiled. Whoever had an ulcer on his body, or touched another man in whose person there was such an ailment, was defiled. Nay, whoever happened to sit upon a chair on which a person having a running sore had previously sat, unless it had been washed in the meantime, was defiled. A leprous person was defiled; or one who touched him. A woman after child-birth was defiled. And so in many other cases.

In like manner, there were strict ceremonial laws respecting the tabernacle, the altar, and the implements that were employed in offering up sacrifices, and in the other solemnities of public worship. If these laws happened to be in any respect neglected or infringed, the article with reference to which the neglect had occurred, was defiled—rendered unclean—and made unfit to be used in the service of God.\*

It is evident that, if these defilements or ceremonial impurities had been incapable of being removed, the whole Jewish nation, and every object in the sanctuary, would, in a short time, have become polluted. For no care or diligence could have enabled a man to escape defilement, or the priests to secure the sacred implements from pollution, when it arose out of so many causes, and was produced by circumstances of which no one might be aware. Had it been irremediable, a stop would have been put to the public worship of God; because the altar, at which alone the appointed solemnities could be fulfilled, would have been unfit to be used in sacrifice; the priests would have been incapacitated to present the offering to

\* See Appendix A.

Jehovah ; and the people on whose behalf it was offered would have been unable to attend upon it, or even to enter the place in which it might be performed. Therefore, means were appointed in the law, by which these defilements could be removed. These means consisted usually in washing the clothes, bathing the person, and offering certain sacrifices, which are called, in the Old Testament, *sin-offerings and trespass-offerings*; (*Ihat-tā-im* and *Ashā-min*); on the presentation of which the impure person or thing was cleansed of the pollutions.\* In these cases the sacrificing priest was declared to “*make atonement*” for the person or things which were thus freed from defilement, and even to make “*atonement for their sins.*” For it is important to bear in mind that these ceremonial transgressions, though involving no moral culpability, were called *sins*. In illustration of this point, I think it will be sufficient to refer to one verse only in the law of Moses. I take it from Leviticus xvi., 33 :—“*And he,*” (that is, the priest), “*shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary ; and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar ; and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.*” That is to say, he shall, by the performance of certain prescribed ceremonies, remove any defilement which the people, or the priests, the altar, the tabernacle, or the sanctuary, may have incurred by the neglect of the ritual laws ; and shall render them fit to engage, or to be employed, once more in the public service of God.

Observe, however, that these atonements only referred to ceremonial transgressions, and to sins of ignorance, properly so called. Such offences alone were purged by ceremonial atonements ; but for wilful transgressions against morality none such were prescribed, nor would such have been accepted. For breaches of the moral law, when they affected the interests of society at large, severe punishments were decreed,† and their forgiveness in the sight of God was declared to depend entirely on the offender’s penitence and reformation. Of this, the pas-

\* See Appendix B.

† See Appendix C.

sage from Isaiah, which I read at the beginning of this lecture, affords a proof. (lv. 7):—"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." To the same effect is that taken from Ezekiel xviii., 21, 22:—"If the wicked will turn from all the sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done, he shall live." It would be easy to produce abundance of passages equally clear with these; but these will suffice, for nothing can be clearer.

Thus, under the Old Testament, ritual offences, and the defilements which they occasioned, were removed by ritual atonements; and moral offences, by a sincere change of heart and a thorough reformation of life.

In the New Testament, the word "atonement" occurs but once in our English version; that is, in Rom. v., 11:—"And not only so, but we also rejoice in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received *the atonement*." It is remarkable that this is the only passage in the New Testament in which the word is found; and, also, that there is now an almost unanimous consent of critics and divines, of every church, that, in this passage, the word which the Apostle has used would have been more correctly rendered "*reconciliation*." It is so rendered in every other passage in which it occurs—(Rom xi., 15; 2 Cor. v., 18, 19)—and the kindred verb is, in the context of the passage which we are now considering, and in the very preceding verse, twice rendered, *to reconcile*. But, in fact, the two words—*atonement* and *reconciliation*—signified the same thing at the time when our translation of the Bible was made—to *atone* is to "at-one;" the *atonement* is the "*at-one-ment*," or the "*setting at one*"—the making friends of those who have been at variance; that is to say, it is their *reconciliation*.\*

\* See Appendix D.

It is almost too trite to deserve especial mention—only that it has been often overlooked—that reconciliation (*or atonement*) implies a previous state of hostility. No one can be reconciled to another unless he has been his enemy. Where there is enmity there may be reconciliation, but nowhere else. Now, God neither is, nor can be, the enemy of man. On the contrary, He is, always, and eternally, the friend of man. He does not, He cannot hate. He loves His creatures; He loves all His creatures. He is the father of them all. Therefore, He cannot be reconciled to them. To talk of “*a reconciled God*”—a phrase which is familiar as household words in certain tracts and sermons that I have seen—is blasphemy; because it implies that God cherishes enmity; than which no assertion can be more untrue—none more injurious to the character of God. “He is love.” (1 John iv., 8–16.) He is love from all eternity. He was love before there was man or angel to adore Him. The goodness of man did not invest Him with this attribute. The wickedness of man cannot divest Him of it. The sinfulness and rebellion of a whole universe could not render Him less than He is now, or was before the universe existed—“Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious.” And though the universe were altogether given up to sin—and the sins of men were multiplied and rendered more intense—yet still the mercies of God would out-number them and overtop them. God cannot be the enemy of His creatures; therefore, He cannot be reconciled to them. He cannot be reconciled to those with whom He never was at war.

But, alas! the case is far, far otherwise with man. He places himself, by sin, in an attitude not only of disobedience, but of rebellion, against God. He becomes God’s enemy. He perversely strikes at the hand which is stretched out over him in protection, and which is continually pouring down bounties and blessings upon him. He sets himself in opposition to his best benefactor. He casts off the laws which were devised only for his own happiness, and tramples under foot the authority by which they were framed. He spurns at the wishes of his truest friend, and wages war against his best benefactor. God is not the enemy of man; but man is the enemy of God. God

cannot be reconciled to the beings to whom He is, and was, and ever will be, a friend and father ; but man not only may, but must, be reconciled to God, against whom he is at variance, and from whom he has been estranged, before he can know the purest happiness that a sinful being can experience—the joy of pardoned sin. In most exact accordance with this statement is the language of the Apostle :—“ For if, when we were enemies,” (remark, *we were enemies* to God—not He to us), “ we were reconciled unto God,” (remark, *we*, who were *enemies* to God, were reconciled to Him, but there is not a word of *God*, who was *always our friend, being reconciled to us*), “ through the death of His son,” (we shall consider, afterwards, how the death of Christ becomes a means of reconciling us to God) ; “ much more, we shall be saved by means of his life, now that we are reconciled ; and not only (reconciled), but that we also triumphantly rejoice in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by means of whom we have now received this reconciliation ”—that is, the opportunity and means of being reconciled. (Rom. v., 10, 11.) In other words, Christ came into the world, lived and taught, suffered, died, and rose again, that he might effectually proclaim the all-important truth—the solemn and deeply-interesting doctrine—that the Eternal Ruler of heaven and earth is not only the friend of the pure, the holy and the good, but the friend of all, even of the sinful and disobedient—to proclaim that, by a free impulse of His own heavenly nature, God desires the happiness of the vilest transgressors of His law ; that, because He desires their happiness, therefore He desires their repentance, seeing that, for the sinful and the fallen, there is no other pathway to the highest and the purest bliss except through the road of penitence ; that He delights to witness their repentance when they have sinned ; that to the penitent the hand of divine mercy is continually stretched forth ; and that he who, in contrition and sorrow, turns away from his sins, and, with a renewed and awakened spirit, seeks the face of the God whom he has, by sin, offended, is at once locked in the everlasting arms of heavenly love.

This is the Gospel of God’s atoning grace—the glad message of the Heavenly Father’s mercy and placability. These are



the joyful tidings which the Saviour made it the business of his life to proclaim; to which he endeavoured, by every most efficacious means, to draw their attention; and in which he sought to interest their hearts by every affecting and affectionate appeal. This is Christ's Gospel. I cannot conceive a notion against which the soul of Jesus would have revolted with more of horror and indignation than the bare idea—had any one dared to suggest it—of *his* having done anything which had the effect of rendering the Father of Mercies more merciful, or better enabled, or more disposed, to exercise mercy than He had been from all eternity! Most clearly does the Gospel testify that the love of God was the cause of Christ's mission to mankind; but never that his mission was the cause of God's love. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." (John iii. 16, 17.) "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv., 9, 10.) And so speaks the Apostle Paul:—"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 to die; *but God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*" (Rom. v., 6, 7, 8.) It was to a sinful and rebellious world that Jesus Christ was sent on this errand of mercy. He came not to make God merciful, nor to dispose Him to pardon, nor to enable Him to forgive; much less, to buy off, by his own death and sufferings, the souls of those who, but for his interference, would have been condemned to everlasting misery, notwithstanding their best repentance. No: he came to proclaim the blessed truth, that God is merciful in His own nature—ever merciful—and to persuade, and beseech, and implore men to lay hold, by repentance, on their Heavenly Father's gracious offers of forgiveness.

We cannot find anywhere a more striking and characteristic example of our Saviour's teaching than in that chapter of St. Luke, from which I have selected one of the passages prefixed to this lecture. The sinner is the lost sheep, which hath strayed far from the fold, and from the fresh pastures that the good shepherd's care has provided for his flock. But the loving concern of the Great Shepherd of the sheep is not withdrawn from the erring and guilty wanderer. Without a price paid—without a thought of vengeance—much less, of vengeance to be wreaked on the unoffending, instead of the guilty—he leaves the ninety and nine that had never strayed—seeks diligently for the lost one until he finds it. “And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them : ‘Rejoice with me ; for I have found the sheep which was lost !’” And this joy of the affectionate keeper of the flock is, by our Lord himself, declared to be a type of the heavenly jubilee which hails the penitent sinner on his return to God :—“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.” (Luke xv., 3-7.) To the same effect is the parable of the lost piece of money, which immediately follows. At its close, also, our Lord declares, that “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” But no passage in the Bible, nor in any other book, can teach the doctrine of God's free forgiveness of the penitent more clearly, and, at the same time, with more touching tenderness, than the parable of the Prodigal Son, which concludes this chapter. The misguided young man had removed himself from his home, and his father, and his father's care. He had wasted the goods which his father's bounty had bestowed, in riotous and impure living—grieving the heart of that generous parent by the report of his guilty and sinful life. “And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land ; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country ; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat : and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said : ‘How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish

with hunger ! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants.' And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell upon his neck, and kissed him. And his son said unto him : ' Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' But his father said unto the servants, ' Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him ; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet ; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it ; and let us eat and be merry : for this my son was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost, and is found.' "

This is our blessed Saviour's doctrine of atonement—free forgiveness "without money and without price ;" nor can any one take out of that parable any other doctrine, unless he supposes—what, however, I believe no one has ever yet supposed—that our Saviour meant to condemn the conduct of the forgiving parent as unjust and weak, and to approve and commend the sentiments of the elder brother, who is represented as offended by the joy which the father had shewn on the return of the prodigal, and by the unpurchased pardon extended to him, as soon as his repentance shewed him to be in a fit state for pardon.

The same doctrine is placed before us in our Lord's Prayer, in which we are instructed to pray that "God may forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"—(Matt. vi., 12)—that is, *freely and unreservedly*. "For," as our Saviour afterwards explained this petition, "if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you : but, if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. vi., 14, 15.) Our forgiveness is to be of many offences. "If thy brother trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again unto thee, saying, I repent—thou shalt forgive him." (Luke xvii., 4.) The nature of God's forgiveness is further illustrated by an expression in the parable of the two servants :—The master (who represents the God of All) said to the unmerciful

creditor, "Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because *thou desiredst me* : shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee ?" And how does God forgive ? Freely. "When they had not wherewith to pay, he *freely forgave them both*." (Matt. xviii., 32, 33 ; Luke vii., 42.)

Christ's doctrine of atonement—or the reconciliation of the sinner to God—is, that it is a change wrought in the mind and heart of the sinner—wrought where it is needed—wrought where the enmity resides. But Christ never taught, nor do the Scriptures ever teach, that by or in the reconciliation (or *atonement*) there is any change wrought in the mind of God ; for *there* no enmity resides, and no reconciliation is required. The reconciliation which the Saviour preached is the reconciliation of man to God—not the reconciliation of God to man. To talk of God as being reconciled to His creatures is to libel His character, for it imputes to Him that He did or does look upon them with hatred or aversion.

The whole life and ministry of Christ were calculated to produce this all-important change in the heart and soul of man. This great end of his coming he laboured to accomplish by the doctrines which he taught respecting the Unity of God, his fatherly character, and his moral government and providence—by his proclamation of free pardon to the penitent, on the sole condition of reformation and amendment of life—by his promise of divine help to those who labour earnestly for growth in spiritual excellence—by the light which he has thrown on the path of duty—by the influence of his own spotless and winning example—by the warning which he has given of the severe punishment which is the inevitable consequence of unrepented guilt—by his discoveries of the future world—by his own resurrection and ascension, whereby all his promises are so impressively authenticated—and by his continual intercession on behalf of his disciples with his God and Father. But, above all, he has accomplished, and still accomplishes, that divine work, by the attractive and efficacious influence of his death and sufferings, on the heart of the awakened sinner. That solemn event inspires all who contemplate it with a dread and hatred of sin ;

for it was sin that rendered all that bitter anguish which the Saviour endured needful, in order to accomplish the work given unto him to finish. How hateful, then, must sin be in the sight of God, when, in order to remove it from the world, He sent His well-beloved son on a mission which was to terminate in a catastrophe so dreadful! Viewed as an example, the crucified Son of God manifests a piety so ardent, an affection for mankind so abiding, an adherence to truth and duty, in the face of the most dreadful trials, so persevering—a superiority so striking to all the passions and influences of the world—to its hopes, its fears, its trials, and its pains—that, if the same spirit could be infused into the hearts of his disciples, sin, and guilt, and crime would disappear from among them, and the church of believers on earth would be like the church of the redeemed in heaven, “without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” The death of Christ likewise appeals to our sympathies—to our purest, holiest sympathies. It gives to him who endured all this for our benefit a hold upon our heart’s affections that cannot but lead us to detest those vices by which we make his cross of none effect—by which we render all his tears, and cries, and agonies, vain—by which we even trample on his mangled corse, and “count the blood of the covenant, where-with we were sanctified, as an unholy thing.” (Heb. x., 29.)

And now, having clearly, as I hope, though briefly, stated what seems to me the doctrine of Scripture on this great question, let me, in conclusion, revert to an observation that was thrown out near the beginning of this lecture. The subject of it is one in which we must all feel that we have a most serious—yea, an all-important concern; for we are, all of us, sinners before God. “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” And, “if our hearts condemn us”—as condemn us most assuredly they will, unless they are utterly hardened, or we are utterly deaf to their voice—“then God is greater than our hearts, and He knoweth all things.” (1 John iii., 20.) Unless there be a remedy for sin, our case is desperate. But, blessed be God, there is a remedy; and it has been the object of this discourse to unfold, in the very words of the Scriptures of truth, what that remedy is:—

“With Jehovah there is mercy : with Him there is plenteous redemption.” (Ps. cxxx., 7.) The blessed discoveries of His benignity and compassion, which we have now considered, are sufficient, one would think, to bend the most stubborn will, and soften the most obdurate heart. My brethren, let them soften ours. Let “the goodness of our God lead us to repentance.” (Rom. ii., 4.) Let the love wherewith the Saviour hath loved us, in giving himself up for our sakes to death, enkindle our grateful affection for him. Let us not make those sufferings fruitless by an obstinate rejection of the blessings which he died to place within our reach. Let him not plead in vain to us his stripes, his crown of thorns, his pierced hands, his lacerated feet, his wounded side. Let even the feeble voice of a fellow-sinner reach your hearts, and awaken your sympathies, when he would—addressing *himself* as well as *you*—as an ambassador for Christ—plead with you in Christ’s stead : “*Be ye reconciled to God !*” May the precious offers of grace and mercy, which the New Testament unfolds ; may the Gospel—the glad message which it contains—touch our hearts, convince us and convert us ; lead us to an unfeigned repentance, and bring us into a state of reconciliation with our God, that so we may, in the truest and fullest sense of the words, have reason to “rejoice in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement !” (Rom. v., ii.)

## LECTURE II.

## HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

2 COR. v., 17-20. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 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. 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!*

HERE we have the apostolic doctrine of reconciliation, or atonement. It teaches that, if any man desires to be "in Christ" he must become, morally and religiously, "a new creature." Directly and immediately, this statement applies to the converts who embraced Christianity, having been educated as Jews and Heathens. In their case, "old things had passed away, and all things were become new." Old prejudices, old principles, old habits, old vices, had been renounced; and a new state of heart, character, and life, conformable to the holy spirit and sanctifying influences of their new faith, had been produced within them. Such a change they could never have themselves effected, without a divine interposition on their behalf. It required a special dispensation of religion, of which not man but God is the author. St. Paul does not separate his own case from that of the other converts. He says, "All things are of God," who hath "reconciled us"—enemies as we were by sin—unto Himself, "through" the life and doctrine of "Jesus Christ." It

is God who gave to the Apostles the call to preach the blessed "doctrine of reconciliation;" "how that God was in Christ reconciling" the sinful and rebellious "world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses" unto those who embraced the offered terms. The Apostles, therefore, "in Christ's stead," "as ambassadors for Christ," besought all to whom they addressed themselves, as if "God, through them, besought" and implored, saying, "*Be ye reconciled to God.*" Nothing can be plainer than this. It shews that the Christian scheme of reconciliation owes its origin to God's free grace. "All things are of God." It shews that Christ was merely the mediator or instrument through whom God carried out His sovereign plans of mercy. It is "*God*" that "hath reconciled us unto Himself, *through Jesus Christ.*" It shews that what Christ had done, during his earthly ministry, the Apostles were, after his removal, engaged in doing. "We are ambassadors, instead of Christ"—"we pray you in Christ's stead." It shews that the work to be done consisted in the reconciliation of sinners unto God, not of God unto sinners. "God hath reconciled *us to Himself*—God was in Christ, reconciling *the world unto Himself.*" It shews that, although the Gospel proceeds from God's free grace and abounding love, still the acceptance of it must be our own act and deed. "We pray you, in Christ's stead, *be ye reconciled to God.*" And, lastly, it shews that the essential condition of reconciliation is a change of heart and life. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Each of these points would admit of very useful and important applications, but the illustration of them would require a lecture to itself; and at present we have another topic before us.

I shall only remark in passing, that, although addressed originally to converts from Judaism and Heathenism, the spirit of the passage is quite applicable to ourselves:—for there is none of us who does not stand in need of a renovation, a change of heart, and an amendment of life, similar to that which the early Christians experienced, though not in all points exactly the same.

We have here the view which the Apostle took of his great commission. There is no doubt that his colleagues agreed with



him in this view ; there is no doubt that they acted upon this view ; there is no doubt that, having committed it to writing in their epistles, they desired that it should form the grand topic of the preaching of the Gospel to the end of time. But, alas ! the treasure was lodged in earthen vessels. The fallibility of men's minds, and the weakness of their hearts, gave admission to various corruptions of doctrine, of worship, and of morals. These, in time, so overspread the Saviour's church, that, in wide regions, nominally Christian, and often among persons who prided themselves on their peculiar claim to the possession of the purest form of faith, the Apostles of Christ—if they had been permitted to visit the disciples of their master—would hardly have been able to recognise the religion which they had themselves planted among mankind. The progress of this corruption of primitive purity, so far as it respects the doctrine of atonement, or reconciliation, we are now to trace. And this I shall attempt to do, as briefly as I can, with due regard to clearness.

We may assert, in the first place, without fear of contradiction, that the teachers of the church who immediately succeeded the Apostles, were as far from the notions at present held on the subject of atonement as the Apostles themselves. Indeed, their language very closely resembles that held by Paul, John, and Peter, in reference to the death of Christ ; and their opinions, generally speaking, were manifestly the same. It is true that one of them, Clement—*Clemens Romanus*, as he is called, to distinguish him from another writer of the same name—in one place uses an expression, which, if it were found in the pages of a modern orthodox divine, might naturally enough be interpreted as referring to the doctrine of satisfaction to divine justice by the death and sufferings of Christ ;—but the whole scope of his writings shews that he was a stranger to that theory ;\* and that his language in that passage, (as is certainly the case on other questions frequently), is not to be construed strictly. But respecting his contemporaries, whose works have come down to us, there cannot be a doubt that they did not hold the

\* See Appendix E.

modern orthodox opinions. Ignatius, who was a disciple of St. John, says that Christ "was truly crucified for us in the flesh, under Pontius Pilate, . . . in order that, through his resurrection, he might set up, for all ages, a signal to all his holy and faithful followers." Polycarp, who was a disciple of Ignatius, says, that Christ Jesus "suffered all for our sakes, that we might live through him. Then, let us be imitators of his patience." There is nothing in their writings that bears on the subject of atonement more directly or strongly than these sensible and truly Christian expressions. But these expressions have not the savour of modern orthodoxy. Indeed, Basnage—a very able writer in defence of the modern opinions, and one who was particularly well acquainted with the early history of the Christian church—admits that the early Fathers, as they are called, express themselves "very meagerly" of the "satisfaction of Christ, and that they rested much weight upon good works."\* And Flaccius Illyricus, a very learned man—one of the most zealous of the Lutheran Reformers, and who, both as a historian and a divine, is most highly esteemed—declares that "the Christian writers who lived soon after the time of the Apostles were *totally ignorant* of man's natural corruption, the mysteries of the Gospel, and the benefits of Christ." And I believe they were "totally ignorant" of the doctrines which these words are now commonly used to signify.† What must convince everyone that Basnage and Flaccius are right, is this:—Those early Fathers, to whom I have referred, protest against an opinion that had been broached by a set of men called *Gnostics*, several of whom held that *Christ did not really die upon the cross*; that he had a kind of phantom body; and that he suffered and was crucified only in appearance. If such an opinion were published at the present day, I feel no doubt that the utmost horror would be expressed against that theory, on the ground that it completely destroys the foundation on which the doctrine of the satisfaction for sin by Christ's sufferings rests. But the Fathers who contended most vehemently against the Gnostics,

\* Histoire des Églises Réformées, vol. i., p. 75.

† See Appendix F.

*never once allude to such an argument!* It is plain, therefore, that they could not have held the modern doctrine of atonement as a satisfaction for sin.\* A similar conclusion may be drawn from the silence of the Apostle's Creed—a document which was drawn up in the middle or latter end of the second century. It says that our Lord Jesus Christ “was crucified, dead, and buried;” but it does not say that he died to satisfy divine justice for human guilt.

Indeed, the doctrine of satisfaction, when it was first plainly broached, which was not till about two hundred years after the death of Christ, did not represent his blood as satisfying the claims of divine justice, but *as a payment made to the devil!* This was the doctrine advocated by the celebrated Origen. (A.D. 230.) He was, perhaps, the most learned Christian of his time, yet he seems never to have heard that any one regarded Christ's sufferings as the discharge of a debt due to God. Origen argues thus:—“Paul affirms, ‘*we are bought with a price;*’ therefore, we must have been bought from some one whose slaves we were; and who demanded what price he pleased, that he might dismiss those whom he held [in bondage]. But it was the devil who held us [in bondage]: for to him we had been given over for our sins. Wherefore, he demanded the blood of Christ as the price of our redemption.” (*Opp.* ii., 486.)

The Latin Fathers who wrote during some centuries after the time of Origen, believed, and argued, and stoutly maintained that the blood of Christ was a price paid to the devil for the souls of men. St. Ambrose says, “we were in pledge to a *bad creditor*, for sin; but Christ came and offered his blood for us.”† Optatus says, “the souls of men were in the possession of the devil, till they were ransomed by the blood of Christ.” (*Opp.* p. 80). St. Augustine says, “the blood of Christ is given as a price that we might be delivered from the devil's bonds. And yet the devil, *though he has received it*, is not thereby enriched, but rather bound by it”—that is, made a debtor. (*Opp.* iii., 417.) In another place he writes, “Was God the Father so angry with

\* See Appendix G.

† So cited by Grotius, T. iv., p. 344; but he gives no reference: and not having access to the works of Ambrose, I am not able to supply the omission.

us that He could not be appeased without the death of His own son? [No: but] by the justice of God the race of man had been delivered over to the devil. Yet the goodness of God did not forsake them though in the devil's power. And it pleased God, in order to deliver man from the power of the devil, that the devil should be overcome, not by *might*, but by *justice*. How then, was he overcome? Because, though there was in him [Christ] nothing worthy of death *he* [*i. e.* the devil] *killed him*." (*Opp.* iii., 414.) Augustine, therefore, considers, and expressly rejects the theory of Christ's death being the payment of a debt due to God. He regards the death of Christ as *an act of justice to the devil*, in discharge of his fair and lawful claims. This is quite different from modern ideas; but it was for a long time a recognized doctrine, if not the recognized doctrine, of the Western Church.

Some teachers in the Eastern Empire were evidently not quite satisfied with this theory. Not that they rejected it: they were not courageous enough for that, supported, as it was, by high authorities: but they felt difficulties, and probably had doubts. Gregory of Nazianzum was one of these. He thought that none of his predecessors had fully or fairly discussed the question, "*to whom and for what* was satisfaction made by the death of Christ." It is evident, therefore, that the modern doctrine of atonement had as yet never been held to be an essential doctrine of the faith; had it been so, it would surely have been discussed by some one. He undertook to examine this question, and he goes into it largely; but he seems unable to make up his own mind: in truth, he leaves the question exactly where he found it. "First," he says, "if the price was paid to the devil, *it was a great shame!* And if he not only received a price for us from God, but God became himself the price, then it would have been but fair that the devil, having received so large a price, should let us all out of his clutches;" (which, assuredly, Gregory believed he had not done). "Was then," he asks, "the price paid *to God?* How could that be? We were not in bondage to the Father. How then could he receive payment for our ransom? And how could He be delighted with the blood of His only begotten son, when He would not accept the sacrifice of Isaac at the hands of Abraham?" (*Opera*, p. 691). And that is the sum and substance

of all that Gregory says on the question ; so that this great, learned, and orthodox father, after all his anxiety to settle the point, leaves the question which he had undertaken to discuss unanswered. No modern champion of orthodoxy would have felt the difficulties which distressed the mind of Gregory. It is, indeed, somewhat strange, that he did not perceive that his arguments proved very clearly that the blood of Christ *was not a literal payment or satisfaction to any one*: but that seems not to have occurred to his mind.

There was another Gregory who was able to see his way through the fogs which obscured the mind of him of Nazianzum—it was Gregory the First, (commonly called the Great), Bishop or Pope of Rome. (A.D. 600.) And it may be interesting to those who are perpetually railing at Popes and Popery to be informed *that the first man who appears to have held the doctrine that the sufferings of Christ were a satisfaction made to the justice of the Father, and were necessary to enable God to forgive sins, was a Pope of Rome!* This great man, whose talents and position lent weight to every word which fell from his pen, declares that “the rust of sin *could not be purged away without the fire of torment*: wherefore, Christ came without *fault* that he might subject himself to voluntary torment, and *that he might bear the punishment due to our sins.*” (*Moralia in Job.* ii, 12; *Opp.* i, 13). The influence of this brief and cautious intimation was not lost. St. Thomas Aquinas, the great scholastic theologian of the middle ages, adopted the same view. Indeed, he went farther than the Pope had ventured ; for he expressly contradicted the opinion held by Ambrose and Augustine, that the sufferings and death of Christ were a price paid to the devil—a point which Gregory had thought it prudent to pass over in silence. St. Thomas says, that “by sin man became a debtor to God as a judge, and to the devil as a tormentor. *With respect to God, justice required that man should be redeemed, but not with respect to the devil.*” (*Summa Theologicæ*, P. iii., Q. 48, art. 6, p. 120). However, he elsewhere says that “it was not impossible for *God to be reconciled to man* without the death of Christ ; but the latter was more suitable.” (*Ib.* Q. 46, art 3, p. 111). Here first I meet with the idea of *a reconciled God*,

now, unhappily, too familiar. St. Thomas adds that baptism, penance, and the other sacraments—to which he assigned great efficacy—derived all their virtue from the death of Christ. These doctrines kept possession of the schools till the time of the Reformation.

In the sixteenth century, it was the prevailing doctrine of the Roman Catholic church that man, by sin, incurs two sorts of penalties: the one spiritual and eternal, due to God, which is remitted, on repentance, through His grace, founded on the merits of Christ; the other temporal, for the satisfaction of the church itself. But as the sins of most men are numberless, the amount of these temporal penalties, or penances, would far exceed the duration of their lives; hence a place is provided, called purgatory, in which the souls that are destined to reach heaven at last, are enabled to complete, after death, the time of their expiatory torture. The period of torment there, however, may be shortened, by putting to the sufferer's credit the merits of the saints, over and above what are required for their own salvation; these merits are laid up in store, ready for use; and the precious treasure can be dispensed by the church on earth, through its ministers, by means of efficacious sacraments. This was the leading point of the doctrine of Indulgences, which excited the indignation of Zwingli in Switzerland, of Luther in Germany, and of their brother Reformers throughout Europe.

The whole system of Indulgences, against which the Swiss and German Reformers protested, was founded upon the doctrine of human merit. The saints were supposed, by their works of supererogation, to have laid up a stock of merit, which was made available for the relief of others from the pains of purgatory, at least, if not from those of hell. Indulgences were draughts on that spiritual bank, in favour of the bearer, who, generally speaking, had paid for them in sterling coin. The Reformers first directed their attack against the sale of Indulgences. But they found it was covered and protected by the doctrine of human merit. The citadel could not be taken till this outwork was carried. Against the doctrine of human merit, therefore—that is, the merit of works performed by ordinary mortals—the Reformers directed the whole fire of

their spiritual artillery. Thus far they were, in my opinion, right. That man can, by any holiness of his, make his Creator a debtor, so as not only to be able to claim his own salvation, as the earned reward of his virtues, but even to go beyond his own salvation, and demand, as a right, the release of his fellow-creatures, who are enduring the just penalties of their offences, seems to me at once unscriptural, and unreasonable, arrogant, and dangerous. But, on the other hand, when the Reformers were hurried by the spirit of opposition so far as to deny that the holiness or piety of men can be pleasing to God, or will be accepted by Him as a qualification for the enjoyment of His favour, here or hereafter, they seem to me to have taken leave of Scripture, morality, common feeling, and common sense. In opposition to the merits of the saints, the Reformers, adhering to the scholastic theology of the middle ages, which, in this particular, took its origin from the dictum of Pope Gregory the Great, set up the merits of Christ as the sole ground of acceptance. These merits, they affirmed, could be appropriated to individual persons—not through the power of the sacraments, (for that would have made the work done by the officiating priest efficacious with God), nor through the instrumentality of repentance and a holy life, (for, in that case, the sinner might be regarded as having a hand in his own salvation), but only by means of faith. In their extreme anxiety to avoid the admission of the slightest pretence of human merit, in any form, and utterly to destroy every shadow of ground for believing that man has the slightest ability to contribute, in any degree, to his own salvation, or acceptance with God, the Reformers adopted a definition of faith formerly advanced by St. Augustine, in controversy with the Pelagians. With him they held that *faith*, in reference to religion, is something quite different from what the word implies, when it is employed on other topics. *Saving faith*, according to the Reformers—the faith by which the merits of Christ are appropriated to the individual, and are made available for the salvation of his soul—is not, simply, belief in God, founded on the testimony of nature, reason, and conscience; nor is it belief in Christ, built on the evidence which proves his divine authority; nor is it,

simply, trust in the assurances which God has given, through Christ; nor is it merely fidelity to God, to truth, to duty. Saving faith, according to the Reformers, is not, simply, these things; for all these are human agencies—acts or states of the heart and mind of man. The Reformers define faith to be an *infused virtue*—the mere result of the work of the Holy Spirit on the souls of those to whom it is dispensed, to which men themselves neither contribute nor can contribute anything, and which the persons from whom it is withheld can by no means acquire. By this infused grace, Christ's merits are efficaciously applied to the soul, and by it alone. In this way the Reformers effectually banished all claim and pretence of human merit; but by a process which annihilated free will, and utterly deranged the whole moral machinery of Providence. *Free will*, indeed, Luther, and Bucer, and Calvin, fiercely denounced as the invention of the devil, and the doctrine of hisimps. The only branch of the Reformed church in which it was allowed a place was that founded by the Unitarians, in Poland.

It should be mentioned that by most of the systematic theologians of the orthodox churches of the Reformation, the salvation of men, in every respect and shape, was held to be the result of a covenant or bargain, entered into from all eternity, between the Father and son, and called the "Covenant of Redemption." By this agreement, God, the Son, consented to become incarnate in time, and to suffer and die, in order to make satisfaction to the Father's justice, for the sins of the elect; and God, the Father, bound Himself, in consideration of this interposition on behalf of certain members of a race, the fall of which was foreseen and pre-determined, to give to the son a chosen portion of mankind, who should be his people, and who, in process of time, should be endowed with saving faith, justified, sanctified, and glorified.\*

It would be tedious to detail the statements made on the subject of atonement and satisfaction, in the Confession of Augsburg, which is to this day subscribed by the Lutherans in Germany; in the Helvetic Confession, drawn up by Calvin for

\* See Appendix H.



the use of the Reformed Churches of Switzerland; in the Catechism of Heidelberg, long the bond of union among the Huguenots in France. The sum and substance of them all are embodied in the Decrees of the Synod of Dort, enacted by the year 1618, by an assembly of divines from all the Protestant Reformed Churches in Europe. That Synod declares that "our sins, being committed against God's infinite Majesty, His justice requires that they be punished, not only with temporal, but with eternal pains of body and mind, which pains we cannot escape *until the divine justice be satisfied*. But when we could not make satisfaction, God gave His only begotten son *to satisfy for us*, and he was *made sin* and a curse *in our stead*."\* Here you will perceive it is declared to be impossible for God to grant free forgiveness for any sin. *His justice must be satisfied*. It was the doctrine of Luther that the sins of man were imputed to Christ; that he was punished for them; that his obedience and satisfaction are imputed to them; and that they are thereby justified and entitled to reward.†

In the Articles of the Church of England, it is declared that "the son truly suffered and was crucified . . . *to reconcile his Father to us*; and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of men," (Article ii.); and that it is a "perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual," (Art. xxxi.). Here, you must have observed, it is stated that Christ's death was intended "*to reconcile God to us*:" an anti-scriptural, and, to my mind, a most tremendous assertion, which, however, there will be another opportunity of considering.

The divines of the Westminster Assembly—whose Confession and Catechisms are the standard of orthodoxy with our Presbyterian brethren in Scotland and in Ireland—were more cautious in their language than the framers of the Thirty-nine Articles: they avoid the harshness of saying that Christ died to reconcile his Father; but, in rigour of doctrine, they do not fall behind their brethren. They affirm that the Lord Jesus, "by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, . . . hath

\* See Appendix I.

† See Appendix K.

*fully satisfied* the justice of the Father, and *purchased* not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven *for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.*" (Chap. viii., sec. 5; see also chap. xi., sec. 3.) They tell us, moreover, that none are "redeemed by Christ, sanctified, or saved, *but the elect only.*" (Chap. iii., sec. 2.) These doctrines—and a great variety of others, which to me appear not less extraordinary—are subscribed by all the ministers and elders of the Scottish Presbyterian churches, and other churches connected with them, as the confession of their faith.

These doctrines were also preached in England by most of the divines who occupied the pulpits during the ascendancy of the Long Parliament, which had summoned the Westminster Assembly; but no sooner was that Parliament dissolved, and the ancient constitution of the kingdom restored, (about 200 years ago), than the great majority of the Episcopal clergy, and a large proportion of the people of England, testified their utter aversion to the Calvinistic doctrines, which, for the space of twenty years, had been, as it were, crammed down their throats. Most of the bishops and parish ministers openly, and, to all appearance, with the hearty concurrence of their flocks, went over to the ranks of Arminianism, endeavouring to reconcile, as best they could, the Calvinistic Articles, which they subscribed, with the opinions, quite at variance with them, which they avowed and preached. Bishop Jeremy Taylor was an Arminian, so was Dr. Barrow, so was Archbishop Tillotson, so was Bishop Butler, so was Bishop Hoadly; if, indeed, he did not go a step farther. Bishop Hoadly may be taken as a specimen of the latitudinarian clergy. In his "Sermons upon the Terms of Acceptance," he quotes, and declares his assent to, the Article which affirms that "Christ, by his one oblation, hath *made satisfaction* for the sins of the whole world:" but, then, he declares that the satisfaction is only to be valid *for those sins of which men repent.* Repentance and reformation he makes to be *terms of acceptance*; terms with which men must themselves comply: and no external grace infused into their hearts will, unless they use their endeavours, either produce these conditions, or compensate for their absence. Wherein, then, consists

the efficacy of Christ's sufferings? That, he says, consists in its having procured from God the offer of acceptance on these conditions, and in having put the sinner on the way to obtain pardon from God.

It is well known that the greater part of the descendants of the Puritans of England have abandoned the stern dogmas of their ancestors, and adopted a more genial, and, as it seems to me, a more rational and Scriptural system; in substance the same with that which, in your hearing, last Sunday evening, I unfolded, for the most part, in the very words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and his Apostles. Indeed, scarcely had the framers of the Westminster Confession passed away from this sublunary sphere, when, in many cases, their own sons and grandsons began to shew symptoms of waning orthodoxy. The religious freedom which their churches enjoyed, from the time when they were permitted by law to gather themselves into churches, was favourable to moral and spiritual progress. Their posterity have availed themselves of their advantages, and have gone forward, it may be hoped, some steps in the way to truth. Nor has progress been confined to the soil of England; there are free churches—churches that are really as well as nominally free—in Ireland and in Scotland. In America they are numbered by thousands. In Geneva the liberal views of Christian doctrine are in the ascendant; and the case is similar in some other of the Protestant Cantons. In most of these, subscription to the old Calvinistic creeds has been abolished; and opinion, when once set free from human trammels, is always sure, sooner or later, to seek the light of religious truth. The case is the same in Holland; and, to a large extent, among the Protestants of France. In Germany and the North of Europe the old creeds are still subscribed by the clergy; but it is notorious that the doctrines which they set forth are no longer preached from the pulpits, nor believed by the people, except in rare instances—exceptions so rare that they establish the rule.

Even in our own country, it is found that divines and theologians, who subscribe the old doctrines, frequently, in their sermons and writings, inculcate others of a more enlightened character. I could name to you an admired and eloquent

preacher, whose sermons, published after his decease, are discovered to be quite heterodox in their tendency—often in their actual teaching—on this and other important points. I could name to you a critic who expounds the language of Scripture bearing on this question in a manner very like, if not exactly the same, with that which I should myself select; yet he had signed the articles of the church, and being called on, *did so again*, without hesitation. I could name an eminent writer in a neighbouring country, who, for a long time, retained a reputation for orthodoxy, by raising the cry of heresy whenever he could, against others a little less orthodox than himself, who has been obliged to retire from his office on a charge of heterodoxy, involving some points having a perceptible bearing for this very doctrine, fundamental, as it is held to be, by all who acknowledge it as true. And I could point to a number of other facts which show that opinion is making progress in many different quarters. But this would be an invidious task, whether the persons referred to were censured for their dissimulation, or applauded for their candour. I rather call on all who hear me, to use their own judgments; to read, compare, and reflect; to take Scripture—not man’s fallible word—for their guide; and, in particular, to hold fast by the doctrine of atonement or reconciliation announced by the Apostle of Christ, in the text of this lecture—even that doctrine which asserts that “God was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ. [And,] as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

## LECTURE III.

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### ARGUMENTS FROM REASON

IN SUPPORT OF

### THE COMMON DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT CONSIDERED.

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LUKE i., 76-79. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace.

ZACHARIAS, the priest, the father of John the Baptist, spake these words, when, filled with the Holy Spirit, he prophesied the coming of Christ and the diffusion of his Gospel. He describes the Gospel as consisting in "the knowledge of salvation, by the remission of their sins;" he declares the means by which it accomplishes its purpose to be by "giving light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death;" and he asserts the source of the Gospel itself, and the foundation of the forgiveness which it promises, to be "the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us." There could not be a more beautiful or more expressive declaration of God's free grace and inherent mercy. It ascribes all the blessings of Christianity to the tender love of the Father

for His offspring—a love which He cherished for them even when disobedient and sinful—and to His spontaneous, unbought desire to give them light, and “to guide them in the way of peace,” that they may obtain “salvation by the remission of their sins.”

How different all this is from the modern doctrine, which represents God as forgiving sin only in consequence of the death of Christ, by which His justice is satisfied, and His wrath appeased, it requires no words of mine to explain. The contrast must strike the mind of every one who thinks. Instead of the remission of sins being obtained through “the tender mercy of our God,” our brethren tell us that the transgressions of God’s people are all imputed to our Lord Jesus Christ; that he being, in consequence, held to be guilty of them, is punished for them; and, by his death and sufferings, pays the debt that was due to divine justice, and purchases the mercy of the Father on behalf of all those for whom he died. The merit of his obedience and righteousness is, in like manner, imputed to them; and so they become entitled, not merely to forgiveness, but to God’s favour in this life, and to eternal happiness in the world to come. Their own holiness and obedience have nothing to do with their preparation or qualification for the promised reward. Not but that they must lead holy lives; at least they will assuredly not persevere in sin. But their holiness and perseverance are neither the causes nor the conditions of their acceptance. Their holiness and perseverance are the *fruits of their acceptance*—the *consequences*, not the *means*, of their being saved. They are the work of God upon their hearts; the result of His favour; the favour or grace which Christ Jesus died to purchase for them, and purchased by his death.

This is a short, but I think a fair outline of the doctrine of atonement or reconciliation, as held by my brethren, from whom, in the exercise of my right and duty of private judgment upon the meaning of the Holy Scriptures, I feel myself compelled, on this, as on some other important questions, to dissent. It is only respectful to them to consider carefully the considerations by which they have been led to embrace opinions that appear to me so very objectionable; and this I

propose to do in the present and succeeding lecture. On the evening of next Lord's-day, it is my intention to examine the Scripture evidence which my brethren of the common faith are in the habit of advancing in favour of their own views; at present I shall briefly discuss those arguments, by which they endeavour to support them, which are drawn not from the Scriptures, but from reason and experience. And first I shall state these considerations, faithfully and impartially, so far as I have been able to gather them from discourses that I have heard; from conversation, and from publications that I have read. I may not be able to mention every argument of the kind that has ever been advanced; but I shall place every one that I am acquainted with fairly before you, and I have reason to hope that none of *real importance* will be omitted.

The advocates of the common doctrine usually urge the following considerations in its support. Every sin, being committed against the law, the holiness, and the majesty of God, who is infinite in all its perfections, is an infinite evil, and demands an infinite punishment. But all men are sinners; some of them atrocious sinners. Hence, an almost *infinite number of infinite penalties* has been incurred by the race of man; and were God freely to remit all this enormous amount of punishment due to His violated law, His justice would fall to the ground. Justice is one of His essential attributes; it is infinite, and it must be satisfied. Seeing, then, that man is unable by himself to pay the debt to divine justice, God's mercy is shewn in providing a substitute, by whom the punishment will be borne in man's stead. The penalty of sin is thus paid in the person of Christ. His merits, and his alone, are equal to the work of making satisfaction for human sin. To deny, or doubt their having done so, is to doubt or deny the value of his death and sufferings in the sight of God. By means of faith the merits of Christ are imputed to his disciples. Unless this be acknowledged, faith in the Gospel is made of no effect. Indeed, nothing but a self-righteous spirit, unwilling to accept God's method of justification, and anxious to set up its own merit as the ground of a claim against God, could lead any one to question or reject the received doctrine of atonement.

Let us now examine these considerations separately and carefully.

*First.* It is urged that sin, every sin, because it is committed against an infinite God, must be an infinite evil. But the force of that inference I am unable to perceive; not only so, but the argument appears to me to be a transparent fallacy. Remember that we are not speaking now of any Scripture principle, but of a mere argument of human reason; *caral reason*, as our brethren would call it, if *we* had happened to employ such an argument against their views, or in favour of our own. The Bible no where says that sin is an infinite evil; it only speaks, in the words of truth and soberness, of the "exceedingsinfulness" of sin; and reason tells us, that the sinfulness of any act depends altogether on the moral powers and state of heart of the person *by whom it is done*. The very same act for which *a man* would be most severely reprehensible, and would be justly punished, might be, and in most cases would be, viewed with slight censure if performed by *a child*; and would be utterly free from moral culpability, if done by an idiot, or a brute animal. The higher any being rises in the scale, the more extensive his powers; and the richer his moral and religious culture, the deeper is his guilt when he falls into sin. Sin, therefore, would be infinite, *if man were infinite*. But as man is limited, fallible, and weak, it is beyond his power, even if he were to set himself to sin with all his might, to commit an infinite transgression. A finite being cannot infinitely transgress. And this disposes at once and for ever of the first link in the chain of argument.

Its fallacy may be shewn in another way. If sin be an infinite evil because it is committed against the law of an infinite God, it follows that every holy desire, every virtuous action, every devout and pious feeling of the heart, every penitential pang for sin, being (as they are) conformable to the divine law, and agreeable to the divine will, must be infinitely pleasing in the sight of God, and must incline Him to bestow upon the persons in whom He witnesses these manifestations an infinite amount of His favour. The one infinity would thus be arrayed in opposition to the other; and, as there is no sinner so bad that he has not, at some time or other of his life, had



some holy or virtuous impulses, every sinner would practically be in the condition of a person who had never done either good or ill—a conclusion which every religious mind rejects with horror. Finite, erring man can neither do infinite good nor infinite sin. All his actions are bounded by the limits of his own circumscribed nature. And thus is demolished the very groundwork of the popular creed, as it exists in the popular mind. Scholars and divines have given it up long ago. Dr. Wardlaw alludes to this argument, but does not urge it; Dr. J. Pye Smith passes it over in total silence; Archbishop Magee admits that some persons have used this reasoning on his own side, but says they argued “*poorly*.” He says—“That some few have thus argued is certainly to be admitted and lamented; but how poorly such men have reasoned it needed not the acuteness of Dr. Priestley to discover. On their own principle the reply is obvious, that sin, being committed by a finite creature, requires only a finite satisfaction.” (*Discourses on Atonement and Sacrifice*, i., 171–2.) If I were to meet with this argument anywhere, I should call on the person who urged it, not to answer me, but the learned Archbishop; for he says and proves that is a poor one; and, on this topic, I am only treading in his footsteps. Indeed, the divines and scholars of the orthodox persuasion have given it up long ago. It is to be lamented that, although they are well aware that it retains its hold on the minds of the uneducated and ill-informed, they have done but little, (in truth, with the exception of Archbishop Magee, they have scarcely attempted,) to disabuse them.

*Secondly.* It is held that the justice of God could not be satisfied with less than the infliction of the full penalty incurred by the transgression of His law. Were sin forgiven on the mere condition of the sinner’s repentance, we are told the divine justice would fall to the ground. The full punishment must be borne by some one. And, as the sinner himself cannot pay his debt, it must be paid by some one who steps forward, takes the offence upon himself, and endures the whole of the deserved chastisement in his stead. This is called vicarious punishment—which means punishment by proxy. It is upon this notion of vicarious punishment, that the whole doctrine of

satisfaction for sin by the death of Christ is built. But it is easy to shew that the foundation is unsound.

Those who urge this argument have a strange notion of justice, especially of divine justice. The proper notion of justice is, that it is a quality or feeling which prompts its owner to treat different persons with different degrees of favour or disapproval, corresponding to their respective degrees of excellence or depravity; and to do this for the purpose of restraining vice and encouraging and promoting virtue. Such is the justice of a parent, in his treatment of the various members of his household. Such is the justice of an employer, in his dealings with his servants and dependants. Such is the justice of every humane and benevolent system of human law. Such is the justice which our Gracious Sovereign is bound—and, I am sure, not more bound by duty and promise, than impelled by the dictates of her own heart—to dispense. It is a part of her coronation oath—"Justice and mercy I will maintain." And such, too, *in kind*, though infinitely more pure, because guided by a wisdom which is infallible, is the justice which all thinking and considerate men—all who understand that whereof they speak, when they speak of divine justice—ascribe to the Sovereign Ruler of heaven and earth. We can conceive of nothing more amiable, more holy, more worthy of veneration, than a justice like His; pure and absolutely perfect; taking cognisance of the conduct and circumstance of every individual in the wide universe; dispensing rewards and penalties, without error and caprice, because it desires the growth of all in holiness; and desiring their obedience to its own laws, because, to them, its laws are the only pathway to happiness. Such a justice will never fail to rebuke the sinner, for it seeks his reformation; yet will never loathe him, for it is the justice of a heavenly Father, who, when He sees in the heart of His once offending child, that which renders him a proper object of forgiveness, will forgive with a father's pity; and will even inflict needful and salutary chastisement, with a father's lenient hand, and a father's yearning heart. That is the proper idea of divine justice.

But according to the ideas of most of our fellow-Christians,

divine justice is a cry for vengeance—a thirst for blood—a demand for grief and groans—a furious indignation excited in the mind of God, which *must vent its rage on some one*; which, rather than forego the satisfaction which it claims, will wreak its vengeance on the purest, the holiest, the most innocent of beings—on the only being in heaven or earth that never offended; and which, when its passion is thus assuaged, lets the real offenders loose; looking upon them no longer as objects of dislike, but as clothed with all the holiness and purity of the innocent person who had been punished in their stead. This is not justice, but frenzy. A father, a judge, a sovereign, who should dispense justice on these principles would be shut up as a lunatic. Shall we ascribe such conduct to the Judge of all the earth?

We are now, let it be remembered, considering these questions as they present themselves to the common sense and understanding of mankind; and on these grounds I ask, is there not infinitely more injustice in laying the punishment on the innocent, in order that the guilty may escape without any penalty at all, than in forgiving the penitent sinner freely, without any satisfaction? Is it not outrageously unjust to punish the innocent for crimes which he did not commit? *And can God's justice be satisfied by the performance of an unjust act?*

We know, indeed, that this procedure is thought to be rendered quite right and proper, because the sins for which Christ is punished are, as is asserted, first *imputed* to him. But, as it is confessed he never committed and never sanctioned them, *they cannot be imputed to him without an utter falsehood*. And how can an act of gross injustice be palliated by pleading that the doer of the wrong had previously been guilty of an untruth? Thus the satisfaction theory, in sober earnestness, implies—*first*, that God *falsely imputes* to Christ sins which are not his; and *secondly*, that He *punishes the innocent* for crimes of which he was not guilty. That these things are essential parts of the theory is beyond all dispute. But surely the very mention of them is sufficient to make those who have professed that theory, shudder at the thought of the

conduct which they have ascribed to the God of justice and of truth !

The *third* consideration that is urged in defence of the satisfaction theory is, that the merits of Christ, and more especially the merit of his obedience unto death, are absolutely infinite in themselves; and, therefore, quite sufficient to entitle all to whom they are imputed to the enjoyment of eternal life, without any merit of their own. And it is contended that we, who cannot believe that they possess this saving efficacy, undervalue the merits of Christ, and are guilty of treating his person and his services with contempt. But we are not the only persons who are subjected to this censure. Dr. Wardlaw extends it to persons who, while they hold, with himself, that the sufferings and death of Christ have fully satisfied the justice of the Father, yet look upon them as having done so, not in consequence of *any inherent power strictly belonging to them by nature*, but in consequence of a divine appointment; who regard them as having had this effect, purely and solely, because it pleased the Father that they should have it. "Angels," he says, "admire and adore the Divine Redeemer. They sing, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing!' But what would angels think of him were they to be assured that he has done no more than might have been effected by one of themselves, had it only pleased God so to ordain it! This," he exclaims, "will never do!" And he contends that the doctrine which he is combatting, namely, that the merits of Christ, though amply sufficient to purchase for believers an admission into the heavenly mansions, derive their sufficiency from God's decree, tends to lower the Saviour in the grateful estimation of sinners of mankind, and in the ardent admiration of other creatures. Such being his feelings with respect to a doctrine which is in many points the same with his own, you may imagine his lamentation over the errors of all who absolutely reject what he regards as the grand tenet of vital Christianity.

But the worthy doctor might have spared his sighs and tears. The crime which he imputes to us is one of which it is impos-

sible that any reasonable being could be guilty. Willingly to degrade the Saviour, or to undervalue the salvation that he has wrought, is what no one who accepts him as a Saviour could possibly desire to do. We, at least, are anxious to cherish, both for his person and his work, the highest veneration that is consistent with truth. It is no true veneration, rather is it an insult to him, to ascribe to him merits and services which he never claimed, and could not claim with right; for that would be to suppose that he can be pleased with falsehood. It is no true act of veneration to attribute to him, and to his work, an efficacy which derogates from the perfections of his Heavenly Father; for that is to suppose that he can be gratified with an impeachment of his Heavenly Father's character. We willingly and gratefully ascribe to our blessed Saviour, and to his sufferings, all the value that reason and Scripture justify us in assigning; and surely it would be no act of reverence, but the reverse, to ascribe to him more. We accept all that we find asserted in the divine record on these and other points. But we cannot accept the reasonings of fallible men which our own understanding contradicts; even though, by rejecting them, we incur the censure, or excite the compassion of our brethren, who are frail and fallible as ourselves.

*Fourthly.* With as little reason is it said that, when we deny the transference, by faith, of the merit of Christ's obedience and sufferings, from him to those who believe in him, we make Christian faith of no effect. We are very far from undervaluing the importance of faith in Christ. We think it inexpressibly valuable. We regard it as the blessed source of comfort to the penitent, of consolation to the mourner, of strength to the tempted, of hope to the fallen, and of energy in the fulfilment of every duty. We regard it as the most efficacious means of attaining that frame of heart and life which is the only suitable preparation for meeting God. But we do not look upon it as a means of doing what is self-contradictory, and therefore impossible. We do not believe that any faith, however strong, can transfer the sins of one person to another who has not committed them; or can hand over the virtues and the graces of a holy person to one who has not cherished or practised

them. If you are a drunkard, it is impossible that any amount of faith can take your drunkenness from you, and lay it at the door of another who has all his life been temperate. If you are an adulterer, your faith, though as strong as that which could remove mountains and hurl them into the sea, cannot remove your debaucheries from yourself, and throw them on the shoulders of your Saviour. In like manner, if you are addicted to avarice, no force of believing can transfer your covetousness to one who lives for the good of others. If you are proud; if you are envious; if you are passionate; if you are revengeful; if you are censorious and uncharitable; if you are false-hearted and hypocritical, your sins and vices are, and ever must remain, *your own*, and not another's: least of all can they be made the sins and vices of one "who did no sin, and in whose mouth no guile was found." (1 Peter ii., 22.) Believe as you please; believe as you may; your own acts are still your own, and the guilt of them you cannot hand over to a substitute; nor can you claim merit for his virtues. You cannot be holy, or benevolent, or chaste, or pious, by proxy. And if your creed flatters you that you can, your creed is but a delusion; you believe a falsehood, and your hope is "the hope of the unjust which perisheth." (Prov. xi., 7.) If you repent of your sins, and forsake them, assuredly they will be forgiven; but even then, no ardour or intensity of faith will transfer them to another party, or clothe you with virtues which you have not made your own. We are now discussing these questions on the mere ground of reason; and reason tells us that faith can have no such power as is, by the advocates of the doctrine of imputation, ascribed to it. In denying that doctrine, therefore, we do not underrate the true value and importance of faith in Christ. We only withhold from it a supposed efficacy, which our reason and conscience tell us is impossible and absurd.

*Fifthly.* The last consideration that is advanced by the advocates of the common doctrine of atonement is, that the denial of it is the result and the proof of a self-righteous spirit, which plumes itself on its own holiness, and proudly and arrogantly refuses to accept salvation, when offered solely and simply on the

ground of the merits of the Saviour. It would be very painful to me, and would probably serve no useful purpose to any one, were I to cite the heavy charges of this nature which are scattered through the pages of Archbishop Magee and other controversialists. We sometimes meet with them, however, in other quarters—at times from persons who accost us with the utmost manifestations of tenderness and sympathy. They come to us with professions—which, I do not at all doubt, are sincere—of their deep anxiety for “the awful condition of our poor souls!” They beg and beseech us to look into our own hearts, and to expel from them that proud and rebellious spirit which rises up within us against what they denominate “the humbling doctrine of the cross.” But to this there is a very obvious answer. The doctrine of the cross—that is, *their* doctrine of the cross—does not appear to be a very humbling doctrine, if it teaches them to set themselves up as searchers of our hearts, to sit in judgment upon our feelings and motives, to impute to us a motive which our conscience tells is untrue, (for we do not cherish it); and to claim for themselves and for their party the exclusive possession of humility and lowliness of mind—a praise, we must take the liberty of saying, to which such conduct as theirs seems to us to give them *very, very little claim*. In the words of St. Paul, we say to such persons, “Who are ye that judge another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand!” In the words of Christ, we say to them, “Judge not that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” (Matt. vii., 1, 2.)

The crime (for it is a crime), which they impute to us, we have the satisfaction of knowing, is one which no human being in the possession of his senses would or could commit. There is no one who does not wish to be saved rather than to be damned. There is no one who, if he were certain that his salvation had been fully accomplished, wrought out, and made complete and sure eighteen hundred years ago, would not most gladly accept the pleasing assurance. There is no one who would not feel quite happy and easy in his mind to know

that he was to be released from all anxiety, and set free from the necessity of making any farther exertions to prepare himself for the favour of heaven. "All that is needful has been done by Christ, and will be done by God's Spirit; and you have only to accept the boon that is offered." I do not deny that this is a very *comfortable* doctrine; nor do I know any one so desperately self-righteous, and so spiritually proud, as to choose to be damned rather than accept it, *if it were only true!* But there is the difficulty. Reason says it cannot be true. The Scriptures declare it is not true. Reason and Scripture call on us, and urge us, to make every exertion for our own salvation; to "*labour* not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life" (John vi., 7); to "*work out* our salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. ii., 12); and to "*give all diligence* to make our calling and election sure" (2 Peter i., 10). In obeying these exhortations, and in believing that they come to us with the full authority of our Heavenly Father, there is no manifestation of a self-righteous feeling or of spiritual pride, but, on the contrary, genuine humility, obedience, and trust. And we greatly fear that those who assert or insinuate that we are actuated by the feelings so often imputed to us, "*know not what manner of spirit they are of*" themselves.

I have not entered in this lecture on any of the arguments from Scripture that have been advanced in favour of what is commonly called the orthodox view of the doctrine of atonement; these will form the subject of the next discourse. Neither have I entered upon the many and powerful arguments, both from reason and Scripture, that seem to me to lie against the popular theory on this subject; these will come before us at a subsequent part of the present course. I have merely considered, and calmly, and I trust, charitably, discussed the arguments from reason and experience which are urged in favour of the common doctrine; and I think I have shewn that from whatever other source they may derive strength, they cannot be maintained on these grounds. It is possible that some who have listened to me this evening have never heard these arguments canvassed or even questioned before. Let



them not assume that arguments are sound, because they are familiar to their minds, or inconclusive, because they are strange. Many a thoughtful person, who had for a great part of his life taken it for granted that the arguments which I have thus shattered and scattered were altogether beyond the reach of controversy, found, at last, when he applied his own mind to the subject, that they were quite destitute of foundation. Let the example of such men and women shew the propriety of hearing both sides before determining. Above all, let perfect candour and charity prevail in the breast of every one, when he attempts to estimate the motives of those who take an opposite view from his own. Those who dissent from you may be right, or they may be wrong; you cannot help forming some opinion upon that point; but God alone can tell whether they are conscientious or not. If they are, they will assuredly be accepted by Him who knoweth our frame, both of body and of mind; who remembereth our weak nature; and who, in every nation, accepts those who endeavour "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God."

## LECTURE IV.

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### ARGUMENTS FROM SCRIPTURE

IN SUPPORT OF

### THE COMMON DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT

### CONSIDERED.

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MATT. xviii., 23-27: Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, who owed ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant, therefore, fell down, and worshipped him, saying, "Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

A BEAUTIFUL example this of free forgiveness, proceeding from the impulse of a heart "moved with compassion" for the penitent who sued for mercy. That it is put forward by our Saviour as a type of our Almighty Ruler's dealings with His creatures, no reader has ever doubted; indeed, no reader can doubt. Yet multitudes of those who profess to take our Saviour's teachings as the very standard of truth, deny that our Almighty Ruler ever forgives a single sin, unless He has received a complete satisfaction to His offended justice; or ever remits a fraction of the debt that is due to Him, unless He obtains from

another person, who becomes surety for the debtor, the last farthing to which He is entitled. This seems to assert, in other words, that *He never forgives a sin at all*, or pardons a sinner. An offence is not forgiven, if ample satisfaction has been taken for it. A debt is not remitted, if it is paid in full by a third party. A sinner is not pardoned, if his guilt is transferred to another, who undergoes the entire penalty which the most rigid justice could inflict. This is so plain, that it would be a waste of your time, and mine, to go into farther proof.

But our brethren think they have strong arguments in support of their views, drawn from reason and experience, and from the declarations of Scripture. In my lecture of last Sunday evening, I considered those which are most frequently advanced on the ground of reason; and I think we saw enough to convince all serious and candid inquirers, that, wherever else these doctrines may find support, they have none in reason and experience. The present discourse will be occupied in a brief examination of the arguments from Scripture which are most commonly urged in defence of the popular doctrine of atonement. And, in the first place, I shall briefly state those which are most relied upon, and which really seem to be most deserving of attention.

Our friends who hold that our Lord Jesus Christ, by his death, endured the punishment which God was bound to inflict on the sins of men, and that he made satisfaction to divine justice on their behalf, appeal to a number of passages in the Bible, in which it is declared that he "*died for us*"—that he "*died for the ungodly*"—that he "*died for all men*"—that he died "*the just for the unjust.*" They contend that these passages imply that the Saviour suffered death in the room or stead of sinners; and that his death and sufferings were strictly vicarious. This interpretation, they maintain, is established beyond dispute by another class of texts, which affirm that "*Christ died for our sins*"—that he was "*delivered for our offences*"—that "*his blood was shed for the remission of sins*"—that he "*bore our sins* in his own body;" and some similar expressions. It is argued that every one of these expressions implies, and that taken together, they clearly prove, that the

sins of men were imputed to Christ; that he bore the punishment of them in his own person; and that, in consideration of this his interposition on our behalf, God is enabled to forgive and to accept sinners into His mercy. Our brethren conceive that this inference is strengthened by certain texts, which speak of the "*blood, or the death of Christ*" as a *price* paid for us; and in which we are said to be *redeemed, ransomed, or purchased* by the death of Christ. This signifies, they tell us, that we were all slaves or debtors to God, in consequence of our sins; that Christ stepped in, and, by dying on our behalf, paid the debt which we had incurred, or the ransom without which we could not be set free; that his blood was really and effectually our ransom or purchase money; and that, through it alone, we are delivered from the sentence of eternal misery, which we had incurred by our guilt. Lastly, our brethren appeal to passages in the Scriptures, in which Christ is described as a "*passover* slain for us;" in which his blood is mentioned as an *ablution* in which we are to be "washed," in order that we may get rid of the stains of sin; or as a *libation* which is "shed" on our behalf; and in which his voluntary death is spoken of as a "*propitiation,*" a "*sin-offering,*" a "*sacrifice,*" a "*sweet-smelling savour,*" or is alluded to in other terms, borrowed from the sacrificial service of the Mosaic law. It will, I think, be granted, that this is a fair and comprehensive, though brief outline of the Scripture arguments most relied upon by our brethren in support of their views. It is necessarily brief; but it is not—at least not intentionally—unfair.

We are now to examine these arguments, but previously I would make two remarks.

The first relates to the state of the question. The question is not whether the death of our Lord Jesus Christ has an important influence in enabling man to obtain the forgiveness of sin; for all are agreed that it has. I gave my opinion upon this point very distinctly in the first lecture of this course, and you will find it also stated to the same effect in my *Brief Outline of Christian Unitarianism*, (p. 12). The question is, *where* and *how* the death of Christ exerts its influence. The doctrine

which is called orthodox represents it as satisfying *God's sense of justice*, and as producing its effect *upon Him*. We believe that it produces its effect on *the mind and heart of man*, by softening his obduracy, and leading him to repentance. This is the great point which is at issue between us and our fellow-Christians.

My second remark respects the interpretation of Scripture. It is good to adhere, *whenever it is possible*, to the plain and obvious meaning of words. But there are cases in which it is not possible to do so without falling into error and absurdity. There are cases in which *the plain and obvious meaning*—that which lies on the very surface of the text—is the *farthest possible from the real meaning intended*. For example, our Saviour tells us that “unless we hate our fathers and mothers, and our own souls also, we cannot be his disciples.” But in its plain and obvious meaning, this is not true. In fact, the very contrary is the truth. If we hate our parents, and, especially, if we hate our own souls, we cannot be disciples of Christ. The real meaning is, that if we love father or mother, or our own lives, *more than we love Christ*, we are not worthy to bear his name. So, likewise, our Lord declared that “unless we eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, we have no life in us.” But here again the obvious meaning is not the true one. The obvious meaning would enjoin cannibalism. But that cannot be. The expression is figurative. It simply asserts that unless we are endued with a heart and temper conformable to Christ's, we have no reason to look forward to a happy futurity. Reason, experience, the usage of language, the nature of the subject, and the general tenour of Scripture must, in all such cases, be our guide. We have no right to interpret one part of Scripture so as to make it needlessly contradict another; nor have we a right to interpret any passage in such a manner as to set it in opposition to common sense.

After these preliminary observations, which I have condensed as much as possible, I proceed now to examine the passages of Scripture alleged by our brethren in support of the common doctrine of atonement.

I. The first group or class of texts to which the advocates of the generally received doctrine of atonement appeal, are those in which it is affirmed, in varying forms of expression, that *Christ suffered and died for us*. To these texts great importance has been assigned by every writer who has drawn his pen in this controversy. They are tolerably numerous, though, perhaps, not quite so many as is commonly supposed; and it may be convenient to produce a few of the principal passages as samples of the whole. I shall select the strongest.

Here the words of our Saviour are adduced—"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd *giveth his life for the sheep*. . . And *I lay down my life for my sheep*." (John x., 11, 15.) "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man *lay down his life for his friends*. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John xv., 13, 14.) And the words of the institution of the Lord's Supper—"This is my body which is *broken for you*: this do in remembrance of me." (1 Cor. xi., 24.) To the same effect are the words of the Apostle Paul—"When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ *died for the ungodly*." (Rom. v., 6.) And in the next verse but one—"While we were yet sinners, Christ *died for us*." (Rom. v., 8.) So, also, the Apostle Peter—"Christ, also, hath *suffered for us*, leaving us an example that ye should walk in his steps." (1 Peter ii., 21.) And elsewhere—"Forasmuch as Christ hath *suffered for us in the flesh*, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind." (1 Peter iv., 1.) On all these expressions our brethren, from whom we differ on these points, rely, as proofs that Christ died in our stead; that his sufferings were the just punishment of our sins; that is to say, that his sufferings were strictly vicarious, or, which is the same thing in other words, that we were punished by proxy, in his death and sufferings. But that such is not the meaning of these expressions, we are ourselves convinced, and think we could readily convince all who would examine the point with unprejudiced eyes.

You will perceive that the whole force of the argument turns upon the meaning of the word "*for*" in the texts which state that Christ "*died for us*," and "*suffered for us*," and "*shed his*

blood *for* us." If that word necessarily signifies "*in our room,*" or "*instead of us,*" it would be difficult to resist the interpretation which our brethren are anxious to put upon these passages. But such is not the case. There are in the Greek language, which is the original language of the New Testament, several particles which are indifferently translated by this little word *for*. One of these particles, ( $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\acute{\iota}$ ), generally signifies *in the room or stead of another*. But this particle is *never* used in the New Testament, when the sacred writers speak of Christ as having "died for men." The words which they actually use, ( $\pi\rho\delta\ \delta\iota\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omega\ \alpha\ \nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\acute{\omega}\nu$ ), have a much more comprehensive signification, and imply, what indeed all Christians believe, and none more sincerely than we, that Christ died *for the good of men, in their cause, on their account*. This fact ought to settle the question, so far as it depends on the interpretation of these texts. The sacred writers had it in their power to employ a phrase, which, in its obvious meaning, would have expressed the doctrine of vicarious punishment; *but they have never once employed it*. The phrases which they have used simply express a fact which no Christian ever can or ever did deny; a fact which we, at least, not only admit, but on just occasion, constantly assert and strenuously maintain, viz. :—that the death of Christ was a voluntary death, in the service and for the benefit of mankind. That such is the true interpretation of this language in the passages now under consideration, is evident even from some of the texts themselves. Peter, exhorting servants to bear patiently the severities of cruel masters, says, "for even hereunto were ye called, for Christ also hath suffered for us, *leaving us an example* that ye should walk in his steps." (1 Pet. ii., 21.) He "died for us"—*i.e.*, died for our advantage; and one of the advantages that his death conferred is, that we have a pattern of godly meekness under cruel wrong. So, also, in 1 John iii., 16—"Hereby perceive we love, because he laid down his life for us, and *we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*"—*i.e.*, in their defence, or for their confirmation in the faith. A striking example occurs in the writings of the Apostle Paul—"If one died for all, then were all dead; and he died for all, *that they who live*

should not live henceforth unto themselves, but unto him who died and rose again for them" (2 Cor. v., 14)—that is, Christ died for all, that all might be prevailed on to walk in "newness of life," conformably to the precepts and example of him who died on their behalf. The same Apostle says, "for a good man some would even dare to die" (Rom. v., 7)—that is, not to have his sins imputed, and to bear his punishment, for that would scarcely be consistent with the fact of his being a good man; but to do him a service, or to protect him from injury; and in the very same sense, as the Apostle's language clearly implies, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" that is, died to confer on us advantages and benefits. Remember that the High Priest moved the sanhedrim to consent to the murder of Jesus by persuading them that "it was expedient that one man should die for the people." (John, xi., 50.) Not certainly as a vicarious victim, to bear the penalty of their offences;—that was a doctrine of which the unbelieving Jew had no notion; but as he himself explained his words, he thought it desirable to put Jesus to death in order to ward off from them an impending danger, "that the whole nation might not perish" under the jealous anger of the Roman government. Christians are exhorted to be ready to die for Christ. "Unto you it is given, on behalf of Christ\* (Gr. for Christ), not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake"†—(Gr. to suffer for him). (Phil. i., 29.) The Apostle Paul says, that he took pleasure in "reproaches, persecutions, and distresses, for Christ's sake"‡—(Gr. for Christ). (2 Cor. xii., 10.) He says that he "was always delivered to death for Jesus' sake"§ (Gr. because of Jesus). (2 Cor. iv., 11.) And he declared that he "endured all things for the elects' sakes,|| (Gr. because of the elect), that they also might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. ii., 10.) What pæans would have been sung if this had been affirmed of Christ? I apprehend that no one who calmly considers the force of these expressions, and the manner in which they are applied, will

\* ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ. † ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχιιν. ‡ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ.

§ διὰ Ἰησοῦν.

|| διὰ τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς.



feel any difficulty in explaining the texts in which our blessed Saviour is said to have died, and to have suffered, and to have endured grief, for us.

II. The proper explanation of these texts, which is not difficult, will aid us in the interpretation of the next class of passages, those in which it is stated that "Christ died for our sins," (1 Cor. xv., 3);\*—that he was "delivered *for our offences*,"—(Rom iv., 25);†—that he "*bore our sins* in his own body on (or rather *to*) the tree," (1 Peter ii., 24);‡—and a few others of like import.

It should be remembered that many persons are said in Scripture *to have borne the sins of others*, to whom no one ever looked as substitutes enduring the punishment of their guilt. Thus Aaron was directed to place a plate of fine gold upon his forehead, "that he might *bear the iniquity* of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts." (Exod. xxviii., 38.) There was no vicarious punishment in this case. There was no punishment at all. The ceremony was merely a figurative way of declaring God's free pardon of the iniquities referred to. So, also, the Jewish priests were described as "*bearing the iniquity* of the congregation, *to make atonement for them before Jehovah*," (Lev. x., 17); because they pronounced God's forgiveness. In another sense the prophet Ezekiel was directed to act in a certain manner that he might "*bear the iniquity* of the house of Israel:" and again to "*bear the iniquity* of the house of Judah." (Ezek. iv., 4, 5, 6.) This sounds very like vicarious punishment. But the context shews that it can have no such meaning; for the prophet was not punished for the sins of Israel and Judah; nor did they escape punishment in consequence of what he did. The prophet merely lay a certain number of days upon his side, to pre-signify and foretel the punishment which they were to undergo; and which they did actually undergo for their own

\* ὑπὲρ τῶν αμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν.

† διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα ἡμῶν.

‡ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον.

great and grievous sins. There are a great many instances in which Jehovah himself is said to have "borne the sins" or the iniquities of His people, ages before the death of Christ; when, of course, any vicarious punishment was out of the question; and in no single case of the kind was there the slightest thought of the imputation or transference of guilt. Some of these examples are seen in our English translation of the Bible; in others the fact is latent; the word which literally signifies "to bear" being rendered "forgive," which, indeed, is its true sense. In fact there are upwards of a hundred examples in which the "bearing of sin," or of "iniquity," is spoken of in the Bible; and I cannot find one in which the phrase signifies to have another person's guilt imputed, or to bear a deserved chastisement in his stead. It does seem to me to be a very mistaken proceeding to argue, as if the sacred writers, who speak of Christ's having "borne the sins" of his people, must have intended to convey a meaning which the very same phrase never once carries with it when spoken of other persons. It ought not to be forgotten, that as Christ bore our infirmities, so we are enjoined to bear the infirmities of each other. "We, then, that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." (Rom. xv., 1.) As Christ "bare our sins in his own body to the tree," so also when he cured the diseases of the multitudes who flocked around him, St. Matthew declares that, by so doing, he "took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." (Matt. viii., 17.) How did our Saviour bear the sicknesses and bodily infirmities of men? By healing them. They were not transferred to him, nor did he undergo the medical treatment which would have been necessary for their cure. How then did he bear the iniquities and the sins of men? In various ways. He was patient under them; he was grieved for them; he exposed himself to reproach, suffering, and death, that he might recover sinners from their transgressions; he even died to confirm the assurance which he had given of the free forgiveness of the penitent; he removed the transgressions of men by the blessed influence of his death and sufferings on their hearts—leading them to contrition, love, and holy obedience. In one or other

of these ways, we can readily explain every expression of the kind that meets us in the Holy Scriptures; and it seems as unreasonable, as it is unnecessary, to have recourse to any other interpretation; especially one which contradicts the express teaching of the Bible, that neither sin nor its penalty can be handed over to another party. "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*" (Ezekiel xviii., 20.)

III. But we are reminded that Christ is set forth in Scripture as our *price*—"Ye are bought with a price," (1 Cor. vi., 20; vii., 23); our *ransom*—"The son of man came to give his life a ransom for many," (Matt. xx., 28; Mark x., 45; 1 Tim. ii., 6); our *redemption*—that we are represented as having been *bought, purchased, or redeemed* by him, "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins," (Eph. i., 7; Col. i., 14.) And we are asked if these expressions do not imply that Christ hath *bought us off* from the anger of the Almighty, *at the price of his own blood*; that is to say, that he died in our stead, to satiate the justice of God, and to entitle us to pardon and to eternal life?

Those who put to us this question seem to us to forget that the book in which these phrases occur is not a treatise on logic,—nor a collection of Acts of Parliament—nor a digest of law—but a *Bible*; a collection not of scientific but of popular books, written for the use of mankind at large, and, therefore, adapted to their usual manner of speaking, which is often highly figurative. The expressions now before us are all figurative. Many of the divines who hold the satisfaction theory, not only admit, but, when needful, argue and maintain, that these expressions are figurative. They think, indeed, that the figure necessarily implies the truth of their own doctrine. But there they are manifestly mistaken; for the very same figure—namely, that of "redeeming" or "purchasing"—is, over and over again, employed in Scripture, where no notion of satisfaction or substitution can for one moment be entertained. For example, the whole people of Israel, in reference to their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, are called "a people that *Jehovah hath purchased*," (Ex. xv., 16)—"a

congregation *which He hath purchased,*" (Psal. lxxiv., 2)—"the *ransomed* of the Lord:" (Isa. xxxv., 10)—and it was declared that Jehovah had "*redeemed them*, out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh, King of Egypt;" (Deut. vii., 8)—though, certainly, neither price nor satisfaction was made to Pharaoh. How, then, did Jehovah redeem and ransom the Israelites? By *letting them go free*, without money and without price; but yet *as free* from the power of the taskmaster *as if a full price had been paid* for their deliverance. And how did Christ ransom or redeem his people? By delivering them from the power of sin, and thereby from its punishment. This is a very common figure of speech. When, in consequence of any man's exertions and sufferings, we enjoy important advantages, it is quite common to represent these advantages as having been *bought* for us, at the price of the labours and sorrows which their author underwent. I could give many examples, but I shall content myself with two. One is from the pen of the learned and eloquent Dr. Bentley. He says—"The first Reformers, and particularly those of England, for freedom of thinking, laid down their lives, '*atque animas pulchrâ pro libertate dederunt!*' 'Twas *by the price and purchase of their blood* that this author [Anthony Collins] and his sect have, at this day, not only the liberty, but the power, means, and method of thinking." (*Works* iii., 309, 310.) The other is from Archbishop Newcome's excellent work on the translation of the Bible. "We enjoy the benefit of these versions into our native tongue *at the price of Tyndall's blood; of the imprisonment and exile of Coverdale, . . . and the labours, reproaches, and dangers of many religious men.*" (*Historical View*, p. 112.) One would think that people whose ears are accustomed to language of this sort—for it is quite common\*

\* The metaphor has passed into a stock-phrase of writers in political journals.

"We must crush all vices, annihilate all evil passions, trample upon them as a triumphant Christ with his foot upon the serpent; and then the proud hallelujah of freedom will rise to heaven from the lips of a pure, a virtuous, a regenerated, a God-blessed people; and this fair land of ours, which now affrights the world with its misery, will be one grand temple, in which we shall all kneel as brothers—one holy, peaceful, loving fraternity—sons of one common country—children of one God—heirs together of those blessings *purchased by our blood*: a heritage of freedom, justice, independence, prosperity, and glory."—(*From an article headed "JACTA ALEA EST," in THE NATION newspaper, of 20th July, 1848, printed but not published.*)

—would have no difficulty in understanding how we are redeemed, bought, or ransomed at the price of Christ's blood. His death was the means by which our privileges were obtained.

Indeed, the nature of the case—if men would but consider it thoughtfully for a moment—would make the whole matter plain and simple. If the blood of Christ was literally a price paid for us to God for the satisfaction of His justice, then, before the price was paid, we must have been the servants of God; and after it was paid, we must have ceased to be subject to His law. Whereas, the very contrary was the fact. Before Christ died the world was in bondage to idolatry and sin; and he died that he might make men the servants of God, faithful subjects of His laws. He died, therefore, to redeem them not *from God*, but *to God*; and, consequently, his blood could not be a price paid to the Almighty. And such, too, is the express statement of Scripture. We are told by the Apostle Paul that our Saviour “gave himself for us, that he might redeem us,” (that is, ransom or purchase us) “*from all iniquity*,” (observe, *not* from God), “and purify *unto himself* a peculiar people, zealous of good works,” (Tit. ii., 14); and by St. Peter, that “we were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, *from our vain conversation*, received by tradition from our fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (1 Peter i., 18.) We were “*redeemed from iniquity*,” we were “*redeemed from our vain conversation* :” that is to say, we were delivered from the habit and the practice of sin. This is said in Scripture. But never once is Christ said to have purchased us *from the justice of his Father*. This fact seems to me to settle the question, so far as it depends on this class of texts.

#### IV. And now we are come to the fourth and last of the

*Commencement of another article in the same journal, and same date, headed, “THE TOCSIN OF IRELAND” :—*

“Ireland is, perhaps, at this hour in arms for her rights; in arms for the rights so patiently solicited, so perversely refused, so tyrannically trampled upon, while one fragment of them remained: the rights which she sought in vain to *purchase with her tears*; which she springs up at last to *purchase with her heart's blood*, only when the sacred charter of manhood—without which our life is lower than the dog's or the slave's—is trampled under the feet of her foreign lord.”

groups into which the passages that are appealed to in this discussion are usually divided. It includes the texts in which sacrificial terms, and others borrowed from the ceremonies of the law of Moses, are applied to Christ, or to his death. I shall enumerate a few of them. They are such expressions as "*Christ our passover is slain for us,*" (1 Cor. v., 7.) "*He hath made him to be sin,*" (i.e., a sin-offering), "for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v., 21.) "God hath set [Christ Jesus] forth *as a propitiation,*" (it should be *a mercy-seat*), "through faith in his blood." (Rom. iii., 25.) Christ hath "loved us, and *washed us from our sins in his blood.*" (Rev. i., 5.) "The blood of Jesus *cleanseth us from all sin.*" (1 John i., 7.) These are all *sacrificial or ritual expressions*; nor is it difficult to understand the sense in which they, and others of the same sort, are used, when they are applied to the death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As he surrendered his life in the discharge of duty, and for the spiritual elevation of mankind, he is compared to a victim slain, and is said to have died that he might "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb. ix., 26.) As in the temple and in the tabernacle there was presented, twice each day, on the golden altar, an offering of incense, which was a fragrant perfume, so Christ, in dying to leave us a pattern of holy love, "gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, *for a sweet smelling savour.*" (Eph. v., 2.) As the mercy-seat, the top of the golden lid of the ark of the covenant, was the spot whence God announced, through the High Priest, the forgiveness of the sins of the Israelites, so God having, through Jesus Christ, announced His merciful intentions toward the whole human race, is beautifully said to have "set him forth *as a mercy-seat*, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness," (or mercy), "for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." (Rom. iii., 25.) His flesh is compared to the veil of the temple, through which the High Priest passed once a year into the holy of the holies; (Heb. x., 20); because, by dying and rising again, he entered into the heavenly sanctuary to appear before God on our

behalf. He is figuratively called our *passover*; for that was a lamb, by the eating of which, "roasted with fire," the Israelites commemorated the deliverance of their ancestors from the bondage of Egypt; and the death of Jesus was the signal of the world's deliverance from superstition and sin. There is nothing extraordinary in these expressions. Figures of speech exactly similar are often employed in reference to the exertions and services of persons remarkable in history. Collins says that the worship of images and relics obtained almost universally, "till the thinking of a few, some whereof *sacrificed their lives* by so doing, gave a new turn to the Christian world." (*Cited by Bentley, Works*, iii., p. 215.) Professor Norton says, "Our religious and moral improvement has been *purchased* by severe thought and laborious investigation, *by high-minded sacrifice of worldly hopes*, by a generous contempt of reproach and persecution, by tears and blood." (*Tracts*, p. 144.) And what to me seems a complete justification of this manner of interpreting the sacrificial phrases which are used with reference to the death of Christ is, that the very same phrases, or others equally strong, are employed in the New Testament with allusion to other persons and other subjects. The Apostle Paul beseeches us to "present our own bodies, *a living sacrifice*." (Rom. xii., 1.) Here at least there can be no vicarious propitiation. As Christ is compared to a high priest, the veil of the temple, and the mercy-seat, so are we, by the Apostle Peter, declared to be "living stones," a "spiritual house," and an "holy priesthood," to offer up "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter ii., 5.) As Christ's obedience unto death was likened to a sacrifice, so the prayers and good deeds of Christians are described in similar terms. "Let us *offer the sacrifice of praise* continually—the fruit of our lips." (Heb. xiii., 15.) "To do good and to communicate forget not; for *with such sacrifices* God is well pleased." (Heb. xiii., 16.) St. Paul declares that a donation sent to him from Philippi was "*an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice, acceptable, well-pleasing, unto God*." (Phil. iv., 8.) And he does not hesitate to speak of his own approaching death in terms which are quite as strong as any that he uses in reference to that of Christ. He

says he was about to be "*poured forth* [as a drink-offering] upon the sacrifice and service of the early Christians' faith." (Phil. ii., 17.) He says to Timothy, "I am now *ready to be sacrificed*, and the time of my departure is at hand." (2 Tim. iv., 6.) Elsewhere he says, "We are unto God a *sweet savour* in Christ." (2 Cor. ii., 15.) There is no thought of imputed sin here, nor of any act by which the wrath of God against others would be appeased.

That the manner of interpreting these Scriptural tropes which I have now suggested is in the main correct, must be farther evident from the fact that if any attempt be made to explain them literally, they will contradict each other. If the death of Christ was a *sacrifice*, it could not be a *passover*. If it was a *passover*, it could not be a *drink-offering*, or a libation. If it was a *libation*, it could not be an *offering of incense*. If it was an offering of incense, it could not be an *ablution*. If Christ was a *victim*, he could not be the *priest*, nor the *altar*, nor the *veil*, nor the *mercy-seat*. These expressions, therefore, cannot be understood in their literal sense. *They must be figures of speech*. If they be figures of speech, the only question that remains is, whether the manner in which I have explained them, or that in which they are explained by the divines from whom I differ upon this point, is the more consistent and rational; and that question I fearlessly leave to the decision of any understanding man, who thinks it lawful to use his understanding. If he thinks it unlawful to do that, he can have no opinion of his own, and I need not appeal to him.

One thing is clear. An essential—a fundamental—a vital article of the faith can never depend on doubtful phrases—on indirect allusions—or mere figures of speech—or expressions, all of which admit, easily and naturally, of another interpretation; many of which are repeatedly found in passages where another interpretation is absolutely forced upon us by the circumstances of the case. This being so, the commonly received doctrine of atonement, which has no stronger support, *cannot possibly be a fundamental doctrine of Christianity*.



# LECTURE V.

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## OBJECTIONS

TO

## THE COMMON DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

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PSALM CIII., 8-14.

Jehovah is merciful and gracious,  
 Slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.  
 He will not always chide,  
 Neither will He keep His anger for ever.  
 He hath not dealt with us after our sins,  
 Nor rewarded us according to our unrighteousness.  
 For as the heaven is high above the earth,  
 So great is His mercy toward them that fear Him.  
 As far as the east is from the west,  
 So far hath He removed our transgressions from us.  
 Like as a father pitieth his children,  
 So doth Jehovah pity them that fear Him.  
 For He knoweth our frame;  
 He remembereth that we are dust.

IN the first lecture of this series, I stated, for the most part in the words of the sacred books, the doctrine of the Scripture on the great subject of "atonement"—the reconciliation of the sinner to his God. In the next, I laid before you an outline of the history of the opinions upon that important subject, held in the churches of Christ, at various times, from the age of the Apostles to the present day. In the third and fourth, I considered the arguments usually advanced, both from reason

and Scripture, in support of that form of opinion which is, by our Protestant brethren, usually called and considered orthodox. It is now my duty to lay before you the principal objections to that theory as they present themselves to my own mind. Having undertaken to do this, you will all acknowledge that it is my duty to speak my sentiments, openly and freely. In this way I mean to address you. Let no one be offended with my freedom. I speak without the least feeling of unkindness, or dislike, or contempt, towards the persons who differ from me on this great question. I do—I must—oppose their doctrine, for I believe it to be erroneous and dangerous; but against themselves I entertain no hostility. I am aware that many of those who hold the common doctrine of atonement are extremely attached to it; they look upon it as the sum and substance of Christianity; they think their own hope of salvation is bound up with it; they conceive that any one who questions their favourite doctrine is overturning the very foundation of the Gospel, and endangering their own hope of salvation, if not extinguishing it altogether. Hence they get vexed and angry when they hear it impugned; and it often happens, that the more unanswerable are the objections which they hear, the more angry they grow. But if the objections which are started are *real* objections—not pretended or sophistical, but real—or if they are believed to be real by the person who urges them—and more especially if they are urged in a calm, earnest, truth-loving spirit—there is surely no ground for offence. *Ribaldry* is quite another affair. Every right-minded person, no matter what his opinions are, must abominate that and resent it. But you will hear no ribaldry from me. I will speak freely, for I feel deeply; but, for the same reason, I will speak seriously, as becomes a man speaking to fellow-sinners on the solemn interests of eternity. If there are any of my Christian brethren of another persuasion present, I entreat them to hear me patiently. They cannot reasonably be offended if I speak of their doctrinal views quite differently from the way in which they would speak of them themselves; but I am very far from wishing or intending to give offence, and I trust that none will be taken.

Without farther preface, I now proceed to enumerate and discuss, as fully as our time permits, the objection which seem to me to lie in the way of the popular doctrine of atonement.

I. And first I object to it as an *unscriptural doctrine*. Perhaps this commencement will startle some of its partizans. They have been taught to regard it in a very different light. From their earliest years they have been taught that the very end for which Christ came into the world was that he might make satisfaction for the sins of believers; that there is no salvation for sinners except by faith in the efficacy of his blood in turning aside the wrath of God; that this is the one fundamental doctrine of the Gospel; that the whole Bible is full of it; that it shines in every page of the New Testament with a lustre so bright, that even the wilfully blind cannot altogether fail to discern it; and that the denial of it is as wicked as it is dangerous. They have heard this repeated again and again, by men whom they respect, love, and trust; and they have never questioned its correctness. No wonder they are amazed and shocked when they hear it asserted that this vital and fundamental doctrine of their creed is not to be found in the Bible at all; and that it cannot even be expressed in Scripture language. Yet when they consider the matter carefully for a few minutes, they will find that the case is even so.

For they must recollect what is the real question at issue. It is not whether "Christ died for us"—for that we believe as firmly as they do themselves. Nor is it whether his "blood was shed for many for the remission of sins"—for that no Christian doubts. Neither is it whether "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins"—for in that all are agreed. So long as they adhere to the statements of Scripture, there is no dispute. All sects of believers in Christ receive these statements; each, of course, understanding them as they are persuaded the Apostles, who wrote them, wished them to be understood. But no one even pretends that these texts carry the orthodox or common doctrine of the atonement *on their very face*. It is *deduced* from them by those who believe it, *as an inference*. And when their theologians are

called upon to express their own opinions distinctly, as, for example, in their creeds and articles and confessions, they are not satisfied to take the simple statements of the Scripture as they stand in the Sacred Page, nor would these serve their purpose. They cannot find a single text from Genesis to Revelations, that will, clearly and unmistakeably, express their doctrine. They are, therefore, obliged to invent forms of expression for themselves ; such as that “the Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself—which he, through the eternal spirit, once offered up unto God—hath *fully satisfied the justice of the Father, and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven* for all those whom the Father hath given unto him :” (*West. Conf.* viii., 5) ; and that Christ “truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, *to reconcile his Father to us.*” (*Articles of the Church of England, sec 2.*) Let any man find this, or any thing amounting to this, in the Old Testament or the New, and, so far as I am concerned, the controversy is over. You can hardly fail to remark that, in the extract just quoted from the Westminster Confession, there is a passage taken from Heb. ix., 14, in which Christ is stated to have, “through the eternal spirit, offered himself without spot unto God.” But does the remainder of that verse affirm what the Westminster Confession affirms, that he thereby “*fully satisfied the justice of the Father, and purchased for his people an eternal inheritance in the kingdom of heaven ?*” No ; nor any thing like it. The text asks a question—“How much more shall the blood of Christ who, through the eternal spirit, offered himself without spot to God, *purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God ?*”—*i.e., turn you away from a sinful to a holy life.* Thus, then, the matter stands. As long as the Westminster divines adhere to Scripture and common sense, they use the very words of Scripture ; but when they come to express their own peculiar views, they are compelled to employ words and phrases which are not in the Bible at all. Quite similar is the case with the framers of the Thirty-nine Articles. They adopt a form of language in which every single word is taken from the New Testament, but then, they turn the statement of the sacred

writers upside down and inside out. The New Testament affirms that Christ died "*to reconcile us to God.*" (Rom. v., 10; 2 Cor. v., 18; v. 19; v. 20; Eph. ii., 16; Col. i., 20; i., 21.) But the framers of the Thirty-nine Articles declare that he suffered and died "*to reconcile his Father to us,*" which is the very opposite sense. I cannot help thinking that, if either the fathers of the Church of England, or the Presbyterian divines of Westminster, had been able to find *so much as one passage in the Bible*, that would have clearly conveyed the doctrine which they were both anxious to inculcate, they would have adhered to it closely. But they could not find one, and no man has been able to supply the deficiency. Not only is there no text in the Bible that will express the common doctrine of atonement, but the words and phrases which are necessary to state it, and without which it cannot be expressed at all, are absolute strangers to the Sacred Volume. What reader of the Holy Book has ever been able to discover there such expressions as *satisfaction to divine justice—vicarious punishment—a substitute for sinners—the imputed righteousness of Christ—the Saviour's meritorious sacrifice—the merits of Christ—a reconciled God?* These are the terms of a new language, which, to the tongues of prophets and evangelists, was a foreign speech. The doctrine which these terms are employed to express, and which cannot be expressed without them, is, therefore, an unscriptural doctrine. These phrases flash before our eyes in every tract we read from orthodox pens; they tingle on our ears in almost every sermon that we hear from orthodox pulpits. There is no mistaking the meaning of the preachers and writers who use them. They express their meaning very clearly. Had the Prophets and Apostles held the same views, they would have put them forward with equal plainness; but this they have never done. They have, as in my first lecture was clearly shewn, most clearly and unmistakably stated the very reverse. The doctrine, therefore, is, in every sense unscriptural; it is not taught in Scripture, it is incapable of being expressed in the language of Scripture; and it pointedly contradicted by decisive passages in almost every portion of the Sacred Volume. I put it to every seriously

minded hearer to decide, whether *such a doctrine can be a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel?* Can it possibly be true?

II. My second objection to this doctrine is, that it is imperfect in itself; that it does not solve the difficulties which it proposes to remove, nor effect the purposes which it professes to have in view.

Its advocates admit that a *lame* atonement is *no* atonement. I now proceed to shew that *their own atonement is lame*, does not answer its avowed object, and leaves the sinner still in need of another atonement to accomplish his salvation. We all know that the very foundation of the common doctrine is, that sin is an offence against God; therefore, infinite; and that no sin can be forgiven without full satisfaction. The common doctrine makes provision for satisfying the justice or the wrath of God, *so far as the person of the Father is concerned*. For this purpose, a covenant, as it is called by the Westminster divines,\* is made in heaven between *God the Father*, the first person of the Trinity, and *God the Son*, the second person of the Trinity, and the equal partner in the Father's sovereignty. In consequence of this *covenant* or *treaty*, God the Son descends to earth, becomes incarnate, lives as a poor and despised man among men, and at last dies upon the cross, offering himself up as a sacrifice to the justice *of the Father*. Thus *the Father's* justice is "fully satisfied;" and "reconciliation and an eternal inheritance are purchased" for the parties on whose behalf this sacrifice is presented. In the language of the Thirty-nine Articles, "Christ suffered to reconcile *his Father* unto us." But here the common doctrine stops; and its friends seem to imagine that it is now "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." But it wants a great deal; yea, an infinity is needed to render it complete. For we must remember that sin is committed *against God; not against the single person of the Father*, but *against God; the whole Godhead*; against the person of the Father unquestionably; but also, and equally, *against the person of the Son*, if he be God equal with the Father, as the

\* It is called "a bargain" in the "Sum of Saving Knowledge." *App. to W. C.*, p. 447.

upholders of this theory maintain that he is ; and also *against the person of the Holy Spirit*, if he be likewise a divine person, equal in holiness and majesty to the other two. By virtue of the bargain or covenant of redemption, between the Father and the Son, the latter dies to appease the former's wrath, and doth thereby "*fully satisfy the justice of the Father.*" But they have forgotten to tell us *who satisfies His own !* Yet this is a thing quite as essential to be done, in order to make their theory complete, as the offering of an infinite sacrifice to appease the Father's wrath. They will not deny, nay, they strenuously assert, that Christ is God equal with the Father ! If they deny this, I shall be happy to hail them as fellow-believers in the simple unity of God, a doctrine to which I attach much importance ; but I fear they are not prepared to meet me on these terms. Now, if Christ be God, equal with the Father, in justice, holiness, and majesty, *he must be just as deeply offended with sin and sinners as the Father is.* If the Father's wrath is infinite, *so is his.* He has as much right, and he is as much bound, to demand satisfaction to his justice, as the Father himself ; *and it is as impossible for the Son, as it is for the Father, to forgive a sinner without an infinite substitute.* The Father could not forgive without one. In order to enable Him to forgive at all, it was necessary to provide, as a substitute, the second person, who became incarnate, and suffered the punishment required by infinite wrath. But *the wrath of God the Son* is not less tremendous than that of God the Father. Yet no infinite substitute, no substitute at all, has been provided to appease it. No one has died to appease it. *It remains, till the present moment, unappeased !* And thus, they who think that they cannot be saved till divine justice be fully satisfied by a vicarious atonement on their behalf, must, if their own theory be true, be in a desperate condition ; for no victim has yet been provided, by the sacrifice of which the infinite wrath of "God the Son" may be appeased, and his justice satisfied, as that of the Father's has been. *Surely it will not be said that the Son died to satisfy his own wrath !* That is contrary to the creed which says he died to satisfy the justice of the Father. It nullifies the "bargain" or

“covenant of redemption” between the Father and the Son. For it will not be asserted that the Son entered into a bargain to appease the Father’s wrath on certain terms, intending all the while to appease his own. And if it implies that he did, then it makes the latter conduct himself like the insane suicides, who, under the influence of passions which they have lost power to control, sacrifice their lives to attest the force of their indignation or the absorbing power of love. I might apply similiar reasoning to the case of the Holy Spirit, to whom no victim was ever offered up; and whose justice, therefore, remains, like that of the Son, unsatisfied. Thus is the doctrine of satisfaction utterly incomplete. It declares that a victim is necessary to *satisfy divine justice*. It tells us that such a victim was provided, *but that he satisfied the justice of the Father only*. It leaves *unsatisfied* the justice of the Son and that of the *Holy Spirit*, each of whom it declares to be like the Father himself, infinite in holiness, justice, and all other attributes. The satisfaction is, therefore, imperfect, and, consequently, *null*, on the shewing of its advocates themselves.

I use this argument as an *argumentum ad hominem* merely; for I do not look upon the son of God as God himself, highly as I venerate him. But the persons whose views I am combating look upon him in this light. And the manner in which I mean to apply the whole topic is to convince them, that—seeing they themselves admit it to be possible for God the Son (whom they believe to be equal to God the Father in justice, holiness, and all other attributes), to forgive sin without compensation; yea, and as they hold it to be certain that he will actually do so—there can be nothing in the divine nature, or in the nature of things, to prevent God the Father from doing the same. But if this be granted, the whole case is virtually closed; for few pious minds will contend that God insisted upon an equivalent to satisfy His justice or His wrath, if He had it in His power to pardon sin without it.

III. I object to this doctrine, because it is inconsistent with itself, nugatory, and self-destructive. For observe, the Scripture plainly declares that “the Father *sent the Son* to



be the Saviour of the world," (1 John iv., 14); that "God loved us and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins," (1 John iv., 10); that the son of God "came down from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of the Father *who sent him*, (John vi., 38); and other things to the same effect. The sternest orthodoxy cannot venture to expunge these *truly* fundamental articles out of the creed of Christendom. Indeed, strict orthodoxy requires the admission of these tenets, or something akin to them, for it is the orthodox doctrine that the substitute, to whom the sins of men were imputed, and who bore their penalty, was a substitute *provided by the Deity himself*. This is the very substance of the covenant of redemption. Now let me suppose a case. There are two neighbours, one of whom owes the other a very large sum, but he becomes an insolvent; he is unable to pay any thing; it is a total loss. The creditor continues to feel an interest in his unfortunate neighbour. He is anxious to resume his dealings with him on their former confidential footing, and to advance his prosperity. But he conceives that this would be contrary to the laws of justice; he fancies there would be something dishonest in taking his debtor once more into favour, until the old debt shall be paid in full. The man, however, cannot pay it himself, and nobody else is able or willing to pay it. The creditor, therefore, prevails on a third party to come forward and take the debt upon himself. Not only does he find the surety, but he furnishes him with the money that is needful for liquidating the obligation in full. He makes no secret of what he has done. He tells the debtor and all the world that he has provided the surety, and supplied him with funds for the purpose in view. His sense of justice being thus satisfied, he accepts the payment of his own money from the surety whom he has himself engaged; and then, *but not till then*, he writes an acquittance of the debt, declaring that the balance due to him had been discharged in full. I put it to any man of business who hears me, if this would not be a very round-about, crotchety, and silly way, of effecting what would have been done at once by writing off the amount to profit and loss? But it is exactly what the Almighty has done, according to the

common doctrine. Man owes to God an infinite debt. He can pay nothing. God will not forgive till the debt is paid in full ; nothing less will satisfy His justice. He, therefore, provides a substitute. He furnishes the substitute with means to pay the debt ; nay, as I shall presently shew, He is himself the substitute. He accepts the payment which He himself has made, proclaims that His justice is now satisfied, and avows the means by which it has been satisfied ; and then He forgives those, whom, but for this measure, He declares He never would have forgiven, nay, whom he would have kept in a fetid and noisome prison-house for an undying eternity ! Does not this process leave the justice of God as much unsatisfied, as a debt is undischarged, when the creditor takes money out of one pocket and puts it into another ? Let men talk about it, and about it, and about it, as long as they please, still the matter comes to this :—If Christ died and suffered only as man, the debt is not paid, for it was infinite, and man is finite. If the Godhead was at all concerned in the matter, then the Deity made and furnished the equivalent Himself. And so the boasted expedient, without which, we are told, man's salvation cannot be reconciled with God's holiness, melts into vapour, and vanishes like a dream ! Divine justice, we are told, must be satisfied, and yet the doctrine leaves it unsatisfied !

IV. My fourth objection to the common doctrine of atonement—and it is the last on which I shall enter this evening—is, that it distinctly implies that the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth expired and died. Remember, however, that I charge this absurdity on the *doctrine*, and on some, but not on all, those who hold it ; for although some orthodox persons have avowed and defended this tenet, others are as far from believing in the death of God as I am. Nevertheless, it seems to me quite certain that if the received doctrine of surrounding churches be adopted, this horrible conclusion must, logically, be accepted along with it. For thus the question stands. Our brethren tell us—and, doubtless, they themselves believe—that an infinite substitute was necessary to endure the infinite punishment of sin, before God could forgive it ; therefore, the Saviour died. The

Saviour, consequently, must have died in his infinite, that is to say, in his divine nature ; for in his human nature, to use their own language, he was no more infinite than any other man. This seems to me conclusive.

Calvin sought to get rid of this difficulty by asserting (*Inst.* l. ii., c. xvii., sec. 1 ; *ad finem.*, p. 103), that although Christ died only as man, yet, *by the will and appointment of God*, his sufferings were esteemed to possess an infinite value.\* But such an adventitious value, a value arising out of the mere will and pleasure of the Deity, and which He might, if He had been so pleased, have assigned to the death of any other human being, never could afford the infinite equivalent, without which justice could not be satisfied nor sin forgiven. The sacrifice which is to compensate for an infinite amount of sin, must be an infinite sacrifice ; it must not be the sacrifice of any man, however distinguished or illustrious, but *the sacrifice of a God !* And this, I believe, is the opinion of all the common people who hold this doctrine. It is the impression which young people, brought up under evangelical training, almost uniformly imbibe. I remember once that I was travelling in a neighbouring county along with two distinguished men ; one was a Calvinistic minister, eminent for his talents and virtues, since deceased ; the other was a layman, equally illustrious, who still survives, and is a leading elder in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. We gave a seat upon our conveyance to a fine intelligent boy, who was returning from school with his books under his arm. My lay friend entered into conversation with the lad, and soon began to touch on a subject always uppermost in his own thoughts. "Can you tell me," said he to the boy, "*who died for men ?*" "Oh, yes !" he answered, "*God Almighty !*" My friend seemed mortified at receiving such an answer, especially, I thought, at receiving it in my presence. I could not help telling him that it was he, and gentlemen like himself, who kept such blasphemous notions afloat—necessarily, though undesignedly, kept them afloat—by maintaining in their tracts, and teaching in their schools, and inculcating in their

\* See Appendix I.

catechisms, a doctrine which, to every plain understanding, implies that God died, and must have died, to bear the penalty of sin.

But not the children and the common people only have embraced this doctrine. Many eminent scholars and divines have embraced it and defended it. Osiander, a friend and fellow-labourer of Luther, maintained that *Christ died and satisfied divine justice, not as man, but as God!* He was professor of theology at Königsberg. His colleague, Stancarus, wrote against him; but Osiander was supported both by the ecclesiastical and civil authorities; and Stancarus was obliged to fly into Poland, where he found shelter among the Unitarians, whose church was then, as often since, the camp of refuge to minds distressed and burdened with the weight of human creeds.\* The Church of England adopted the same opinion with Osiander; for in her Litany she appeals to God "*by his agony and bloody sweat; by his cross and passion; by his precious DEATH, resurrection, and ascension.*" Hooper, a great and venerable name, declares that he cares "for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned, and *God hath suffered.*" The learned Bishop Beveridge holds the same opinion. Mr. Hervey, in his "*Meditations,*" is very strong on the same side. And the Rev. Mr. White, of Dublin, says:—"They crucified him! *Whom?* Who is it that hangs upon that central cross? Who is it that was thus crowned with thorns, and clothed with mockery; thus scourged and scoffed; thus buffeted and spit upon; rejected when a murderer was chosen, and crucified between two thieves, to mark that he was considered the vilest malefactor of the three? Oh! how shall I give utterance to that mystery of mysteries? I am lost with wonder! I am overwhelmed with awe! How shall I speak it? How shall I tell that that rejected, reviled, scorned, scoffed, scourged, crucified one, was **GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, THE SUPREME MAKER AND MONARCH OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, LORD OF LORDS AND KING OF KINGS, GOD OVER ALL, BLESSED FOR EVER!** Oh! is it strange that the sun was afraid to look upon that sight, that the heavens were shrouded with darkness when their

\* See Appendix M.

Almighty Maker was expiring, or that the earth shook with convulsive terror, as if it trembled to support the cross on which its ADORABLE CREATOR hung?" (*Sermons*, p. 51.)

But it may be said, these were private men—learned and distinguished men, no doubt, but, after all, only individuals. Give us something that will shew the concurrence of bodies of men in this astounding doctrine. I reply, I have already alluded to the decree which banished Stancarus for opposing this doctrine; *that* shews the concurrence of several public bodies acting judicially in the case. I have given you the Litany of the Church of England, which, it is to be presumed, conveys the sentiments of those who drew it up, of the convocation which adopted it, and of those who habitually use it in their worship, and by their responses, shew that they are conscious neither of sin nor shame in praying to a God who died. In addition, I could give you a huge number of passages from the hymns which vast multitudes of our fellow-Christians are in the habit of singing in their families and in their congregations; and which, undoubtedly, express their feelings and views. Indeed, I think that the hymns express the sentiments of the worshippers who use them, far more accurately than writers like Dr. Pye Smith, or Archbishop Magee, who wrote in defence of this doctrine. For these were learned men, able men, cautious men; and were most carefully on their guard; anxious to avoid everything that could reflect discredit on their favourite tenet, or that could be turned to its disadvantage. The hymns of Dr. Watts, for example, are most extensively used among the Dissenters of England—perhaps one-fourth of the inhabitants of England and Wales employ them; and the second and third books are crimsoned with the blood of *a dying God*. I take the following out of a dozen passages that I have marked.

“ Well might the sun in darkness hide,  
 And shut his glories in,  
 When God, the mighty Maker, died  
 For man the creature's sin.”—(ii., 9, v. 4.)

“ Behold a God descends and dies  
 To save my soul from gaping hell!”—(ii., 21, v. 2.)

“ Oh, the sweet wonders of that cross,  
Where God the Saviour loved and died ! ”—(iii., 10, v. 5.)

“ Th’ eternal God comes down and bleeds  
To nourish dying worms ! ”—(iii., 17, v. 1.)

Next only to the hymn book of Dr. Watts, in extent of circulation and popularity (if, indeed, it be second to any) is that of the celebrated Mr. Wesley ; and it abounds still more in statements of this kind. I have noted about fifty passages which speak of “ Jehovah crucified,” and other similar phrases. I shall read to you but one verse.

“ Sinners turn ! why will ye die ?  
God your Saviour asks you why ?  
God, who did your souls retrieve,  
*Died himself* that ye might live ! ”—(c. 2.)

And, lastly, the pious and amiable Bishop Heber compiled a book of hymns, which has been published for the general use of the Christian church. From it, also, I shall select but one verse.

“ Thou art gone to the grave ; but we will not deplore thee ;  
Whose God was thy *ransom*, thy guardian, thy guide ;  
He gave thee, he took thee, and he will restore thee,  
And death has no sting, for the Saviour has died ! ”

But the dry reading of these extracts can give no idea of the hold which these sentiments have on the minds of the persons who use them. You should hear them sung, as I have done. You should mark, as I have done, how, when these passages occur, all symptoms of fatigue and languor in the congregation appear ; how voices hitherto silent break forth into song ; and how those that were singing before acquire at once a clear brilliancy and richness of tone, that speaks the fervour of a deep devotion. Verily, the doctrine of *infinite satisfaction for infinite sins* has produced its natural fruit ; and has enticed its votaries into *the belief and worship of a dying God !*

I have other objections to this doctrine not less important than those which have now been stated, but I must reserve

them for my lecture next Sunday evening. In the mean time let me caution you to keep close to the law of God and testimony of his holy word. You may see from the specimens which have been laid before you, that learned, able, and pious men, who have not been content to take the simple truths of the Gospel as expressed to us in its own simple language, but have thought to be wise above and beyond what is written, have entangled themselves and others in a labyrinth of error; and that of a most pernicious kind. Leaving the Bible behind them, and following the dim light of their own imaginations, they have reached a region of uncouth shapes and direful forms. They have fancied that they have saw upon the cross of Calvary an expiring Deity! and they have bowed before him in blinded adoration. But reason tell us it was a phantom—and Scripture tells us it was a phantom—and piety tells us it was a phantom—a horrid phantom. Oh! when will they turn to the lamp of truth and see the light “in the light of God.”

## LECTURE VI.

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 FURTHER OBJECTIONS

TO

THE COMMON DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

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EZEKIEL, xxxiii., 11. As I live, saith the LORD God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways ; for why will ye die, O house of Israel ?

ALTHOUGH this passage is taken from the Old Testament, no one will doubt that the sentiment which it expresses is likewise the pervading sentiment of the New. In truth it may be taken as an illustration and proof of the unity of religion, as unfolded in the two great dispensations of God's will. In both there is a common object kept in view, though the means employed for carrying it out are in many respects different, that object being the turning of men away from their sins, and their preparation for a state of union with their God. Holiness is His delight. He is not satisfied by means of death and suffering, but by goodness. Even in the death and misery of the sinful He has "no pleasure at all." His object, in threatening and (when necessary) inflicting chastisement, is to wean transgressors "from their evil way," and "turn" them to Himself. Is it necessary to add, that the Being who has "no pleasure at all in the death of the wicked" cannot possibly find pleasure in the death of the innocent ?



In my last lecture I commenced a statement of the principal objections to the common doctrine of many surrounding sects on the subject of atonement. It was not possible for me in the compass of a single lecture to bring forward all those that have occurred to my mind, nor to illustrate at much length those on which I touched. Nevertheless, I think I shewed to the conviction of every unprejudiced person—*first*, that the generally received theory on this important question is *unscriptural*. Not only is it not laid down in the Bible, but it cannot be expressed in the language of the sacred writers; because it requires, in order to convey it distinctly, the use of the words and phrases which are not to be found in the Holy Volume, while it is contradicted by many express testimonies of the Bible. *Secondly*, I objected to the received theory, that it is, upon its face, *an incomplete hypothesis*; that is to say, that the atonement which it affirms is a lame atonement, unfit to accomplish the end which it professes to have in view; because, while it asserts that a victim is necessary to satisfy the justice of God, and provides a victim to appease the wrath and satisfy the justice of *God the Father*, it exhibits no means of satisfying the wrath, or the justice of *the Son*, or the *Holy Spirit*, whose wrath, as the advocates of this doctrine themselves allow, must be appeased before the Godhead can be appeased, or sin forgiven. My *third* objection was, that the whole doctrine, as laid down in the Articles, Confessions, and Catechisms, is *self-destructive and nugatory*, because it admits that the victim which was sacrificed to satisfy the Father's justice and appease His wrath, was a victim procured and furnished by Himself; the offering up of which could by no conceivable means be such an equivalent as would enable Him to pardon what He would otherwise have been obliged to punish. And *fourthly*, I shewed that this doctrine requires its consistent advocates to believe that *God himself—the Eternal and Immortal God—suffered pain, agony, and death*. In proof that this blasphemous opinion has been actually maintained, I appealed to judicial sentences, to liturgies, to the published sentiments of eminent divines, and to the hymns which are extensively used in public worship among our orthodox brethren both in England and America.

I mention these points, that we may be prepared to take up the subject where we left it off; for several very material objections still remain to be discussed.

V. I proceed, therefore, to the *fifth* objection; and it is one to which I attach great importance. It is, that the common doctrine of our fellow-Christians, on the subject of atonement, represents God our Father as a merciless being; as a being who, rather than forego the smallest particle of the vengeance to which He was entitled, inflicted the whole penalty of human guilt on His own son, though innocent; and that it sets forth this son as the personification of tenderness and compassion; to whom, therefore, and not to God the Father, it attracts the gratitude, love, and confidence of mankind. This must appear to every seriously-minded Christian a point of infinite moment. No one who desires to form his faith, his heart, and life, by the rules of Holy Scripture, can possibly doubt its importance.

The voice of nature testifies that her God is good; it is by means of His goodness that He makes Himself known to us; for what are the displays of God in the universe around us, but manifestations of the skill and energy which He is continually exerting to promote the happiness of all that live? Nor is the volume of revelation less explicit in its announcement of its Great Author's benevolence. It declares that "the Lord is good and ready to forgive;" (Psalm lxxxvi., 5;) that "He is good to all," and that "His tender mercies are over all His works;" (Ps. cxlv., 9;) that He is a God "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, but abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin;" (Exod. xxxiv., 6, 7;) that He is "our Father in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and upon the unjust;" (Matt. v., 45;) that "God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort;" (2 Cor. i., 3;) that "He is love;" (1 John iv., 8;) and that out of His love to the world—a sinful, selfish, and disobedient world—He sent His son to save mankind from sin and its consequences; "for God so loved the world, that He

gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii., 16.) It is "through the tender mercy of our God that the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace." (Luke i., 78, 79.) And "God commendeth His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." (Rom. v., 8.) Indeed, the Gospel is most earnest and explicit in ascribing all the blessedness which it affords to the pure grace and mercy of God the Father; and in claiming for Him the gratitude, love, and confidence of all whose hearts are touched by its own displays of mercy, and its offers of forgiveness.

But such is not the character of God, as depicted in the prevailing creed of Christendom. It declares that an infinite victim must die, and pay the full penalty of human sin, before God could or would accept a sinner into His favour, or grant the pardon of a single sin. What is this but to affirm that God the Father never forgives? Can anything be clearer than that he who never overlooks an offence till he has received full compensation for the injury or the insult, never truly pardons; and that he who, before granting a release to his debtor, requires the debt to be paid in full, is the most stern and unrelenting of creditors? Can such conduct call forth love and gratitude in the hearts of those to whom it is displayed? Does it not, on the contrary, necessarily engender alienation, suspicion, and distrust, if not hatred? Moreover, the common belief represents Jesus as stepping in between guilty man and this rigorous, inflexible, and unrelenting God. He takes upon himself the burden of the believer's sins; bows his meek head before the seat of unbending justice; offers himself as the substitute of hapless, helpless human beings, to bear the brunt of vengeance infinite; bears that vengeance; satisfies all its cravings for agony and pain; pays the debt in full; and so "purchases for his people, not only forgiveness of their sins, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven!" What more natural than that the merciful being who interposes between them and his Almighty Father's unmitigated wrath,

and pays for them the price which secures their everlasting bliss, should be the object of their love, their thankfulness, their trust, their hope? This is, in my opinion, the natural result of such views of the divine procedure. And I am able to shew that in many instances this effect has actually been produced upon the minds of men. I shall bring forward a few examples, illustrating both of the two classes of feelings that I have just described.

Stockel, for instance, informs us that "in a strict and proper sense, God does not forgive sin, for Christ hath given Him full satisfaction. How, then, can it be justly said that God pardoneth sins and transgressions? Surely that debt can never be *forgiven* that is *paid*." (Cited by Dr. Bruce, *Sermons*, 2nd ed., p. 354.) This seems to me conclusive reasoning, if the fact be as Stockel and our orthodox brethren imagine. To the same effect, says the pious Flavel, whose writings were once remarkably popular among Christians of what is called the evangelical school. "To wrath—to the wrath of an infinite God, without mixture—to the very torments of Hell, was Christ delivered; and that by the hand of his own Father. God stood upon full satisfaction and would not remit one sin without it." (*Works*, *Folio ed.*, p. 10.) Very clear and very striking. But if such be the conduct and dispositions of God, how can men be called on to love Him, or to bless Him, or to put their trust in Him? The feelings which such a form of belief inspires, both towards God and Christ, are very beautifully expressed by Dr. Watts in one of his hymns.

BOOK II. HYMN 108.

"Come, let us lift our joyful eyes  
Up to the courts above,  
And smile to see our Father there  
Upon a throne of love.

"Once 'twas a seat of dreadful wrath,  
And shot devouring flame;  
Our God appeared consuming fire;  
And vengeance was his name!

“ Rich were the drops of Jesus’ blood  
 That *calm’d his frowning face,*  
 That sprinkled o’er the burning throne,  
*And turned the wrath to grace.*

“ Now we may bow before his feet,  
 And venture near the Lord ;  
 No fi’ry cherub guards his seat,  
 Nor double flaming sword.

“ The peaceful gates of heav’nly bliss  
 Are *open’d by the Son* ;—  
 High let us raise our notes of praise,  
 And reach th’ Almighty throne.

“ To thee, *ten thousand thanks we bring,*  
 Great advocate on high,  
 And glory to th’ Eternal King,  
*That lays his fury by.*”

It would be a waste of time to comment on these sentiments at any length. God sits on “a throne of dreadful wrath,” which “shoots devouring flame.” His name is “Vengeance !” but the blood of Jesus “calms His frowning face,” and “turns His wrath to grace.” *The son* opens to man the gates of heaven. To him “ten thousand thanks” are due, for he is our “advocate” in heaven. And glory is also due to the Eternal, for He has “laid by His fury.” I can scarcely imagine any sentiments which would excite more of horror and utter abomination in the breast of Jesus than these ; yet because we reject them, we are deemed unworthy of the name of Christians !

To the same effect are many of the hymns in Mr. Wesley’s collection. I shall read but one short extract :—

## HYMN 168.

“ Lo ! I cumber still the ground ;  
 Lo ! an advocate is found !  
 Hasten not to cut him down,  
 Let this barren soul alone !

“ Jesus speaks and pleads his blood !  
*He disarms the wrath of God !*  
 Now, my Father’s bowels move,  
*Justice lingers into love !*”

Many hymns, and many sermons, and many prayers, are conceived in this spirit. Can any spirit be more unchristian ? Am I not discharging my duty as a man and a minister when I do my utmost to call my fellow-creatures away from this shocking perversion of the Gospel of Christ ?

And here I cannot but notice an assertion of the late Archbishop Magee in his book upon the atonement. He says that “ the sacrifice of Christ was never deemed by any *who did not wish to calumniate the doctrine of atonement*, to have made God placable.” (Vol. i., p. 22.) After what you have heard from Stockel, Flavel, Watts, and Wesley, you will be able to estimate this assertion at its true value. With the same remark I meet the statement of Dr. Wardlaw—“ That any transition is produced in God’s nature by the mediation of Christ, from previous vindictive cruelty to benevolence and pity, *as the adversaries of the doctrine of atonement are, either through ignorance or a worse principle, accustomed to speak*, is a supposition full of blasphemous impiety.” (*Discourses on the Socinian controversy*, 5th ed., p. 225–6.) Right, Dr. Wardlaw ; quite right : but remember it is your own friends who are guilty of the sin ; and it is your own creed which has enticed them into it. Indeed, the doctor himself admits that some “ of its *well-meaning friends* have used at times *such unguarded modes of expression, as give apparent countenance to the impious blasphemy.*” (*Discourses, &c.*, p. 228.) Is it not strange that a vital and saving doctrine of Christ’s blessed Gospel should be so apt to betray its friends—“ its well-meaning friends”—into “ blasphemous impiety ? ” The same admission is made by another eminent scholar and divine of the Calvinistic persuasion, my own excellent and lamented friend, the late Dr. J. Pye Smith. “ We cannot hear or read, without unspeakable disapprobation and regret, representations of the Deity, as first actuated by the passions of *wrath* and *fury* towards sinful men, and as afterwards *turned* by the

presentation of the Saviour's sacrifice into a different temper, a disposition of *calmness*, kindness, and *grace*." (*Discourses on Sacrifice and Redemption*, 2nd ed., p. 140.) This, no doubt, conveys a tacit reference to the hymn which I have just read from Dr. Watts. I am borne out by these eminent writers in the view that I have given of the effect of the common doctrine of atonement on the minds of many who hold it. I have already shewn that such are the natural fruits of that doctrine. Explain it as you will, unless you explain it away to nothing, it represents God as a God of rigour, wrath, and vengeance; while Jesus is the friend of mankind, who interposes to "disarm the wrath of God;" "turns the wrath to grace;" and opens to them the gates of paradise; and it does and *must* withdraw the fond affections of the worshipper from the Eternal Father to fix them on the mild, and tender, and merciful Saviour. This is orthodoxy—but who can believe that it is Christianity?

VI. A sixth objection to the common doctrine is, that it charges God with gross injustice, imputes to Him conduct that is totally irreconcilable with every idea that we can form of what is right, and represents Him as acting in a manner equally immoral and irrational. This can be shewn in a very short space.

If there be any principle which is fundamental in morals, it is that virtue and vice, holiness and sin, are qualities which belong exclusively to the persons who are virtuous or vicious, holy or sinful, as the case may be; and that they cannot be handed over to any other, as a man may transfer his money or his land. A man may "distribute all his goods to feed the poor," but who ever heard of any one giving away his virtues among his fellow-creatures; presenting his *truthfulness* to one who stood in need of it; his *honesty* to another; his *temperance* to a third; his *chastity* to a fourth; his *piety* to a fifth? Who ever yet advised another, when preparing his will, to settle his whole stock of religion and morality, on trustees, for the benefit of his posterity or the public? These questions seem to be ludicrous, because the conduct which they contemplate is so

utterly absurd. Reason and religion both tell us that "he that doth righteousness is righteous;" and, in like manner, he that doth wickedness is wicked. Again we all know what is meant by *justice*. It consists in rendering to every one according to his moral deserts; good if he be good, and evil if evil—for the purpose of promoting goodness and discouraging guilt. This is justice in human affairs, and it is a quality to which Jehovah attaches great importance. "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord." (Prov. xvii., 15.) It is a quality which we cannot help ascribing to God himself. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" We must be careful that in all our thoughts of God, we never allow ourselves to consider Him as one who "justifieth the wicked, or condemneth the just." But this is the very light in which the received doctrine of the atonement represents the Deity; that is to say, *it attributes to Him the very conduct which He abominates in others*; and it thinks, in so doing, that it preserves the majesty of His justice inviolate! Such is the inconsistency of mankind.

But here it will, perhaps, be objected to me, that God himself has frequently declared in Scripture that He will do the very thing which my argument implies that He cannot do. Has He not proclaimed Himself to be "a jealous God, *visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children?*" (Exod. xx., 5.) Did He not cut off seventy thousand men in Israel by a pestilence, on account of the sin of David in numbering the people? (2 Sam. xxiv., 15.) And was not an innocent child in like manner deprived of life, to mark God's displeasure for another crime committed by the same monarch? (2 Sam. xii., 14.) Do we not often see innocent persons suffering in consequence of crimes, in the commission of which they had no share? Are not the drunkard's children subjected frequently to disease, poverty, ignorance, contempt, in consequence of their father's vicious life? And so in many cases besides.

Yes; the innocent often suffer through the sins of the guilty; we might even say *for* the sins of the guilty; but such suffering is not punishment. Not long since, an unoffending public officer, in the discharge of his useful duty in the metropolis,



was ferociously and brutally assaulted, and so barbarously injured that his life was for a time endangered, and he has been rendered a diseased, helpless cripple for life, dependent on others, and totally unable to provide for his family. This man *suffers*, and will to his dying day suffer, through, or for, the guilt of his assailant. But who would say that he is *punished* for it? The children of guilty parents are, indeed, "visited," that is, rendered wretched by, and through, their parent's misconduct; but who, except a madman, would impute it to them as guilt? The child of David was deprived of life to mark the divine displeasure at the monarch's behaviour. But was this vicarious punishment? Had not his offence been previously forgiven freely, on his confession and repentance? (2 Sam. xii., 13.) And so in all similar cases. Suffering, even when it is the consequence of crime, is not necessarily punishment; though punishment always implies suffering. Punishment is suffering inflicted on the guilty as the penalty of his offence; and where there is no offence there can be no punishment.

Now, orthodoxy declares that Christ suffered the punishment of the sins of men, and thereby exempted them from eternal misery. But orthodoxy admits that Christ could not justly be punished for these sins, unless they somehow or other became his own; therefore, it says, they were transferred to him *by imputation*. What then is imputation? We are told that the meaning of it is, that the sins for which he suffered were set down to his account—reckoned to be his own, just as if he had done them. "But did he really do them?" No; he "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." (1 Peter ii., 22.) "He was in all points tempted, like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. iv., 15.) Then, it appears that the imputation of the sins of men to Christ was a *false imputation!* And so this method of vindicating the justice of God is—*first*, to assert that God untruly imputes to Christ crimes of which he was not guilty; and *then* that He follows up this falsehood by the cruel wrong of inflicting upon him, to the very utmost, the penalty incurred by offences which were not his! Is not this to make God guilty of the double crime of falsehood and malignity? And this is what you call vindicating His glorious justice!

Is it not astonishing that Christian men can stand up in the presence of God, and charge Him to His face with such iniquitous conduct!

But there is an absurdity involved in the prevalent doctrine, which, though it leans to the opposite side, is so far from counterbalancing that which we have been considering, that, in truth, it doubles the weight of our objection; I mean the imputation of the sacrifice, the sufferings, and the righteousness of Christ, to the believers. This is an essential part of the system; and it seems to be thought that, like the combination of an alkali with an acid, this ingredient will neutralise the noxious qualities of the other portion of the doctrine. To me it only appears to render doubly absurd that which was already too absurd to be believed by any rational man. Let us just take the case of any individual sinner who happens to be among the number of the sound believers. He has committed, we may suppose, many enormous crimes. Let us take the case of Col. Gardiner, who fell at the battle of Preston-Pans, upwards of a hundred years ago. His life has been written by Dr. Doddridge. In his youth he had run into excess of riot. He was a gambler; he was a duellist; he was a debauchee; in fact, an adulterer. But he saw the error of his ways; he turned to the Lord; and I doubt not received mercy from that Being who has no "pleasure in the death of the sinner but rather that he should turn from his way and live." But what says orthodoxy? God could not have pardoned and accepted Col. Gardiner if he had not imputed his sins to Christ, and Christ's merits and righteousness to him; that is to say, the colonel could not have been saved if God had not transferred the merit of the crucifixion on Calvary, and the faithful loving heart which endured it, from the person who actually endured it to one who never did; if he had not given credit to Col. Gardiner, while he was yet living in adultery and excess of riot, for the holy graces of the Saviour's unspotted life! Who does not see that if God made this imputation, and acted upon it, he acted under a mistake? Dr. Doddridge himself, though he loved his hero much, does not dare to give Col. Gardiner credit for a life free from sin; for going about continually

doing good ; and for dying on the cross of Calvary. How much less could the All-wise be guilty of such folly ;—God who cannot err, and cannot lie ! But although Dr. Doddridge would not dare to impute to Col. Gardiner the merit of having endured the cross on Golgotha 1700 years previously, or for displaying the purity and piety which have made Judea, to all time, a holy land, yet both he and Col. Gardiner himself, believed that *God* had imputed to him the righteousness of Christ, which consisted in these things ! If we did not know the characters of both these illustrious men, we might almost suspect them of a design to turn the whole affair into ridicule. But they were quite serious ; and the matter is, in truth, most melancholy.

It is for those who hold the satisfaction theory to reconcile it, if they can, to equity, Scripture, and common sense. In the common affairs of life, such conduct as it ascribes to the Deity would be set down a proof of insanity. When Mr. Fauntleroy, the London banker, was lying in prison under sentence of death for forgery and fraud, a foreigner presented himself to the authorities, expressing his desire to save the gentleman's family the shame and grief of losing one of its members in such a disgraceful manner, by taking on himself the crime, and dying on the gallows in his stead.\* The man was committed to custody as a maniac, whose madness might take a dangerous turn. About ten years ago a Chinese was, by the British authorities, sentenced to death for a murder committed in the island of Hong-Kong. The man no sooner heard his sentence explained to him than he petitioned the judge for leave to find a substitute. We do not know whether to weep or to laugh at the brutal ignorance and total prostration of moral feeling indicated by such a proposal. It was just a request that the judge would murder an innocent man, and let a murderer free. But if it be unjust in man to act in the manner which these misguided men suggested, surely it would be unjust in God ; for justice is justice on earth and in heaven, in man and God ; and God's nature is of all natures the most

\* See Appendix N.

highly to be revered, because He is of all beings the most just. Yet such is the hold which these extravagant views have acquired over the minds of men who ought to be better informed, that a respectable clergyman once told me, (and he did so *by way of recommending this doctrine*,) that the ransomed sinner, though black with crimes, might appear before the tribunal of heaven, and exclaim, not "*Lord Mercy!*" but "*Lord JUSTICE!*" Is not such language as absurd as it is presumptuous? Truly has it been said of the satisfaction theory, by one of its friends in former times, that it is "an unaccountable, irrational doctrine, which destroys every natural idea we have of divine justice; and (laying aside the evidence of Scripture) is so far from being true that it is ridiculous." (Bradbury, *Sermons*, p. 39, 40.) This writer believed the doctrine to be taught in Scripture. I have proved that it is not: but in all other points I agree with this statement of Mr. Bradbury.

VII. I have left myself but little time to illustrate the seventh and last of my objections to this doctrine; which is that it not only robs God of the attribute of mercy, and makes Him act in a way that is directly opposed to the dictates of justice, but that it is calculated to sap the foundations of morality in man; and, if it were carried out in practice to all its logical consequences, would spread corruption over the land in a devastating flood.

I must here, however, repeat a caution, which I have more than once before addressed to you in the course of these lectures, namely, that when I speak of the consequences of this doctrine, I do not mean to impute those consequences to the persons who hold it, *unless they themselves allow the consequences as explicitly as they do the doctrine*. This is carefully to be borne in mind in reference to the point which I have just mentioned; for while I know that some advocates of the popular opinion have been encouraged by it to persevere in sin, others, and I am happy to believe the great majority, of its supporters, look upon such an application of it as a horrible abuse. They detest any such consequences as heartily as I do; and if they could but see that such consequences are deducible from it,

by fair and necessary inference, they would renounce it at once. It is their conviction as well as mine, that no man can see God without holiness; and that a faith which leads to an impure life cannot be sound. So far, therefore, we are one. But I think it can easily be shewn that the consequences which they repudiate, do logically and necessarily flow from the belief which they cherish.

Indeed, the very statement of the common view of reconciliation through the blood of Christ, is sufficient to prove that it has, so far as it exerts any influence on the character, a demoralising tendency. It tells the sinner, while yet re-  
velling in guilt, that all that was needful to be done for his salvation was done 1800 years ago on Calvary; that he has now nothing to do but to put his trust in that all-  
efficacious sacrifice; that if he does so, he is absolved from all his sins; that the penalty of his transgressions has been paid by Jesus; that he is clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and stands in the eye of God, pure and spotless as the blessed Saviour himself. What is the practical result of this, but to teach him that a holy life can do him no farther good, for he is fully, finally, and completely saved, sanctified, and accepted; and that for the same reason an unholy life can do him no harm? Nothing that he can do can wash away the blood of Jesus, in which his soul has been steeped by means of faith! If this be so, why should he put his passions and appetites under any restraint? He may as well enjoy the pleasures of sin, which, it appears, cannot interfere with his enjoyment of God's favour here, and the delights of heaven hereafter. I remember hearing an anecdote of the Rev. Dr. Evans, once a Calvinistic Minister, in Bristol. He had had many discussions with a hearer of his own, who claimed to be one of the elect, but whom he knew to be leading an impure life, in more ways than one. Once the doctor met him in a state of intoxication, and thinking to refute him and reform him at same time, asked him "if he thought his present condition was such as betokened a child of God?" The man, steady-  
ing himself against the wall, asked the doctor what he meant? "Why," replied the minister, "I mean that you are drunk—

bestly drunk !” “ Doctor Evans,” said the reprobate, “ I always knew you did not understand the Gospel ! *So you think a little ale can wash the blood of Christ out of the believer’s soul !*” Thousands have reasoned like this infatuated man, to their own ruin here and hereafter. Nay, this dangerous delusion which has undone its myriads, has often been *forced* upon the mind of dying profligates, by holy men and pious women, as a ground, not of humble hope, but of assured confidence. Learned judges have held it forth in their addresses from the bench to hardened villains on whom they were pronouncing the sentence of death for the most atrocious crimes against the laws of God and man. The dying profligate and the condemned miscreant have gone out of the world with the language of triumphant anticipation upon their lips, “ through the blood of the Redeemer ;” \* and *the religious world*, or that which calls itself the religious world, instead of being shocked by all this, and grieving for it, and endeavouring to counteract it, has been cheered by it, and edified, and delighted ; and has held up these dying declarations as convincing proofs of the efficacy of Christ’s atoning blood ; and has spread the tidings of such events through the land as tidings of great joy. And what has the religious world been doing all the while, but breaking down the barriers which God and man have erected against guilt, and sapping the foundations of morality in the public mind ?

\* See Appendix O.

## LECTURE VII.

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### MODIFICATIONS OF THE COMMON DOCTRINE.

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2 PET. iii., 9. The Lord . . . is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

IN the last four lectures, we have considered that scheme or doctrine of the atonement, which is alone dignified with the name of orthodox or evangelical. We have stated its nature; we have examined its proofs, both from reason and Scripture; and we have also adverted to the most obvious of the objections which appear to militate against its truth. The doctrine which we have thus canvassed is that which is set forth in the creeds and articles of the most important of the Reformed churches around us. It is distinctly stated in those documents which their clergy are required to subscribe as a qualification for the offices which they hold; and, undoubtedly, it expresses the opinion held on this question by the great majority of the members of those churches, both lay and clerical. The same doctrine is also inculcated in most of the catechisms which are put into the hands of children, for the purpose of teaching them the principles of the Christian religion; and, in all reason, it is to be presumed that it will, in consequence, exercise, in most cases, a considerable influence over their minds and feelings in after life. There is no other tenet, of all those that are inculcated in these catechisms, which seems to have so strong a hold on the hearts of those who believe it. There is none other, the rejection of which excites

in them the same degree of horror and indignation. It seemed not only expedient, but just and necessary, to give to a doctrine, so solemnly affirmed, so widely embraced, so zealously inculcated, so warmly believed, that prominence in the discussion of the great question before us, to which, from these circumstances, it is entitled.

But, as I have in a former lecture intimated, a doctrine which is required to be subscribed, may be held with different degrees of strictness. It is difficult to frame any form of words to which it will not be possible to assign, if not various senses, at least different shades of meaning. One man, in subscribing a formula, may fix his attention and his thoughts on one portion or statement, which seems to him the most important. To another mind a different part of the document may appear more interesting; it may seem to comprise the sum and substance of the whole; and by his regard for it, he may be led to throw the remainder of the document into the shade, passing it over as of no importance, or as already implied in what goes before, or as requiring to be explained and modified by what comes after. Besides, even in the churches which are most strict in requiring subscriptions and declarations, there are always to be found persons who assent to them "for substance of doctrine" merely; reserving their right to think and judge of almost every particular point which they contain. It would not be easy to acquit those men of the charge of insincerity in declaring their assent to articles which they do not really believe; but their existence is notorious. There is, moreover, a large number of persons, chiefly laymen, who, though they have never been called on to subscribe the confessions or articles of their church, have yet given much serious thought to religious questions; and many of these, though adhering, *generally*, to the form of doctrine professed in the churches in the midst of which they have been reared—or conceiving that they so adhere—may, and often do, feel themselves compelled to depart, more or less widely, from the creeds of their fellow-worshippers. Hence you will often find a considerable variety of opinion among the members of ecclesiastical bodies which appear to have taken the utmost pains to enforce uniformity of doctrine;



and the modifications which the very same tenet—or what is still accepted as the same tenet—undergoes, under the influence of the varying habits of mind and thought existing among the vast multitudes of men who are supposed to profess belief in the same point of faith, are almost endless. This has been pre-eminently the case with reference to the doctrine of the atonement. Though very broadly and plainly stated in the creeds and articles of almost every existing church, and believed to be one of the fundamental points, without which there can be no vital Christianity, it has been held in varying senses, and has been extensively modified by theological writers, of whom some had subscribed the orthodox formularies, others were free to follow the light of their own reason and conscience, unfettered by any such tests. A dogma, which presents so much to occasion difficulty and doubt to the thoughtful inquirer, as the orthodox theory of satisfaction for sin by the death of Christ, is sure to be modified, if it be not utterly rejected, in passing through the minds of serious inquirers. Accordingly this theory has been, by many such persons, rejected altogether; by many more it has been so explained, limited, and qualified, that it retains, in their mode of viewing it, but small resemblance to the doctrine of the creeds. It would be impossible for me to attempt to state all the modifications which it has undergone; but there are some which have been so extensively adopted, that it would be doing injustice to the subject to pass them over without a brief notice.

The Arminians, whose tenets were condemned by the General Synod of the Reformed churches, held at Dort, in the year 1618, appear to have retained the whole of the Calvinistic doctrine of atonement, properly so called; while they severed the link by which it was united to that of election and reprobation. Both parties agreed that Christ's merits are infinite, and that they are, by faith, transferred to those who believe in their efficacy. Both agreed that, by his death and sufferings, he made satisfaction to divine justice; and that, without such satisfaction, faith, repentance, and reformation would neither have been possible nor availing. And both agreed that the sins and transgressions of those who are saved are imputed to the Saviour; and that he

vicariously endured the punishment which they had incurred. The Calvinists, however, maintained that the sufferings of Christ were endured exclusively for the sake of "the elect;" that, for their sins, they are amply and infallibly efficacious; but that it is absolutely impossible for any except the elect to derive from them the smallest advantage. The Arminians held that this opinion was injurious to God's character, as a Being whose mercy knows no bounds; they asserted that, in a certain sense, Christ died for all men; for the guilty and impenitent, who shall suffer the fire of everlasting torment, as well as for the saint who shall enjoy an eternity of heavenly bliss and glory. His merits, they alleged, are available for all, and his sufferings are an ample satisfaction for the sins of all. But they are effectually applied to those only who comply with the stipulated conditions of faith, repentance, and holiness. Such is the doctrine maintained by Grotius in his treatise on the satisfaction of Christ.\* The arguments, both from reason and Scripture, which are urged in defence of this hypothesis, are, in almost all points, exactly the same which are urged in defence of the common doctrine, and need not be here repeated. The objections against it are, also, in most particulars, the same. We must, however, except the last of those which we enumerated;—for by making the satisfaction of Christ applicable to all, without exception, who perform the required conditions, and by representing all men as having received from God power to comply with these conditions, care is taken to prevent the merits of Christ from being viewed as a substitute for holiness of life. This theory, though it cannot fairly be charged with an immoral tendency, labours under a logical inconsistency, which the more strictly orthodox writers have not failed to expose, with great strength of reasoning. What can be more self-destructive, they inquire, than a system which declares that Christ's merits are available for all, and are sufficient for the salvation of all;—that the debt has actually been paid on behalf of all, and full satisfaction made for the sins of all;—and yet admits that many will be damned not-

\* See Appendix P.

withstanding? Does not this supposition make God act unjustly, inasmuch as he has received a sufficient equivalent for the sins of all mankind, and yet leaves a large proportion of the human race to bear the penalty of their own offences, as if no satisfaction had been made on their behalf?

Not essentially different, though, perhaps, not in all points exactly the same, was the doctrine advanced about a century afterwards by the celebrated Dr. Hoadly, successively Bishop of Bangor and Winchester, and the head of the latitudinarian party in the Church of England. In his "Discourses concerning the Terms of Acceptance with God," he has one entitled, "Of Relying upon the Merits of Christ for Salvation," in which he quotes and adopts the statement of the Thirty-nine Articles, that "Christ, by his one oblation of himself upon the cross once offered, hath made a *full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, and satisfaction*, for the sins of the whole world." But he explains and limits this doctrine so as to make the satisfaction available only for those sins of which men repent, against which they struggle, and which, in all sincerity, they endeavour to avoid. "Jesus Christ," he says, "is the propitiation for those sins which we carefully and conscientiously endeavour to avoid and forsake, not for those which we wilfully continue in. The merits of Christ, so much talked of by some, are so great, that, for the sake of his sufferings, God will accept to His favour and mercy, such as lay hold on the terms offered by the same Jesus Christ; such Christians as relinquish and abandon their vices, and come up to that condition of universal holiness required by Him; but not such as still continue, notwithstanding all His calls and all His denunciations, to prosecute their own vile lusts, and to contradict the will of God." (*Discourses on Terms of Acceptance*, p. 249.) Thus repentance, reformation, and holiness of life, are distinctly made the *terms or conditions of salvation*; they, (not faith alone,) are described as the means by which the merits of Christ and the atoning sacrifice of his death are applied to the cases of individual men, made efficacious for wiping out their sins, and rendered available for entitling them to everlasting happiness. In what manner, then, do the merits of Christ's suffer-

ings and obedience avail with God ? The bishop replies, "that the sufferings of Christ have actually *procured these conditions* to be granted by Almighty God ; that *so* those sinners who have forsaken their sins and entered upon a new course of action, may obtain justification from the guilt of their former sins, and eternal happiness in the kingdom of heaven." He says it was by the sufferings of Christ that "God was moved to make the covenant," which is unfolded in the New Testament ; and that it is "for the sake of the merits of Christ that God pardons the sins which men have forsaken." (*Discourses, &c.*, pp. 250-2, 4.)

The learned and acute Bishop Butler appears to have taken a similar view of the doctrine of Atonement. In his great work on the "Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature," he lays it down, as one of the acknowledged truths of Christianity, that "Christ offered himself a propitiatory sacrifice, and made atonement for the sins of the world." He adopts the terms "satisfaction" and "vicarious punishment," as strictly applicable to the death of our Saviour ; and says that the sacrifice of Christ was, "in the highest degree, and with the most extensive influence, of that efficacy for obtaining pardon of sin, which the heathens may be supposed to have thought their sacrifices to have been, and which the Jewish sacrifices really were, in some degree, and with regard to some persons. How, and in what particular way it had this efficacy, there are not wanting persons who have endeavoured to explain." [I cannot help observing that the learned prelate is himself among the number, if there be any meaning in his own language when he speaks of "satisfaction" and "vicarious punishment" for sin.] "But," he adds, "I do not find that the Scripture has explained it. We seem to be very much in the dark concerning the manner in which the ancients understood atonement to be made, that is, pardon to be obtained by sacrifices. And if the Scripture has, as surely it has, left this matter of the satisfaction of Christ mysterious, left somewhat in it unrevealed, all conjectures about it must be, if not evidently absurd, yet, at least, uncertain." (*Analogy, &c.*, p. 215.)

Far be it from me to deny that "the Scripture has left this matter of *the satisfaction of Christ* mysterious," in the true and Scriptural sense of the word mystery; that is, a thing completely unrevealed—a thing about which it says nothing. Still less am I disposed to dispute the proposition that "all our conjectures about a thing so left must be, if not evidently absurd, yet, at least, uncertain." Undoubtedly, this ought to be a sufficient reason to deter us from framing such theories, or accepting them as articles of faith when proposed by others, or believing them at all, if they appear to our mind and conscience unreasonable in themselves, or at variance with truths plainly inculcated in God's Word. But Bishop Butler, though he disapproves of attempts "to explain the efficacy of what Christ has done and suffered for us, beyond what the Scripture has authorised," cannot refrain from doing the very thing which he condemns; affirming that "the doctrine of the Gospel appears to be, not only that Christ *taught* the efficacy of repentance, but he *rendered it of the efficacy* which it is, by what he did and suffered for us; that he obtained for us the benefit of having our repentance accepted unto eternal life; not only that he revealed to sinners that they were in a capacity of salvation, and how they might obtain it, but moreover, that he put them into this capacity of salvation by what he did and suffered for them; put us into a capacity of escaping future punishment and obtaining future happiness." (*Analogy, &c.*, p. 216.)

Through the influence of the well-earned reputation and justly celebrated abilities of these distinguished writers, and others, who advocated the same opinions, these views of the doctrine of atonement, or views closely allied to these, were widely propagated in the established church of England. Those maintained by the late Dr. Magee, Archbishop of Dublin, in his great work on the Atonement, appear not to differ essentially from those put forward by the two eminent theologians just quoted. On this point, however, it is not easy to speak positively, for the illustrious prelate is far more clear and pointed in his attacks upon the doctrines held by other men than distinct in defining his own.\*

\* See Appendix Q.

It is not requisite to enter at any length into an examination of this modified theory. Its advocates avoid the assertion of the infinite evil of sin, as committed against an infinite God ; indeed, some of them have expressly disclaimed all desire to rest the doctrine on this untenable ground. From this it might be inferred, that in their conception an infinite satisfaction was not required ; and, consequently, that the death of Christ, through which the ransom was paid for sinners, was not the death of the Incarnate God, nor of God-man, but of the man Jesus only ; that is, of Christ in his human nature simply. Accordingly, this has actually been held and maintained by several advocates of this theory, though others contradict it. But it is difficult to conceive how the merits and sufferings of Jesus of Nazareth, considered merely as those of a human being, should have such a value, in and of themselves, as to compensate for the sins of all true penitents, from the beginning of the human race till the end of time. And, indeed, many, but by no means all of those who hold this modified theory, have admitted that, of and in themselves, Christ's merits have no such value ; they think they derive all their weight and efficacy from the special appointment of God, who could, if He had been so pleased, have adopted some other means of dispensing His mercy to mankind. While maintaining satisfaction for sin by the death of Christ, they deny the necessity of the latter for the pardon of sinners. Thus the death and sufferings of Christ are represented as quite needless for the accomplishment of the great end which was to be answered by them ; and the Almighty is depicted in the unamiable character of one who unnecessarily subjected His best beloved and unoffending son to shame, sorrow, suffering, and an agonizing death, for the accomplishment of a purpose which could have been effected by some other means. This consideration alone seems sufficient to render the whole theory incredible to any pious and reflecting mind. But it is liable to other grave and serious objections. It is essentially unscriptural, for it employs, just as does the common doctrine which it aims to supersede, a number of phrases which are not to be found in the Bible ; and it cannot be expressed or explained without them. Such are the phrases—*satisfaction*

*to divine justice ; meritorious sacrifice ; vicarious punishment ; imputed righteousness, &c.* The Sacred Scriptures nowhere affirm that it was the death of Christ which moved the Father to hold out to men the offer of pardon upon repentance, or that Christ procured for men more favourable terms of acceptance than his Father would of himself have required. Like the common doctrine this theory is defective and inconsistent. *It is defective*, because it admits that the second and third persons of the Trinity are equally entitled to demand satisfaction to justice with the person of the Father, yet it provides no victim to appease their wrath. And it is *inconsistent*, because it affirms that the victim, by the offering of which divine justice was satisfied, was a victim provided by God himself, so that His justice really remains unsatisfied. It divests the God and Father of all of His essential attribute of mercy, and presents Him to our minds as a judge so severe and unrelenting, that He would not consent to make to mankind the offer of acceptance on the condition of penitence and reformation, till the son had, by his death and sufferings, obtained for them the benefit of having their repentance accepted unto eternal life. Every form and modification of doctrine which asserts that the blood of Jesus was the procuring cause of man's salvation, whether by appeasing the wrath of God, or by obtaining from Him terms and conditions which he would not otherwise have granted, is injurious to the character of our heavenly Father, makes Him the seat of rigour and wrath, and tends to fix the grateful affections of the penitent not on Him, but on the son, the meek and gentle sufferer to whom, and not to the mercy of his Father, they are on that supposition indebted for the blessings of reconciliation. It cannot be forgotten that some of the most direct and shocking declarations of the tremendous doctrine that the Almighty and Eternal God, the Creator of the Universe, suffered and died on Calvary—a doctrine at which, as one of its advocates declared, "reason stands aghast, and faith herself is half confounded"—proceeded from persons who held this modified theory of the atonement ; and that few writers have been more express in declaring, that by the death of Christ a change was wrought in the mind of God, which

converted Him from an unrelenting to a merciful disposition, than some who held this opinion respecting the atonement.

The speculations of the latitudinarian divines in the church of England produced a very sensible effect on the opinions of the dissenting theologians who lay beyond her pale ; and some of them carried their views still further than Hoadly and Butler had seen their way, or deemed it safe to advance. The celebrated Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, unquestionably one of the ablest and most learned writers of the last century, published about a hundred years ago a treatise on the Atonement, of which the following is his own summary :—“ I conclude, therefore, that the sacrifice of Christ, was truly and properly, in the highest degree, and far beyond any other, *piacular* and *expiatory*, to make atonement for, or to take away sin. Not only to give us an example, not only to assure us of remission, or to procure for our Lord a commission to publish the forgiveness of sin, but, moreover, *to obtain that forgiveness*, by doing what God in His wisdom and goodness judged fit and expedient to be done in order to the forgiveness of sin, and without which He did not think it fit or expedient to grant the forgiveness of sin.” (*Scripture Doctrine of Atonement*, pp. 91, 92.) This sounds, at first hearing, extremely like the common doctrine of satisfaction. But the learned writer afterwards examines and deliberately rejects the following positions respecting the end of Christ’s death :—*First*, “that it was intended to make God merciful.” *Second*, “that by his sufferings he satisfied the justice or the law of God.” *Third*, “that he died in our stead, paying an equivalent, or suffering a vicarious punishment.” And he states, that although Christ’s death was a reason for bestowing upon us “antecedent blessings,” (by which he means religious privileges and advantages in this life,) “yet, in reference to our final salvation, it hath its effects with God only so far as it hath its proper effects upon our own hearts. If we are not sanctified by it, we cannot be saved by it.” (*Scripture Doctrine of Atonement*, p. 126.) From these last statements, which appear to me both Scriptural and judicious, it is quite evident that Dr. Taylor could not believe in the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to believers, or the transference of their



guilt to him; accordingly, he explicitly condemns them both. (P. 98–100.) It is unnecessary to dwell at any length on the manifest inconsistency between the former and latter portions of the theory; they seem like sentences from different books, joined together without regard to congruity; for, unquestionably, if the sacrifice and sufferings of Christ not only produce a sanctifying effect on our own hearts, but “obtained” from God that forgiveness which would not otherwise have been dispensed, it wrought a change in God, and rendered Him more merciful than He would otherwise have been; and it is difficult to conceive in what way that result could be produced, except by satisfying God’s justice, or enduring a vicarious punishment. Dr. Taylor, however, does not admit this inference: for he says, “As, therefore, the Scripture never speaks, (nor in any consistency can speak), of *Christ’s satisfying the divine law or justice*, so it is evident there is no necessity for it: for all the ends of redemption may be obtained without it, by *satisfying the wisdom of the law-giver*.” (*Scripture Doctrine of Atonement*, pp. 95, 96.)

Dr. Richard Price coincided closely with Dr. Taylor. He says that “Christ, by offering himself a sacrifice on the cross, vindicated the honour of those laws which sinners had broken, and rendered the exercise of favour to them consistent with the holiness and wisdom of God’s government, and by his resurrection from the dead, he proved the efficacy and acceptableness of his sacrifice. In a word, Christ not only declared but *obtained* the availableness of repentance to pardon, and became, by his interposition, not only the conveyer, but the *author and means* of our future immortality.” (*Sermons on Christian Doctrine*, pp. 56–7.) With Dr. Taylor, this eminent writer rejects the notion that the death of Christ rendered the Deity placable or propitious; that it satisfied the demands of divine justice; or constituted a vicarious punishment endured by the Saviour on behalf of mankind; and expressly objects to the imputation of guilt to an innocent being, or of righteousness to a guilty one.

It would be tedious to urge in detail all the objections which seem to militate against this theory. I shall only mention one. Dr. Taylor affirms that the piacular and expiatory sacrifice of

Christ "hath its effect with God, only so far as it hath its proper effects on our hearts." Now, it certainly can have no effect on the hearts of those who have never known, or never heard of it. But we are told it is the death of Christ which hath obtained for men the forgiveness of sin. Hence no man could obtain forgiveness of his sins who had not heard of the death of Christ, and been, through it, sanctified. This would cut off from the hope of salvation the greater part of the heathen world, and nearly the whole of those members of our race, who lived before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is true that both the learned men to whom I have referred would have utterly, and with perfect sincerity, rejected this conclusion; but yet it seems to be implied in their own principles. To me, on the contrary, it appears a self-evident proposition, that a true repentance, wherever it is found—a heartfelt sorrow and humiliation for sin, and a thorough reformation of life—will, of itself, meet with forgiveness from the Father of Mercies; whether the penitent has been moved to contrition through the influence of Christ's death upon his heart or not. Most true it is, that, by that dispensation, means, motives, and inducements to repentance are afforded, than which none other are equally persuasive. But, if we can conceive, as undoubtedly we may, penitence to have originated in any sinner's breast, without the knowledge of these persuasives, can we doubt of its being accepted by Him, who "desireth not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn from his iniquities and live?"

In conclusion, when we see how widely learned, pious, and able men have differed from each other in their endeavours to trace the original source, and to explain the grounds of the sinner's acceptance with God, can we fail to be impressed with the folly of taking any of them for our spiritual guides, or following them implicitly? In a matter of such unspeakable moment, it becomes us to think and judge for ourselves, not refusing the help which churches and individuals may offer us as assistance in our inquiries, but resolved to follow none of them farther than they are followers of Christ. It is very plain that many wise and good men, bewildered by their own specu-

lations, or those in which they have too easily acquiesced, must have wandered very far from the pure doctrine of the Gospel ; for they have departed widely from each other, and many of them, if not all, must have been grievously astray. Without personal examination, we cannot tell with whom or where the error lies ; and, if we trust ourselves uninquiringly to any of them, we may, perhaps, attach ourselves to one who will only lead us wrong in matters of the utmost moment, deeply affecting our spiritual progress and our peace of mind. In our own inquiries, let us adhere closely to the plain and explicit teachings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. One half of the errors of mankind, and that by far the worst half, would be avoided, if they kept hold with a firm grasp on what they themselves acknowledge to be first principles and incontrovertible truths. All Christians agree that the doctrines taught by Jesus Christ are such ; yet many of them have followed the devious mazes of their own or others' thought, till they have arrived at opinions which no man ever yet pretended to have discovered in the parables or discourses of the Great Teacher. Sometimes they have elevated these deductions of their own reason into the rank of necessary or fundamental truths, without the belief of which there can be no salvation. Let us carefully guard against such narrow-minded intolerance. Heaven, we have reason to hope, is much wider, and the society there assembled far more comprehensive than the minds of bigots can bring themselves to imagine or believe. There are good men in every sect, and attached to every form of faith ; and, perhaps, some of them will hereafter, to their exceeding joy, meet in heaven with others, over whom, in their short-sighted and ignorant dogmatism, they had mourned on earth, as reprobates, doomed to everlasting torment for their erroneous belief. It is a sad and a grievous thing to reflect that the dying agonies of a common Saviour, whom, though holding different views of his person and work, they all equally revere, have, through the misplaced refinements and exclusive definitions of the creeds which some of them have adopted, been made a subject of wrangling and contention ; and that, instead of being drawn more lovingly together by the sympathetic bond of their

common interest in a common Saviour, and a common salvation, they have been alienated from each other, and led to cherish feelings of discord and enmity, by disputes respecting the precise nature of the effect produced by the death and sufferings of one who died for them all. It seems to the grateful and affectionate heart of the pious believer in Christ, as if his followers gathered around his tomb, were hurried on by the fell spirit of intolerance and bigotry, to attempt to tear each other in pieces, over his mangled corpse. They assail the ears of their risen and ascending Lord, with the direful sound of the anathemas and curses which they yell forth in their fanatical excitement, devoting each other to destruction, because they cannot contemplate dim and mysterious articles of doctrine precisely from the same point of view. May none of us give way to the promptings of a contentious spirit, which is unworthy of us as men, and disgraceful to us as professing Christians. Let us hold fast what we believe to be good and true, on this, as on every other doctrine of religion ; but let us hold it in love. We must honestly avow, and, when need requires, manfully defend, what we regard as God's truth ; but still we must "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." It is quite possible to differ widely from our brethren, and express our differences plainly, and state the grounds of our own views distinctly, without one unkind word or uncharitable thought directed against those from whom we differ most widely—and this is the only proper way of managing religious controversy.

Meanwhile, it is consolatory to those who hold the views of reconciliation through Christ, which have been unfolded in these lectures, to reflect that the true and proper influence of the death of Christ does not depend on the doctrinal views which may be held of his person and work. His death is an event which appeals to our hearts, engages our sympathies, enlists our best feelings on the side of Christianity, strengthens our faith in the Saviour, enkindles our love, humbles our pride, deepens our humility, moves and solemnizes our penitence, and excites to a uniform course of Christian holiness. I have no doubt that it produces similar impressions on the hearts of many who lovingly contemplate the scenes of agony through which the

dying Saviour passed, though they would themselves consider this manner of exhibiting the influence of the cross as altogether inadequate to its importance. While controversialists have been perplexing the world by their disputes respecting the precise efficacy of the death of Christ in promoting the salvation of sinners, the subject of their discussions has been working its effects, unseen, in thousands of loving hearts, and has, by its sweet attraction and persuasive power, done much to counteract the natural effect of these wranglings. It has silently formed in the believers whose souls have dwelt upon it, a character and temper, conformable to the holy pattern of excellence which it unfolds, and thus accomplished their salvation—their salvation from sin—and from that misery which is inseparable from sin. I confess it is to this silent but powerful influence of the cross, on the hearts of those who with faith and love contemplate it and him who bled upon it, that I attribute much of the gentleness, meekness, and self-sacrificing benevolence displayed by many of my fellow-Christians, whose speculative opinions would appear to be calculated to inspire no feelings but those of stern and unrelenting harshness, but whose lives mark them out as among the purest and most amiable of mankind, the excellent of the earth.

## VIII.

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### CONCLUDING LECTURE.

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JOHN iii., 16, 17. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

In the previous lectures of this course, we have considered the great question of the sinner's reconciliation to God. We have contemplated it in the light of Scripture, and surveyed it in those varying aspects in which it has been presented by successive teachers in the Christian church. We have weighed the arguments which have been offered for and against the theory, which is at present generally received; and the most important modifications which it has undergone. In handling these topics, it was needful to be brief; for there are limits, both to the length of a discourse, and to the duration of a series of lectures, which it is next to impossible to exceed. These have compelled the omission of many topics which I should have wished to introduce, and curtailed the illustration of several on which it would have been desirable to dwell at greater length. Still, an outline has been sketched; and enough has been suggested to enable any thoughtful inquirer to complete the picture. More than this can hardly be expected from a series of pulpit discourses. At all events, I have attempted no more. It is now necessary to draw these lectures to a close. I have selected the words of the blessed Saviour, which you have just heard, as suggesting ideas very suitable for a conclusion to the whole matter.

All Christians profess their belief that "God is love"—that He loves, and has ever loved the world which He created—and that to ascribe to Him any such feeling as malignity, revenge, cruelty, or even indifference to the happiness of His creatures, is to belie Him and to libel Him. But, to get at the real views and feelings of mankind, we must go deeper than mere professions. Professions, even when by no means to be regarded as consciously false, are often purely conventional;—the habitual repetition of a form of words, with which the person who repeats them has never taken the trouble to connect any distinct ideas;—words which, if they convey any meaning at all, convey one that is totally at variance with other principles that are, with the heart's deepest conviction, believed by the very same individual who makes these professions. Many are the men, whose professions in reference to matters of integrity and moral conduct impose upon their brethren; and, perhaps, not less numerous are those, whose professions in reference to matters of religious belief impose upon themselves. It is plain that, amidst the harmonious profession of belief in God's eternal and inherent benevolence, which meets us from all quarters of the Christian world, there is, in reality, a discordant difference of sentiment on that fundamental point: for nothing can be more certain than that the opinions which men entertain respecting the administration of his moral government, and the whole principle on which it is conducted, are irreconcilably opposed.

The great majority of the Christian world picture to themselves the Sovereign of the universe, as a ruler who is stern, severe, inflexible. According to them, he has, from all eternity, laid down for his rational creation, a code of rules, founded on the principles of the strictest justice, requiring uniform and undeviating compliance with the law of absolute holiness and righteousness. These rules he has guarded by a system of threatened punishments, by which he is himself as rigorously bound as any of the beings which he has made. He is, by the very necessity of his nature, compelled to visit every infraction of any one of these, his eternally enacted rules, with an adequate and full penalty, else would his holiness and justice fall to the ground. It is out of his power freely to forgive so much

as a single transgression, no matter how venial in itself—no matter how bitterly it may have been deplored by its author—no matter how anxiously he may have endeavoured to prevent, or to remedy, its injurious consequences to others—no matter how earnestly he may have endeavoured to avoid it in after life—no matter how humbly and how penitently he may have entreated God's forgiveness for his sin. *Justice must be satisfied.* The entire amount of the punishment which has been incurred must be endured. Rather than remit one jot or one tittle of the rigid law, divine vengeance will hurl its thunderbolts at the head of the innocent, and, in that manner, satiate its cravings. An unoffending being presents himself; one whose virtues are sufficient to compensate for the sins of the whole world. But not even for the sake of his virtues can forgiveness be dispensed to the penitent for whom he intercedes. The law must have its course; *justice must be satisfied*; the penalty must be paid. The penalty accordingly is paid—the innocent one endures the threatened punishment—to the very uttermost pang of agony he fulfils the requirements of that inexorable law. And then the forbearance, which no contrition on the part of the offender could have elicited, is no longer impossible. The indulgence which would have been refused to the *virtues* of the advocate is accorded to his *sufferings*. The guilt which no tears could wipe out is expiated by blood. The mercy which would have been eternally withheld from the sigh of penitence, is accorded to the groan of anguish; the door of acceptance, formerly barred against the returning sinner, and closely guarded by the sleepless dragon of the law, is thrown open; and "justice lingers into love." Such is the view of God's character and dealings, which is deeply seated in the breasts of, perhaps, the great majority of the followers of Christ; and which, by those who hold it, is considered both to be orthodox and evangelical—that is, the true doctrine, the doctrine of the Gospel.

But there are Christians who can by no means accept this view of God's dealings with His children, as true in itself, or agreeable to Christ's holy Gospel. To them, the assertion that "God is love" conveys no unmeaning conventionalism—no



valueless truism—no vague generalisation. It conveys a deep and solemn truth, of infinite applicability to the spiritual wants of mankind, and of everlasting importance. It is not a truism, but a truth—the truth which lies at the very foundation of all vital religion, and on which God's true glory, and the spiritual elevation, the holiness, and the happiness of men, must rest for ever. To these Christians "God is love." He is essentially—that is, by His very nature, and therefore unchangeably—loving: the only truly, absolutely, and unmixedly loving being in the universe. As He is the God of all, so is He the father and the friend of all—not of the holy and the virtuous alone, but of all, without exception; of the evil, as well as the good; of the guilty and depraved, just as much and as truly as of the pure and the spotless. Their different characters may and must occasion a corresponding difference in the manifestations of His love towards them respectively; but still His feelings for them, and His object in dealing with them, are the same. His love is perfect, unfailling, and unbounded. It leads Him to draw the erring unto Himself by the display of love, rather than by the manifestation or denunciation of wrath. But it is a love guided by wisdom; not a mere instinctive passion, which cannot endure to inflict pain, even for a moment; but a love which ever keeps in view the highest and most enduring good of the being who is its object; and which, therefore, will not hesitate to inflict woe—even long-continued and bitter woe—rather than renounce the accomplishment of its own benevolent designs, when these cannot be otherwise effected. According to this view of God's character, He will undoubtedly punish the guilty; because it is mercy to the guilty to subject him to the discipline of correction, rather than to allow him to remain in his guilt, unrepentant and unreformed. But, for the same reason, He will never punish needlessly; and in His chastisements will remember mercy. Punishment thus awarded and dispensed is the dictate of the purest love; for there is no evil so great as the evil of sin; and any amount of misery is mercy, by which the power of sin can be overcome, and the love of it banished from the soul. Assuredly, however, when that end has been accomplished—when the power of sin has been destroyed, and

the love of it has been uprooted—when contrition has taken the place of impenitence, and holiness reigns in the breast which was once enslaved to vice, the Ever-Merciful, inasmuch as He is love, and the righteous God, inasmuch as He is holy, views the change with paternal complacency. His spirit broods over the new moral creation, and fosters therein the germs of a purer and a better life. Never will the tear of contrition fall unmarked by such a Deity. Never will the sigh of penitence, that bursts from the heart of the converted sinner, ascend in vain to the heaven in which a Father sits enthroned. Punishment has no longer a place or an object. Its work is done. The only end for which it ever was or could be employed is already effected ; and, to use the beautiful language of Holy Writ, “Mercy rejoiceth against judgment.” (James ii., 13.) To inflict punishment for sins already renounced and forsaken—to inflict it on the spotless, unoffending son of God—to inflict it upon him to the very utmost, without mercy and without stint—oh ! who that believes that “God is love,” and understands what this expression means, could for one moment suppose it possible ?

Who that has read the attributes of God Most High, inscribed on every page of the Great Book of nature and of life, in characters which His own hand has traced, can hesitate in deciding which of these two representations is conformable to the testimony that the universe bears respecting the disposition and the providence of the Great Author of all being and of all goodness ? Who that reads the New Testament or the Old, with eyes undimmed by prejudice, can doubt which of the two accords with the doctrine concerning God, delivered to mankind by patriarchs and prophets, by evangelists and apostles, and by our great teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ himself ?

That blessed Saviour traces his own mission to the inherent love and mercy of the great and merciful Father of all. “God,” he says, “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life : for God sent not His son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.” God’s love for the world, therefore—and that, be it remembered, was a world lying in wickedness—was the

source of the mission of Christ. God's love for mankind was not caused by anything that Christ did, but was itself the cause of Christ being sent to do what he did, in order to save men from the power and the consequences of sin. With this agree his words on another occasion—"I seek not mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." (John v., 30.) And, again—"I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the will of the Father who hath sent me, that of all that He hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one who seeth the son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and that I should raise him up at the last day." (John vi., 38-40.) To the same effect the Apostle Paul :—"But God, who is rich in mercy, *for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins*, hath quickened us together with Christ ; (by grace ye are saved !) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together, in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, that in ages to come He might shew *the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us*, through Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii., 4-7.) And so, also, the Apostle John :—"We love Him, because *He first loved us*." "We have seen, and do testify, that *the Father sent the son to be the Saviour of the world*." "God is love. In this was manifested *the love of God towards us*, because that God sent His only-begotten son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, *but that He loved us*, and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv., 8, 9, 10, 14, 19.) In fact, there cannot be a doubt on the mind of any impartial man who reads the New Testament, that so far is Christ from having procured God's love for humanity, or from having enabled him to manifest his love to beings from whom he would otherwise have withheld it, that he is himself the most conspicuous manifestation, the fruit and the pledge of God's love. He did not come to make God merciful, or render it possible for God to display His mercy to the penitent members of a sinful race. On the contrary, he was sent to men, because God is, and was from all eternity, and to all eternity will be, merciful and gracious. He

was sent to proclaim *God's inherent mercy*, and to announce the terms on which it will be dispensed, and to implore men to accept it. In Christ Jesus, "the grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and piously in this present world ; looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus ii., 11-14.)

Blessed be God, that, "when sin abounded, grace did much more abound : that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. v., 20, 21.)

As the cause of Christ's coming was the fatherly mercy of our God, so the design of his mission was in harmony with the feeling on the part of God, in which it had its origin. We are nowhere told in the New Testament that he came to reconcile his Father unto us ; but we are told, repeatedly, that he came to reconcile us unto the Father. (Rom. v., 10 ; x. 15 ; 2 Cor. v., 18, 19, 20 ; Eph. ii., 16 ; Col. i., 20, 21.) It is never said that he came to satisfy the Father's justice on behalf of mankind, or to save them from his Father's wrath, or to bear the punishment of their sins ; but it is said that he came to "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself ;" (Heb. ix., 26) ; to "turn men from darkness unto light, and from subjection to the power of Satan, unto a willing obedience to God." (Acts xxvi., 18.) It is nowhere stated that he came to make God placable ; to do something which might enable Him to grant forgiveness to sins which He would otherwise have been compelled to punish with the utmost rigour ; or to endure something, but for which the contrition of the humblest and sincerest penitent would have been of no avail. But it is most solemnly announced that God had sent him to proclaim his willingness to accept the returning sinner on the merciful condition of repentance and reformation. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor ; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted ; to preach

deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind ; to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke iv., 18, 19.) He came not to do for us what it is our duty to do ourselves, but to teach us what to do ; to give us strength and motives to perform it ; and to set before us an example shewing how it should be performed. He came not to substitute his energy for ours, but to enlighten, enliven, and quicken us—to rouse the careless from their slumbers—to raise up the "dead in sins" to life once more—and to stimulate the living to new energy in every holy, generous, and loving enterprise. "For this end was he born, and for this cause came he into the world, that he might bear witness unto the truth ;" (John xviii., 37) ; and that, through the power and influence of the truth, men might be sanctified, redeemed, and saved. (John xvii., 17.) He came to redeem, (that is, to deliver,) men from the bondage of sin—from the slavery of evil habits—from subjection to sensual appetites and sinful passions—and to emancipate them into the glorious freedom of the sons of God. He came to establish the dominion of God upon this earth, "the kingdom of heaven which is within us ;" to save us from sin, and thereby from present and future misery ; "to bless us, by turning every one of us away from our iniquities ;" to create us anew, "after God, in righteousness and true holiness ;" (Eph. iv., 24) ; to make us "partakers of a divine nature," through the influence of his promises ; and by them, and his example combined, to give us the victory over ourselves and over the world ; to mortify the undue love and fear of man within us ; to raise us to a superiority over shame, and pain, and sorrow ; to arm us with a mind akin to his own ; to lead us to love God more than we dread man's force or desire his favour, and to unite us to our Heavenly Father by a childlike trust and a filial conformity of character and aim. This was the work which the Father gave unto him to do ; (John xvii., 4) ; and whenever this end is attained, the Gospel has its perfect work.

It should never be forgotten—never for a moment left out of view—that, in carrying out this great work, the son of God subjected himself to toil, to penury, to reproach, to danger, to

persecution, and to death—to death in its most appalling form—a lingering and painful death, exposed to public scorn, uncheered by the sympathising presence of a single friend, save one, of all the thousands whom he had benefitted and blessed. To all this, the Saviour knowingly subjected himself. This direful calamity had from the first been foreseen, and had been early foretold. No wonder that its near approach shook his nervous system, and subjected his bodily frame to an agonising struggle. But the same agony, which lets us see the weakness of his physical nature, attests the strength and heroism of his loving soul. In him the inward and the spiritual triumphed over the outward and the physical. It is from the cross of Christ that the light of his love most brightly radiates. It was there that the sacrifice of self to God and duty was consummated. It is by being suspended there that the Saviour drew and draws men unto himself. (John xii., 32.) He “gave himself for them” by dying in their cause; and thousands have thereby been led, in all ages, to give themselves to him.

Feeling and knowing the mighty power and energy for good which the cross of Christ exerts—knowing how potently it appeals to all the purest, most exalted, and generous principles of our moral nature—knowing that, in order to gain this hold upon our hearts, for our good—not his—the Saviour consented to “endure the cross, despising the shame;” that he endured it heroically, unflinching, in order to gain us over from sin to himself, and, through him, to God, we feel no difficulty in applying to the Saviour the glowing figures of oriental speech in which his disciples speak of his death and sufferings, and of their efficacy in subduing the power of evil in the heart of man. Dying to deliver us from a worse than Egyptian bondage, he is to us, as he was to them, “our *passover*, *sacrificed for us.*” (1 Cor. v., 7.) When, by the devout contemplation of his death, and the aid it lends to our faith, and its persuasive influence upon our souls, we are enabled to renounce vices and evil habits contracted in former days, we can, with perfect sincerity, declare that “we were not *redeemed* with corruptible things, as with silver and gold, from our vain conversation, . . . but *with the precious blood of Christ*, as of a lamb without

blemish and without spot." (1 Peter i., 18, 19.) When we feel that, through the same holy influences exerted upon our hearts, we have been not only turned away from sin, but sanctified in our spirits, consecrated to God, and devoted to His service, we can join in the pious and grateful doxology, "Unto him that hath loved us, and *washed us from our sins in his own blood*, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, even his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." (Rev. i., 5, 6.) When we remember that he came into the world to declare the remission of all the sins of all mankind, on the simple condition of repentance, and that, in order to confirm to the world this blessed hope, he refused not to die, but willingly laid down his life, we can fully enter into the feelings which prompted the venerable Apostle when he wrote,—"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is *the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*" (1 John ii., 1, 2.) We can not only enter into the feelings which this language expresses, but we can make both the feelings themselves, and the very language in which they are expressed, our own. And, in like manner, and on similar grounds, we can, and we do, gratefully accept the saying of the Apostle Peter, "that he himself *carried our sins in his own body to the cross*, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: that *by his stripes we were healed*, inasmuch as we were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop—that is, *overseer*—of our souls." (1 Pet. ii., 24, 25.) There are many forms of speech which occur in the Bible, which, owing to the change that has taken place in the thoughts and usages of society, it is, perhaps, more proper to explain than to imitate at the present day. Of these, our Saviour's declaration—so frequently repeated—of "the necessity of eating his flesh and drinking his blood," affords an example. (John vi., 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58.) But I know of no expression in Scripture respecting the efficacy of his death in promoting the salvation of sinners—their salvation from sin and from its punishment—that may not be freely used by the pious and thoughtful Christian, even in these times; yea, and till time shall be no more.

When a real Christian, a sincere believer in Jesus as the son of God, one whose heart is really united to the Saviour by faith and devotion, contemplates the events at which we have just glanced, feelings are enkindled within him, which will lend effectual aid to all his better principles, and help him forward in his endeavours after a spiritual life.

Jesus Christ is to him no longer a purely historical personage, to be contemplated at a distance, and through the dim lights of that long vista of centuries by which he is separated from his followers now on earth ; but a familiar and a loving friend, with whose motives, intentions, objects, he is ultimately acquainted ; one whose very heart and soul he knows. Read in this light, the events of the Saviour's life assume a distinctness of outline and a breadth of colouring which they never wore before ; his actions become more deeply significant, his words more searching and suggestive ; and treasures of wisdom and goodness are discovered in the evangelic narrative, the existence of which was till then unsuspected. Thus faith is at once strengthened, enlightened, and pregnantly applied ; and a new help is acquired, by which doubt is dispelled, difficulties are cleared away, and obstacles removed. With the increase of light is connected a corresponding growth of love and gratitude. While the truth announced by the Apostle John, "that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," is never for an instant forgotten or disregarded, still is the great fact that Christ was the willing and self-devoted agent in the great work of redemption continually borne in mind ; and this devotion of his life to the good of the race of which they are members—a race from whose sins he was exempt, and whose weaknesses he did not share, excites an ardent thankfulness, and an admiring attachment. Though appointed to his office as the mediator between God and men, by the will and counsel of the Father, his acceptance of it was on his part voluntary. No one can read his life without perceiving that while the work in which he was engaged was one "which his Heavenly Father had given him to do," (John xvii., 4;) it was one in which his whole mind was enlisted. In carrying out this mighty work, he knew that grief and pain, anguish and crucifixion, were placed before him, as needful portions of the instrumentality through which it was



to be accomplished ; but from these he did not shrink. He had received from his Father "power to lay down his life, and power to take it again ; no man took it from him ; he laid it down of himself ; (John x., 18) ; and this power he exerted for us and for our salvation. What feat of ancient heroism equals this in the grandeur of its sacrifice, in the loftiness of its aim ? "For a good man," saith St. Paul, "some, peradventure, would even dare to die ;" (Rom. v., 7) ; but Christ Jesus died for the sinful and the depraved. "Greater love," said the Saviour himself, "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John xv., 13.) But he laid down his life in agony and torture for his own enemies and the enemies of God ; for those who had no claim upon him except that which was founded on the vices which defiled, and the miseries which afflicted them. When we consider that our Lord and Saviour, freely, willingly, endured all that he was called on to suffer, for our sakes, and for the sake of others like ourselves, can we fail to love him ? Are we not inflamed with zeal and energy in his cause ? Do we not burn for an opportunity of manifesting the strength of our attachment and the ardour of our gratitude ? Let us neither be ashamed nor afraid to indulge these emotions. They are good in themselves, and the sources of higher good. They unite our hearts to the Redeemer, and thereby help forward the work of our redemption.

Let us not dread, lest this grateful affection to our Lord and Saviour should ever interfere with that supreme love and gratitude which are due to our Heavenly Father, as the greatest, best, and most merciful. That would, indeed, be a sad perversion of the doctrine of the cross ; nor can we guard our hearts against it too assiduously. But there is little danger of our falling into it while we bear in memory what is the uniform testimony of Christ Jesus himself and of his apostles and disciples, that it is to the free, pure, unpurchased compassion of our God, that we owe our blessed Lord, and all the favours, benefits, and privileges of the Gospel. In the midst of our most heartfelt and earnest thankfulness to the son of God, we can never forget that there is One greater than he, (John xiv., 28), and better than he, (Mark x., 18), who claims and ever

must occupy the highest place in our regard, and to whom we owe our supreme gratitude, even that Great Being, who is "his Father and our Father, his God and our God." (John xx., 17.) We can never leave out of view that it was God who "so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life :—" and while we devoutly bear this in mind, the love of the Saviour can never interpose between our hearts, and the eternal source of blessedness and goodness. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift ! May the love of God be shed abroad in our hearts ; and may it inspire us with a spirit of obedience, and a spirit of trust, submission, and resignation ; an obedience cheerful and unreserved, because springing from an unwillingness to offend our benefactor ; and a trust, abiding, and unailing, because founded on the compassion of Him who "withheld not His own son, but freely delivered him up to death for us all." (Rom. viii., 32.) And may the same feeling enkindle a hatred and aversion for all that is evil ; not because it entails punishment on the transgressor, but because it raises a barrier between him and his Heavenly Father, and cuts him off from communion with the Supremely Good. There are views of God which cherish a servile fear in the mind of those who hold them ;—representations of His character which invest Him with the attributes of inexorable rigour, and stern, inflexible severity. Such views may, no doubt, at times, deter from what is known to be the sure way of provoking infinite vengeance and inextinguishable wrath. But the spirit of fear is incapable of inspiring a generous and hearty devotion of the heart to God. It may deter from sin, but it cannot animate to active goodness. It is reluctant and constrained ; and even when it leads to conduct which is itself right, it cannot be equally pleasing in the sight of God, with the ardent love which eagerly embraces every occasion of doing duty, as a blessed opportunity of laying a free-will offering of the heart's thankfulness on His altar.

Let us endeavour to mirror in our life the character of our God, as He is presented to us in the grand dispensation of the Gospel. He there manifests Himself as the merciful, the long-suffering, the tender, the forgiving, "He hath not dealt with

us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. Like as a father pitieth his children, so doth He pity them that fear Him ; for He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." "We love Him because He first loved us ;" and "He loved us even when we were dead in sins ; and hath quickened us together with Christ." Let us imitate that condescending compassion to which we owe so much ; and by our tender anxiety to benefit and bless our fellow-men, even those from whom we have experienced injuries and indignities—let us approve ourselves "the children of our Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and upon the unjust." (Matt. v., 45.) Let us remember also in the same connexion, that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ "suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should walk in his steps." (1 Pet. ii., 21.) "Let the same mind be in us all, which was also in Christ Jesus ; who, being in the form of God, did not eagerly desire to be as God, but made himself of no reputation ; took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii., 5-8.) To us as to him, the path of true greatness lies through the precincts of humility and forbearance ; the love that "suffereth long and is kind."

We can scarcely fail to be impressed with a hatred and abhorrence of sin when we behold the unparalleled nature of those means to which our Heavenly Father has had recourse for the purpose of destroying its power in our hearts, and the hearts of others like ourselves. How abominable must it have been in the eyes of the Great Ruler of the universe, when, in order to deliver mankind from its bondage, He sent His only-begotten son into the world, not merely to teach and preach, but to suffer and to die. God, we may be assured, does not delight in suffering. Even in inflicting chastisement, He is lenient and forbearing. Judgment is "His strange work." (Isaiah xxviii., 24.) Therefore, it was for no trivial; no unimportant end that He sped His beloved son on a message which entailed upon him such an amount of accumulated woes. It was the

sinfulness of men which rendered this unexampled dispensation necessary, in order to accomplish the benevolent designs of the Eternal. Let our breasts be animated by a corresponding abhorrence of evil, and a corresponding love of that which is good, lest we incur the guilt and condemnation of those "who trample under foot the son of God, and count the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, as an unholy thing." (Heb. x., 29.)

Above all, let us thankfully avail ourselves of the mercy which the Father sent the son into the world to announce to all penitent offenders. Let us not be too proud to accept God's mercy, on God's own terms, as an act of His spontaneous and unpurchased grace. There are some whose language would lead us to suppose that they would think it beneath them to accept forgiveness and mercy unless they could establish a claim to it, as due to them by divine justice ; if not, on account of their own merits, at least on the ground of another's merits, as imputed to them ! What mind is not shocked by such arrogance and ingratitude ? Far be it from us. We feel our need of the proffered mercy ; and, with an humble and grateful acceptance of the terms on which it is afforded, we fly for refuge from our sins and from ourselves, to cast ourselves on the bosom of our Heavenly Father, and rush into the everlasting arms which are opened to embrace us.

Whatever may be the hopes and the views of others, we feel that for us there is no hope, unless in accepting the mercy of our God, promised to the sincere and humble penitent. Those who think their debt has been cancelled, and satisfaction made for all their sins—past, present, and to come—eighteen hundred years ago, may naturally be supposed to be relieved from a good deal of the anxiety they might otherwise feel on account of the transgressions thus summarily wiped out. Persons who imagine that all the merits and the virtues of the son of God have been transferred to themselves, and are placed to their credit in the records of Heaven's chancery, may be expected to be somewhat less anxious about the culture of the Christian graces in their own breasts. But if we, with our views of God's providence and dealings, persevere in any known sin, or

neglect any known duty, we are self-confuted and self-condemned ; for we believe, and are assured, that unless the blood of Christ wash us from our sins, it only deepens their stain. Unless we are reformed by the Gospel, it is not our redemption, but our condemnation.

May the Gospel be unto each of "the savour of life unto life," not "of death unto death." May Christ Jesus be unto us all, "wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." (1 Cor. i., 30.) May we "wash us, make us clean, put away the error of our ways, cease to do evil, learn to do well ;" that so, "though our sins be as scarlet, they may be white as snow ; though they be red as crimson, they may be as wool." (Isaiah i., 16-18.) And may the holy apostle's exhortation have its fit response in our life and heart ; who reminds us that "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should walk in his steps ; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth ; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously ; who, his own self, carried our sins in his own body to the tree, that we, being dead to sins, might live unto righteousness, and that by his stripes, we might be healed." (1 Pet. ii., 21-24.) And "unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, even his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever !" *Amen.*



APPENDIX.





## A P P E N D I X .

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### A.—RITUAL TRANSGRESSIONS OF THE MOSAIC LAW. (P. 4).

THE requirements of the ritual or ceremonial law were not only very strict, but extremely numerous ; and the penalties appointed for their transgression, and the atonements prescribed for the expiation of such offences, were various.

Some enactments of this class were regarded as so sacred that offenders were punished with death. The violation of the Sabbath was a capital crime. (Exodus xxxv., 2.) The assumption of the priestly office by any person not belonging to the family of Aaron was a capital crime. (Num. iii., 10.) So was the offence of a priest who ventured to officiate without the consecrated vestments, (Exod. xxviii., 43) ; and that of any person, not being a Levite, who presumed to approach the tabernacle while it was being erected or taken down. (Num. i., 51.) Death was denounced against the high-priest himself if he should enter the holy sanctuary on any day but the great day of atonement, (Lev. xvi., 2) ; but, in this last case, the punishment threatened was, apparently, miraculous.

There were other transgressions, which were looked upon as so heinous, that they entailed on the criminal the penalty of being "cut off from the people," which, in all cases, implied being disowned as an Israelite, debarred from intercourse, and shut out from participation in religious solemnities ; in some, sentence of death. The following offences were thus visited :—The omission of circumcision, (Gen. xvii., 4) ; omission to eat the passover, (Num. ix., 13) ; eating leavened bread during passover week, (Exod. xii., 19) ; eating blood, (Lev. vii., 27) ; eating the fat of ox, sheep, or goat, (Lev. vii., 23–25) ; entering the tabernacle while defiled by touching a dead body, (Num. xix., 13) ; eating the flesh of a peace-offering while labouring under any sort of defilement, (Lev. vii., 20, 21) ; omitting to "afflict himself" on the day of atonement, (Lev. xxiii., 29) ; compounding any imitation of the holy oil, which was used in the consecration of the priests, or putting any of it upon a stranger, (Exod. xxx., 33) ; officiating as a priest while in a state of defilement, (Lev. xxii., 3).

In none of these instances could the transgression be unconscious or involuntary; and, as has been stated, these offences were considered as of unusual enormity. There were other cases in which the law might be violated ignorantly, or in which the violation, if wilful, was regarded as less heinous. In these, atonement, or expiation, was allowed to be made by means of offerings, ablutions, or other purificatory rites, on the completion of which the offender was considered as cleansed from his defilement, and was again privileged to join the solemnities of his religion.

*Sin-offerings* were required to be presented at the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the sacerdotal office, (Exod. xxix, 10-14), and of the Levites to their service in the tabernacle, (Num. viii., 8), for the purpose of cleansing them from any impurities which they might, knowingly or unknowingly, have contracted. This was a ritual atonement for a ritual defilement. A woman after child-birth, and also after her period of separation, if of longer continuance than usual, was required to present both a burnt-offering and a sin-offering; and the priest who offered it "made an atonement for her." (Lev. xii., 7; xv., 29, 30.) A Nazarite who had, by unavoidable accident, touched a dead body, was required to present a burnt-offering, a sin-offering, and a trespass-offering, by which "atonement" would be made for him, (Num. vi., 9-12); and, on the completion of his vow, a burnt-offering, a sin-offering, and a peace-offering, for the same purpose. (Num. vi., 13, 14.) So, likewise, a leprous person, on being cured of the disease, was commanded to offer a burnt-offering, a sin-offering, and a trespass-offering, as "an atonement." (Lev. xiv., 1-32.) Again: it was provided, that "if a soul sin, *through ignorance*, against any of the commandments of Jehovah, concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them," (Lev. iv., 2), whether the transgression shall have been committed by a priest, the whole congregation, a ruler, or a private person, a prescribed sin-offering was to be sacrificed, by which the officiating priest was to "make atonement" for the transgressor, and the sin was to be forgiven. (Lev. iv., 3, 13, 22, 27.) And the tenth day of the seventh month was appointed to be a day of general atonement, (Lev. xxiii., 26), on which sin-offerings were presented, as an atonement, on behalf of the sanctuary, the tabernacle, the great altar of burnt-offerings, the golden altar of incense, the priests, and all the people of the congregation. (Lev. xvi., 33.) This atonement was prescribed, expressly, "*because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins*"—"because the tabernacle remained among them *in the*

*midst of their uncleanness'* (Lev. xvi., 16.) In none of these cases could any moral guilt be imputed. They were cases of ritual impurity, removed by ritual expiations—ceremonies, on the fulfilment of which, objects employed in the worship of God were permitted to be applied to their proper use; and persons who had been, in consequence of a vow, or for natural or accidental causes, excluded from society, or from religious solemnities, were restored to their customary privileges.

*Trespass-offerings* were commanded to be presented by persons who had *unconsciously* touched the carcase of any unclean animal, or any uncleanness of man, (Lev. v. 1—6); by any one who had made a promissory oath, and *forgotten it*, but afterwards recollected the circumstance, (Lev. v., 4); by one who had committed a trespass and sin, *through ignorance*, in the holy things of Jehovah, (Lev. v., 15, 16); by one who had “committed anything that is forbidden, *though he wist it not*,” (Lev. v., 17, 18); by a leprous person on being cured, and a Nazarite, who had incurred uncleanness, in connexion with the sin-offering, in the cases already described. Thus far, the object and effect of the trespass-offering appear to have been quite similar to those of the sin-offering; if not exactly identical with them. There are, however, a few cases in which trespass-offerings were required, in which more or less of moral culpability had been incurred; though manifestly the sacrifice was not demanded as an atonement for the moral culpability itself, but for the ceremonial impurity connected with it.

One of these was that of a person who, being able to bear testimony in a case before the judges, and “having heard the voice of adjuration,” nevertheless refrained from coming forward as a witness. “When he shall have become guilty in this thing, he shall confess that he hath sinned in this thing, and shall bring his trespass-offering to Jehovah,” &c. (Lev. v., 1—6.) In this case a moral wrong was committed by withholding his testimony; and a ceremonial defilement, i.e., exclusion from the tabernacle, and from participation in sacred rites, had been incurred, by disregarding the “voice of adjuration.” It cannot be doubted that the offender, when he voluntarily came forward and confessed his sin, must have been actuated by real penitence; the very act of acknowledging his guilt in such a public and solemn manner, testified his desire to repair the injury which he had done; and, indeed, would, in many cases, be itself a complete reparation of the wrong done by his former silence. I apprehend that the penitent feeling of the heart, the voluntary and open confession of the fault, the desire shewn to repair the injury which had been caused to his neighbour, or the

actual reparation of the wrong, were accepted by God, as a ground of forgiveness for the offence, so far as it was an immoral and irreligious act; and the trespass-offering was accepted as an atonement for the ritual defilement consequent upon it; that is to say, it put an end to the exclusion of the offender from the tabernacle of the congregation, and from religious observances.

The same observations apply to the case of a person who had wronged his neighbour by violence or fraud, and had lied or sworn falsely concerning the matter. When he came to a sense of his guilt, he was required to restore the property thus wrongfully acquired, adding one-fifth part as a penalty; and to offer a trespass-offering. (Lev. vi., 2-7.) This was a case of sincere contrition, and voluntary restitution, with a public confession, and compensation for consequential damages. These, it appears to me, were accepted as an indemnity for the wrong; and the trespass-offering was taken as an atonement for the impurity contracted by the profane use of God's holy name, invoked to a falsehood. I may add that the policy of the Mosaic law, in both these examples, appears to have been to encourage voluntary confession of injuries, and reparation for them, by rendering the terms of restoration to social and ecclesiastical privileges, as easy as they could be made, consistently with the general good.

The last case that remains to be considered, is that of criminal conversation "with a woman who is a bond-maid, a concubine, not redeemed, nor free." In this case, scourging was to be inflicted; doubtless on both the guilty parties, though that be not exactly stated. (Lev. xix., 20, 22.) The man was, in addition, required to present a ram for a trespass-offering; "and the priest shall make an atonement for him, with the ram of the trespass-offering, for his sin, which he hath committed; and his sin, which he hath committed, shall be forgiven him." Here, two things are to be considered; the crime against society, and the ritual defilement connected with it. The penalty annexed to the social crime was that of scourging. The uncleanness was removed, by the sacrifice of the ram for a trespass-offering. It must be remembered that ritual defilement was always incurred by carnal intercourse, even in the case of husband and wife. In such cases, the prescribed atonement was ablution; and the uncleanness only lasted a day; but in the case of the illicit intercourse now under consideration, it continued till the chief offender was able to present himself at the door of the tabernacle; which might be for a period of weeks, or months; and then he had to bring an offering of some value. It need occasion neither surprise nor difficulty, to find the ceremonial impurity here designated

by the term "sin;" for there are many examples of the use of the word, in that signification. Of this, we have one in the passage already cited, respecting the Nazarite, who had unavoidably touched a dead body. He was required to offer a burnt-offering and a sin-offering as an expiation. "And the priest shall offer the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, and make an atonement for him, *for that he sinned with the dead*; and shall hallow his head that same day." (Num. vi., 11.) So, also, it was prescribed, that if a person have touched the carcase of any unclean animal, or the uncleanness of man, even without his knowing of it at the time, when he becomes aware of it, "then he shall be guilty;" and "he shall confess that he hath *sinned*," . . . . "and he shall bring his trespass-offering, . . . . and the priest shall make atonement for him concerning *his sin*." (Lev. v., 2, 3, 5, 6.) And so, elsewhere, frequently. Hence, "the water of purification," (Num. viii., 7,) is in the Hebrew called the "water of sin;" and the lustral water, by the sprinkling of which, the defilement occasioned by touching a dead body was removed, is called "a purification for sin." (Num. xix., 9; comp. ver. 11-22.) In fact, no attentive reader of the pentateuch can fail to remark, that the term *sin*, (both as verb and noun,) is applied very often to ritual impurities, even when contracted accidentally or unconsciously. And this is quite agreeable to the etymology of the word; for it denotes, primarily and properly, *a slip, a mischance, a mistake*.

The cases of uncleanness, which were removed by bathings or ablutions, lustrations and similar ceremonies, are too numerous to be specified. But they are not without their significance, in reference to the subject now before us. They shew that the effect of the death of an animal victim, in the removal of some classes of impurity, was exactly the same with that produced by the application of water, with or without a slight mixture of ashes, in others; no more, and no less. The reader who wishes to penetrate to the depths of the question, would do well to study these purification-rites carefully, as they stand in the last four books of pentateuch; especially in Leviticus. But there is one form of expiation, which is so generally misunderstood, that a brief discussion of it seems necessary to a just conception of the great question respecting the forgiveness of sin.

It is that of the *Azazel*, or scape-goat. On the day of atonement, it was ordained that the high-priest, (Aaron is named, but his successors are manifestly included,) should receive from the congregation two kids of the goats, and, having cast lots upon them, should

sacrifice that on which the lot fell, as a sin-offering, "to 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 also, "for the tabernacle of the congregation that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness;" and also, to "cleanse the altar and hallow it, from the uncleanness of the children of Israel. And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat; and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." (Lev. xvi., 1-34.) Many of our brethren are of opinion, that this is an example of the transference of guilt, and of vicarious punishment. If it were so, does it not seem to them strange—supposing as they do, that the guilt of all believers has been transferred to Christ, and their punishment inflicted on him—that the case of the Azazel is never once referred to, or alluded to in the New Testament? Archbishop Magee and other writers in defence of the doctrine of imputed sin and vicarious punishment, labour hard to make it appear, that the scape-goat was typical of the atonement, made for sin by the death of Christ. (*Discourses on Atonement and Sacrifice*, vol. i., p. 61, 62; vol. ii., p. 342-347.) But he has not attempted to grapple with the fatal fact, than in the 9th chapter of Hebrews, where there is minute reference to the other ceremonies of the day of atonement, (and where I may observe they and all other ritual atonements are placed on their proper footing, as "purification of the flesh,") there is no allusion to the Azazel. But the fact is, there was neither transference nor imputation of sin to the scape-goat. There was no vicarious punishment in the case. There was no punishment at all. The scape-goat was not punished. He was led away into the wilderness; the very place which, from instinct, he would himself have preferred. He was placed in "a land not inhabited," where he was free from the dominion and control of man, the great despot of the lower creation. He was turned loose, in the full enjoyment of his natural liberty, free to range at will over the hills and plains, and enjoy the bounties of a benignant providence. The scape-goat was not punished; nor was there any real transference of guilt to him. The whole action was symbolical; and beautifully betokened the free, unpurchased, and unconditional

pardon of those sins which Aaron had confessed upon him, whatever may have been their nature. The act was significant and expressive. The transgressions and iniquities of the people were first confessed and deplored by the high priest, whose hands were laid upon the head of the scape-goat; the animal was then turned loose in the wilderness, exempt from man's control and cruelty. The act was very significant. It expressed in symbolical language what is conveyed in the direct assertion of the Apostle—"If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i., 9.)

From all this we see very plainly that the sacrifices, ablutions, and other piacular rites of the ancient dispensation, which are often relied upon as collateral proofs of the efficacy of Christ's death in satisfying the law or the justice of God, on account of the moral offences of the faithful, lend to that doctrine no support whatever. Not one of them can be shewn, in any single instance, to have possessed such a virtue, or to have been supposed to possess it. They were expiatory, unquestionably; but not for immoralities. They atoned only for ceremonial transgressions. Their efficacy extended no farther than to restore the person who had neglected or violated some of the provisions of the ceremonial law, to the privilege of associating with his brethren, and of uniting with them in the solemnities of public worship, from which he had been, by ceremonial defilement, excluded. And here we are led to perceive a true and striking analogy between the sin-offerings, trespass-offerings, ablutions, and other expiatory rites of the Mosaic code on the one hand, and the death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, "the lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world," on the other. The Mosaic rites removed the defilements under which those who performed them had previously laboured, in consequence of their neglect of some of the ceremonial enactments of the law. The death of Christ was the signal of the total abolition of all ritual laws; and, by or through it, the bulk of mankind, who had been for nearly two thousand years excluded as unclean, from the privileges of God's church and people, were brought nigh to the spiritual tabernacle, and made "an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable unto God, by Jesus Christ;" (1 Pet., ii., 5): "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." (1 Pet., ii., 9.) This is the true point of the analogy; and to it there are, as will be seen, frequent allusions in the New Testament.

## B.—SACRIFICES. (P. 5.)

MANY learned men have discussed the question, whence did the custom of offering sacrifice, so general in the ancient world, derive its origin? Some have argued that it was instituted by a direct command by God himself; others have maintained that it sprung from the spontaneous impulses of human beings, anxious to declare their gratitude to the Great Bestower of every good, by devoting to Him a portion of the bounties with which He had blessed them. The latter opinion seems to me to be the best supported, both by reason and Scripture. In the account of the first sacrifice, (Gen. iv., 3, 4, 5), no divine command is recorded or hinted at; on the contrary, the language of the history plainly intimates that the fruits of the earth, presented by Cain, and the firstlings of the flock, presented by Abel, were purely free-will offerings. And it is quite consistent with this hypothesis, that, wherever sacrifices prevailed, they consisted of domesticated animals and cultivated vegetables—the produce of pasturage and tillage. Not only were these the primeval occupations of *civilized* man, but the products of them are among the things which are most obviously the gifts of God, and, at the same time, most directly and specially bestowed on men for their own benefit; therefore, the fittest to be presented in acknowledgment of God's bounty. Wild animals may, under certain circumstances, be very valuable to their captor; but they are not regarded as things created or produced for the peculiar benefit of human beings. Manufactured articles are often very costly; but, being the product of human art, they would not, in a rude age, be considered as being so distinctly or so directly the gift of God as the increase of the flock and the productions of the soil. Hence, I believe no nation has been found, among all the tribes of men who have worshipped the Deity by sacrifice, in which it has been the custom to offer either wild animals or manufactured articles on the altar. Even when human victims have been sacrificed, the same feeling has predominated. In all such cases, the victims have been either *slaves*, who were, and are still, wherever slavery exists, regarded as a superior class of domestic animals; or *captives*, who, by the ancient laws of war, were the slaves of their conquerors; or *criminals*, who, by their offences against society, had forfeited their freedom, and sunk down into the same degraded rank. The victims were, in all cases, the property either of individuals or communities. It is manifest, from the whole tenour and spirit of the Bible, that the sacrifice of human victims, which prevailed so extensively, did not derive its origin from a divine precept. On



the contrary, whenever it is mentioned or alluded to in the Sacred Scriptures, it is spoken of with horror and indignation. It arose from an ignorant desire, in a debased and superstitious era of the human mind, to honour God, by presenting at His altar what was considered the most valuable of His own gifts. It has been often asserted, that the offering of animals in sacrifice was a divine institution, typical of the great sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world; and that it was required to be presented as an expression of faith in the Saviour, who was to atone, by his blood, for human guilt. It has even been said that Abel's offering was accepted, and Cain's rejected, because the former, being accompanied with the shedding of blood, indicated that the donor placed reliance on the atoning efficacy of the death of Christ; the latter, being a bloodless offering, implied that Cain renounced the divinely-promised means of salvation. There is not one word of this, or any similar ground of distinction between them, in the sacred historian's page; neither is there in the whole compass of the history of the patriarchs, or in the Mosaic law, (which treats so largely of sacrifices and their accompaniments), the slightest hint of any such reference, as is supposed, to the death or the sacrifice of Christ. It is evident that the rejection of Cain's offering proceeded not from any dissatisfaction, on God's part, with the nature of the substances which he presented; for these were all God's own sinless creatures, and therefore, good; but from God's knowledge of the unprovoked enmity and ferocious malignity which lurked in his heart. So far was an offering of vegetable productions from being, in itself, displeasing to the Deity, or even unacceptable, that, in the law of Moses, such offerings, (technically termed *mincha*), were expressly enjoined; and, in many cases, the animal victim would not have been accepted without them. This was, in particular, the case with the greater number (if not the whole) of the sin-offerings and trespass-offerings; the very sacrifices which are supposed to have implied most clearly an anticipative reference to the crucifixion on Calvary, and to have derived all their virtue from the pre-efficacious influence of that mysterious event. This is a difficulty which I leave it to those who assert such a reference and such a reflex influence to solve as best they may. If, indeed, the ancient sacrifices had been designed primarily and principally to prefigure the sacrifice of the death of Christ, it would not be easy to assign a reason why human victims were not permitted to be offered on God's altar, especially such as might voluntarily permit themselves to be sacrificed; \*For it cannot

\* I may claim for this reasoning, the confirmatory authority of the *arguments* advanced by Archbishop Magee. (*Discourses, &c.*, vol. I., p. 379-390.) His own opinion is, of course, against me; but his reasonings seem to be in my favour.

be denied that such a voluntary sacrifice of a human being would much more strikingly and impressively typify the scene on Golgotha, than any offering consisting of senseless animals—bullocks, rams, or he-goats. That awful and most deeply interesting event gains nothing, and loses much, by being connected, otherwise than in a figure of speech, with the sacrifices, whether bloody or bloodless, of the ancient world.

Sacrifices were offered by Noah, by Abraham, and by the patriarchs; but we have no particulars from which we can define with certainty either the nature of the offerings or the formalities with which they were presented. The distinction between clean and unclean animals being then recognised, there can be little doubt than none except the former were sacrificed. It is nearly certain that the head of the family, for the time being, officiated as priest; and that the altar might be erected wherever he judged it proper or convenient to place it. There is reason to believe that the worship of God by sacrifice was suspended during the whole period of the sojourn of the chosen race in Egypt. (See Exod. viii., 25–27.)

At the giving of the law on Sinai, minute and careful instructions were given respecting the substances to be offered in sacrifice, the place at which they should be presented, the formalities of the rite, the persons who should officiate, and the disposal of that which remained after the prescribed portion had been consumed. None but clean animals—and of these only fowl and quadrupeds—were permitted to be used in sacrifice. Fish and insects, though some species of them might be eaten, were not allowed to be offered upon the altar of God. Every victim was required to be without blemish. Vegetable substances might also be offered; fine flour, unleavened cakes, early corn rubbed out of the ear, oil, wine, and incense, were often required with animal victims, and sometimes accepted as their substitutes. It was strictly forbidden to offer any sacrifice elsewhere than at the one altar which was erected for the purpose, in the place which Jehovah had chosen for his habitation, (Dent. xii., 5, 6, &c.); that is to say, at the tabernacle of the congregation, or at the temple of Jerusalem after it was built. This precept was looked upon as so solemn and so important that any person who violated it was to be “cut off from among his people.” (Lev. xvii., 8, 9.) The formalities of the rite were various, according to the different kinds of offerings; but, in all cases, the victim, if an animal, was to be presented at the door of the tabernacle, (or the temple, in after times); there, and not elsewhere, it was to be slaughtered; the blood was to be poured out at the foot of the altar, except a portion of it, which was to be sprinkled on the altar itself, or on some of the sacred objects in the

tabernacle ; the whole or part of the flesh was then to be burnt with fire on the altar ; if any remained, it was either to be the perquisite of the priests, who were to eat it in the holy place, or to be divided in prescribed proportions between the priests and the donors, who were to eat it on the day of the sacrifice, or on the following day at farthest. No person, except a descendant from Aaron, duly consecrated and set apart to his office, was authorised to officiate as priest. Any one who dared presume to offer a sacrifice, not being of the sacerdotal family, was to be put to death. In all these particulars, which were strictly essential to the acceptability of the sacrifices under the old dispensation, there was the most marked opposition between them and the death of Christ. If his death was a literal sacrifice, it was such a sacrifice as the ancient people of God were taught to regard with horror and abomination. For the victim was of a kind which Jehovah had solemnly and utterly rejected, and had, by the most awful denunciations, forbidden to be presented to Himself. The victim was not presented at the door of the temple, nor slain at the altar of God ; nor was his blood sprinkled on it, or any of the objects in the sanctuary. The flesh was not eaten by the priests ; nor by any one, unless the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation be admitted. And, lastly, the sacrifice was not offered up by the consecrated priests of God, but by the impure and unholy hands of pagan idolators. It seems to me very strange, how any one, with these broad lines of distinction present in his mind, could, for a moment, suppose, that the one great end for which Mosaic sacrifices were instituted was to celebrate the death of Christ beforehand ; to serve as a means by which the worshippers should express their faith in its atoning efficacy before it took place ; and to lead Jews and Gentiles to build their hope of salvation on it afterwards. If the object of the lawgiver had been to *prevent* the death of Christ from being ever regarded as a literal sacrifice, it seems to me that he could scarcely have devised regulations better fitted to answer his purpose. To me these ordinances speak in tones too distinct to be misunderstood, that the death of Christ was no sacrifice, in the literal meaning of the term ; and that, when it is called so in the Scriptures, or elsewhere, it can only be by the same figure of speech, by which the term is applied to the death of any person who heroically lays down his life for the good of others, or in the pursuit of duty, or the defence of a great and holy cause.

The kinds of sacrifices were various ; and their objects different.

1. The *burnt-offering* was, apparently, designed as an acknowledgment of God's sovereign dominion. It was to be taken from the

herd or from the flock, a male without blemish ; the whole of the flesh was to be consumed on the altar ; the skin was to be the perquisite of the priest. (Lev. i., 1-13 ; vii., 8.) In case of poverty, a burnt-offering of turtle-doves or young pigeons would be accepted. A *mincha*, or vegetable sacrifice, was also admissible, (Lev., ch. ii.) ; but whether as an accompaniment to, or as a substitute for, an animal victim, is not very distinctly intimated : the latter most probably ; and if so, as a further compliance with the narrow circumstances of the poor. A "memorial" only of the *mincha* or "meat-offering"—better translated *meal-offering*—was consumed ; the remainder was given to the priests. It is needless to dwell on the ceremonies of the burnt-offering, as no expiatory virtue was ever assigned to it ; and, therefore, no one who believes in the atoning efficacy of the Saviour's death can refer to this sort of sacrifice as a type of it.

2. Next in importance and dignity was the *peace-offering* ; which, like the burnt-offering, (at least when the latter was presented by an individual), was always a voluntary sacrifice. It was either presented as an expression of thankfulness to God, or in fulfilment of a vow. (Lev. vii., 12-16.) The victim was to be of the herd, or of the flock, and might be male or female. The kidneys, the inward fat, and the midriff, and, if the victim were a lamb, the tail, also, were to be burnt ; the right shoulder was given to the officiating priest ; the breast to the whole of the priests in common ; the rest of the carcass was returned to the donor, who was required to eat it with his friends, within a limited time ; but no part of it could be eaten by any person while in a state of defilement. With the peace-offering, a meal-offering was required ; of which a part belonged to the priest, the remainder was the property of the person who presented the sacrifice. I shall dismiss the consideration of the peace-offering with the remark, that Archbishop Magee, who has raked together every argument by which it might be possible to lend even the semblance of support to his proposition "that the Jewish sacrifices were propitiatory, or in other words, that in consequence of the sacrifice of the animal, and in virtue of it, either immediately or remotely, the pardon of the offender was procured"—(vol. i., p. 378)—does not attempt to prove "the vicarious import," or the "propitiatory virtue" of the peace-offering. How, indeed, could a sacrifice, which involved no confession of sin, nor implied any consciousness of it ; which made atonement for nothing, and was never regarded as expiatory in any sense, be held to convey a "vicarious import," or to foreshadow the accomplishment of a grand satisfaction for the sins of all who put their trust in its efficacy ?

3. In the third rank—and it is a significant fact, that they are placed by the great legislature of the Jews *only in the third rank*—came the piacular or purifying sacrifices, denominated *sin-offerings* and *trespass-offerings*. This might be, according to the circumstances of the person who presented it, a heifer, a female lamb, a kid, (male or female), a turtle dove, or a young pigeon. The blood was to be poured out, and a portion of it sprinkled on the altar of incense, the great altar, or the vail of the tabernacle. The kidneys and the inward fat were to be burnt upon the altar; the hide and carcass to be carried out and burnt without the camp. (Lev., ch. iv.) In case of poverty, the tenth part of an ephah of flour, without oil or frankincense, would be accepted for a sin-offering. These rites were declared to be expiations or atonements for persons who had sinned through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord, but whose transgressions afterwards came to their knowledge; and for others who had declined coming forward as witnesses when adjured, or had by force or fraud acquired the property of their brethren, but afterwards had voluntarily acknowledged their sin, and made amends. In one particular case, a trespass-offering was required as an expiation for a ritual defilement, which was connected with an immoral act—the immorality being visited with corporal punishment. It is on these rites—the sin-offering and the trespass-offering—that the upholders of the common opinion, that the death of Christ was strictly and properly a sacrifice, by which satisfaction was made for human sin, and of which, all the ancient sacrificial observances were but types and emblems, must ultimately rest their cause. But how little support these notions have in the Sacred Scriptures which treat of these subjects, has already been shewn in the preceding article of this Appendix. It must ever prove a stumbling-block in the way of such theories, that there is not in the whole Old Testament, from beginning to end, a single expression by which the supposed connexion between the Mosaic sacrifices and the death of Christ is even hinted at.

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C.—OFFENCES AGAINST RELIGION AND MORALS. (P. 5.)

THOSE who regard the death of Christ as a full, entire, and perfect satisfaction for all manner of sin, and believe that the sacrifices ordained in the Mosaic code were merely typical of it, and that they partook of its virtue because they were its types, maintain a principle which seems to imply that, in all cases of transgression,

so long as the old dispensation endured, offenders might have had recourse to these sacrifices, and that, by means of them, every species of guilt might be atoned. I am very far from desiring to insinuate that all who have urged in favour of the common doctrine of atonement, arguments which rest in the Jewish ritual, carry their views to these, their legitimate lengths—lengths which would make the heaven-commanded ordinances of the Old Testament as immoral in their tendency, as the doctrine of Indulgences preached by Tetzels and his associates. But I must say some of the leading writers on this question have not been as careful as might have been desirable to guard their readers against this abuse. That there is no ground for the supposition from which it springs, is manifest from even a brief examination of the provisions of the Mosaic code respecting offences and their penalties. We specify the following as samples of the whole :—

For cursing God, or blasphemy, the penalty was death by stoning. (Lev. xxiv., 14-16.) For worshipping the sun, moon, stars, or any false god, the penalty was death. (Deut. xvii., 2-7; Exod. xxii., 20.) For causing one's seed to pass through the fire to Molech, the penalty was death. (Lev. xx., 1-5.) Necromancers, wizards, diviners, and soothsayers, were to be put to death. (Exod. xxii., 18.) Whoever enticed another to idolatry was to be put to death. (Deut., ch. xiii.) Whosoever struck or cursed either of his parents was to be put to death. (Exod. xxi., 15-17.) A rebellious son, who refused to obey his father or mother, when found guilty by the elders, was to be stoned. (Deut. xviii., 21.) Adulterers and adulteresses were to be put to death. (Exod. xx., 14.) If a man brought a false charge of unchastity against a woman whom he had married, he was to be scourged, and to pay to her father a fine of a hundred shekels of silver; and it was never afterwards to be in his power to divorce her. (Deut. xxii., 13-19.) He who killed a man deliberately and wilfully was to be put to death. (Exod. xx., 13.) The accidental homicide might flee to a city of refuge; and if able to satisfy the magistrates that the act was done without malice, he was safe from the "avenger of blood" so long as he remained within its precincts; but if he transgressed its limits he might be slain. (Deut. xix., 4-13.) In case of bodily injury, the principle of retaliation was enforced—"eye for eye, tooth for tooth." (Lev. xxiv., 19, 20.) He who smote a slave so that he died under his hand, underwent corporal punishment. (Exod. xxi., 20.) If a man struck his slave so as to destroy an eye or a tooth, the slave was made free. (Exod. xxi., 26.) A man-stealer was to be put to death. (Exod. xxi., 16.) A stealer of

cattle was to repay five oxen for one that he had stolen, and four sheep for one. If he were not able to make restitution on this scale, he was to be sold; but if the animal were found in his possession alive, he shall only be required to pay double to the owner. (Exod. xxii., 1-4.) Crimes against nature were punished with death. (Lev. xviii., 22; Exod. xxii., 19.)

Thus it will be seen that there were very few offences against religion or morality for which specific penalties were not provided. In none of these cases—nor in many others, which I have omitted to save space—was any ritual atonement provided; in none of them, or of the kindred offences, would any have been accepted. In fact, there was no ritual atonement for any moral transgressions, with the exception of two cases, in which a sacrificial expiation was allowed to the penitent who voluntarily and publicly acknowledged and deplored his own offence; and one other, in which a moral transgression and a ceremonial defilement were combined: in that case, a bodily chastisement was inflicted on account of the immorality, and a trespass-offering was required to remove the ceremonial impurity.—(See *Appendix A*, p. 124.)

That the view which I have in this Appendix stated respecting the nature and limitation of the sacrificial atonements is, on the whole, correct, is to myself made as manifest as the noonday sun, by the study of the Old Testament history, and the exhortations contained in the prophetic books. We read in the Sacred Record of many glaring crimes, and of their forgiveness. There are no cases more remarkable than some which occurred in the life of David; and of these the most conspicuous is his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband. (2 Samuel, ch. xi. and xii.) For these heinous crimes, (each of which was capital), David obtained forgiveness. But how? Not by or through any sin-offering or trespass-offering; nothing of the sort was presented, nor required, nor would have been accepted: he was pardoned purely in consequence and on account of his repentance. "And David said unto Nathan, 'I have sinned against Jehovah!' And Nathan said unto David, 'Jehovah also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.'" (2 Sam., xii., 13.) And, in fact, I cannot find, in the whole of the historical books of the Old Testament, a single instance of moral transgression being forgiven through, or in consequence of, a sacrificial offering of any kind; though there are very many examples of gross offences against morality being pardoned on the repentance and amendment of the transgressor.

And so, likewise, in the other sacred books. When the ritual transgressions of the ancient people of God are denounced, ritual

remedies are prescribed. But, when offences against morality are complained of, the means of reconciliation to God which are held forth, are of a totally different nature. Of this I take but one example from the prophet Isaiah :—

“ Hear the words of Jehovah, ye princes of Sodom ;  
Give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah !  
“ What care I for the multitude of your sacrifices ? saith Jehovah :  
I am cloyed with the burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts ;  
And in the blood of bullocks, and of lambs, and of goats, I delight not.  
“ When ye come before me,  
Who hath required this at your hands ?  
“ Tread my courts no more : bring no more a vain oblation :  
Incense, it is an abomination to me !  
The new moon, and the Sabbath, and the convoked assembly,  
I cannot endure : the fast and the day of restraint.  
Your new moons and your festivals my soul hateth ;  
They are a burden unto me : I am weary to bear them.  
“ When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you ;  
Yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear :  
Your hands are full of blood !  
“ Wash you ; make you clean ;  
Put away the evil of your doing from before mine eyes ;  
Cease to do evil ; learn to do well ;  
Seek judgment ; relieve the oppressed ;  
Judge the fatherless ; plead for the widow.  
“ Come, now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah :  
Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow :  
Though they be read as crimson, they shall be like wool.  
“ If ye be willing and obedient,  
Ye shall feed on the good of the land ;  
But, if ye refuse and rebel,  
Ye shall be devoured with the sword ;  
For the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.”—ISAIAH i., 10-20.

It is impossible for words to declare more distinctly that *no ritual ceremonies could expiate moral transgressions* ; and it is almost unaccountable how a people who were accustomed to such addresses and exhortations, (for they abound in the Old Testament), could ever have imbibed the notion of their sin-offerings and their trespass-offerings being an equivalent for, or expiatory of, moral guilt. This should settle the question, so far as it relates to the doctrine of the Old Testament Scriptures : for unquestionably the true doctrine of those sacred books is, that which it was intended they should convey to the minds of the persons for whose immediate use they were composed ; and it is inconceivable that, if they were written to convey a particular set of opinions or form of doctrine,



that form of doctrine should be one which, so far as we know from their own history, or from other sources of information, they never actually conveyed to so much as a single mind among the nation into whose hands they were committed.

D.—ATONEMENT, “AT-ONE-MENT.” (P. 6.)

As the word “Atonement,” which to many minds is full of such mysterious import, occurs only in one passage of the Authorized Version of the New Testament—namely, in Rom. v., 11—I have thought it convenient to place before the eye of my readers the following conspectus of the renderings of the principal ancient English translations, copied from that useful work, *Bagster's English Hexapla*, shewing the manner in which the passage was rendered by the leading interpreters, previous to the time of King James I., as well as by his translators:—

WICLIF—1380.

For if whanne we weren enemyes : we ben reconceillid to God bi the deeth of his sone, myche more we reconceillid : schulen be saaf in the liif of him, and not oonli this : but also we glorien in God bi oure Lord Jhesus Crist : bi whom we han reseuyed now reconceillynge.

TYNDALE—1534.

For yf when we were enemyes, we were reconciled to God by the deeth of his sonne : moche more, seing we are reconciled, we shal be preservid by his lyfe. Not only so, but we also ioye in God by the meanes of oure Lorde Iesus Christ, by whom we have receayvd the atonment.

GENEVA—1557.

For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Sonne, muche more, seing we are reconciled, we shalbe preserued by his life. And not only so, but we also reioyse in God, by the meanes of our Lord Iesus Christe, by whom we haue now receaved the atonement.

RHEIMS—1582.

For if vwhen vve vvere enemies, vve vvere reconciled to God by the death of his Sonne : much more being reconciled, shall vve be saued in the life of him. And not only this : but also vve glorie in God through our Lord IESUS Christ, by vvhom novv vve haue receiued reconciliation.

CRANMER—1539.

For yf when we were enemyes, we were reconcyled to God by the deeth of hys sonne : moch more seyinge we are reconcyled, we shalbe preserued by his lyfe. Not onely this, but we also ioye in God by the meanes of oure Lord Iesus Chryst, by whom we haue now optayned the attonment.

AUTHORIZED—1611.

For if when we were enenies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Sonne : much more being reconciled, we shalbe saued by his life. And not onely so, but we also ioy in God, through our Lord Iesus Christ, by whom we haue now received the atonement.

It is manifest that the Rhemish translators have adhered very closely to Wiclif's version of this text, only modernizing the language; while Cranmer's version, the Geneva, and the Authorized, follow Tyndale, with a few improvements. If that venerable man had happened to use "reconciliation," instead of "attonement," there can be little doubt that we should have found the same term in the Authorized translation; for, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, the words "atone," (or "attone,") and "atonement," (or "attonement,") were used in senses closely related to that implied in their derivation from *at-one*; and, therefore, exactly corresponding to the classic terms, *reconcile*, *reconciliation*. "Attone" was used as an adjective and as a verb. As an adjective, it implied *at one*, in agreement or mind; *i.e.*, *reconciled*, *accordant*. As a verb, it denoted *to reconcile*, or *to be reconciled*. The noun "attonement" always signified *reconciliation*. Of these statements, it would not be difficult to produce whole pages of proofs from the best writers of the latter part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and the beginning of that of King James I. I select the following from Spenser's *Faërie Queene*.

Sir Guyon and the Red-crosse Knight having, through misconception, engaged in hostilities, recognise each other, and desist from further conflict.

"So ben they both *attone*, and doen upreare  
Their bevers bright, each other for to greet."

*Book ii. Canto 1. Stanza 29.*

Here *attone*, *at-one*, manifestly signifies *appeased*, *reconciled*.

Of the corresponding use of the noun *attonement*, I take the following example; and, as the whole stanza illustrates the usage of the term, I quote it in full.—Samient is giving an account of her embassy, on the part of Queen Mercilla, to the fell Adicia, the wife of the Souldan:—

"Which my liege lady seeing, thought it best,  
With that his wife in friendly wise to deale,  
For stint of strife and stablishment of rest  
Both to herself, and to her commonweale,  
And all forepast displeasures to repeale.  
So me in message unto her she sent,  
To treat with her by way of enterdeale,  
Of final peace and faire *attonément*  
Which might concluded be by mutual consent."

*Book v. Canto 8. St. 21.*

Here "attonement" can mean nothing else but *reconciliation*. I may remark, that Birch, or whoever compiled the Glossary prefixed to the edition of the *Faërie Queene*, in 4to., 1751, has omitted the word "attonement" altogether, and for "attone" gives only one meaning—*together*; though he correctly assigns its derivation from *at-one*.

Shakespeare employs these words in the very same way, of which the following examples will suffice:—

"Then is there mirth in heaven,  
When earthly things, made even,  
*Attone* together."

*As you Like it*. Act v. Scene 7.

That is, "when earthly things *are at one*, agree together." King Richard II., when appointing a time for the judicial combat between Hereford and Mowbray, thus addresses them:—

"Be ready, as your lives shall answer it,  
At Coventry, upon St. Lambert's day,  
There shall your swords and lances arbitrate  
The swelling difference of your settled hate.  
Since we cannot *atone* you, you shall see  
Justice decide the victor's chivalry."

*King Richard II.* Act i. Scene 2.

"Since we cannot *atone* you"—that is, "since we are unable to *reconcile* you—to make you friends." In *Coriolanus* is a well-known passage:—

"*Messenger*. It is spoke freely out of many mouths,  
How probable I do not know, that Marcius,  
Joined with Aufidius, leads a power 'gainst Rome."

\* \* \* \* \*

"*Menenius*. This is unlikely.  
He and Aufidius can no more *atone*,  
Than violentest contrariety."

*Coriolanus*. Act iv. Scene 6.

"He and Aufidius can no more *agree*—can no more be *reconciled*." The noun "attonement" is employed in the corresponding signification:—

"*Evans*. If Sir John Falstaff have committed disparagements upon you, I am of the church, and would be glad to do my benevolence to make *attonements* and compromises between you."

*Merry Wives of Windsor*. Act i. Scene 1.

“ York. ’Tis very true :  
And therefore be assured, Lord Marshal,  
If we do now make our *atonement* well,  
Our peace will, like a broken limb united,  
Grow stronger for the breaking.”

*2nd Part of King Henry IV. Act iv. Scene 3.*

“ If we make our *reconciliation* with the king on wise conditions.”

“ Queen. God grant him health! Did you confer with him?  
“ Buckingham. Madam, we did: he seeks to make *atonement*  
Between the Duke of Glo’ster and your brothers,  
And between them and my lord Chamberlain;  
And sent to warn them to his royal presence.”

*King Richard III. Act i. Scene 3.*

These are, by no means, the only instances that could be found in Shakespeare; and I believe there is none in which the word signifies *penal satisfaction to law or justice*.

Ben Jonson employs the term in the very same sense with Spenser and Shakespeare:—

“ La Foole. What’s the matter?

“ True-wit. Nay, if he had been cool enough to tell us that, there had been some hope to *atone* you; but he seems so implacably enraged.”

*Epicæne, or the Silent Woman. Act v. Scene 5.*

This expression, “*to atone you*,” the editor, (Whalley,) explains as signifying “to make you friends—to set you *at-one* again.”

Beaumont and Fletcher afford several examples:—

“ Bartolus. I have been *atoning* two  
Most wrangling neighbours.”

*Spanish Curate. Act iv. Scene 3.*

“ Clarissa. Offer in one hand the peaceful olive  
Of concord; or, if that can be denied,  
By powerful intercession, in the other  
Carry the Hermian rod, and force *atonement*.”

*Fair Maid of the Inn. Act v. Scene 1.*

Dr. Johnson cites the following from Drummond of Hawthornden:—“If any contention arose, he knew none fitter to be judge, to *atone*, and take up their quarrel, than himself.” In the Life of Chillingworth, I find a citation from Heylin, which affords a very apposite illustration:—“The greatest part of the controversy between us and the Church of Rome, not being in fundamentals, I

cannot otherwise look upon it but as a most Christian and pious work to endeavour *an atonement* in the superstructure."

All these citations are from writers who were contemporary with the translation of the Bible in 1611; and leave no room to question the fact that, in the language of that period, the terms "atone" and "atonement" were exactly equivalent, in sense, to *reconcile* and *reconciliation*.

It deserves to be pointed out that a great number of the most eminent critics and scholars, firmly attached to the common doctrine, not only admit, but by solid arguments prove, either that in Rom. v. 11, the word "atonement" is used by our translators in the sense of *reconciliation*; or that, if it be meant to be understood in a different sense, it is an erroneous rendering. Doddridge, in his Paraphrase, translates by the words, "we have received the reconciliation;" and, in a note, observes, "The word *καταλλαγή* has here so apparent a reference to *κατηλλάγημεν* and *καταλλαγόντες* in the preceding verse, that it is surprising it should have been rendered by so different a word in our version; especially as it is so improper to speak of our *receiving an atonement*, which God receives, as made for our sins." (*Family Expos.*, vol. iv., p. 64.) Dr. Doddridge understood the word only in its modern sense, as a *satisfaction for guilt*; and, taking it in that sense, his reasoning shews very convincingly that the rendering is improper. Dr. Macknight translates by the term *reconciliation*, and justifies himself by the same arguments as Doddridge. (*Apostol. Ep. in loc.*) Archbishop Newcome renders the verse in the same manner. Dr. Hey approves of its being so translated. Archbishop Magee, after referring to some writers, opposed to the received doctrine of atonement, who think that the word "reconciliation" should have been used in the rendering of this text, says:—"The justice of this remark I do not scruple to admit; the use of the verb and participle in the former verse seems to require this translation. And this being the single passage in the New Testament in which it is so rendered, being elsewhere uniformly translated *reconciling* or *reconciliation* Rom. xi., 15; 2 Cor. v., 18, 19); and being nowhere used by the LXX. in speaking of the legal atonements, and, moreover, there being an actual impropriety in the expression—'We have received the atonement,' I feel no difficulty in adopting the correction." (*Discourses on Atonement and Sacrifice*, vol. 1, p. 243.) Dr. Maltby (*Sermons* vol. ii., p. 488) has no doubt that our translators, in rendering "atonement" conceived they were using a synonyme for *reconciliation*. Mr. Bloomfield (*Recensio Synoptica Annotationis Sacre*, vol. v., p. 511,) agrees with that remark; but

thinks it would have been better to express the same thing by the same word that is employed in the preceding verse. These authorities are amply sufficient to justify the observations I have made on this text and its rendering ; but I have no doubt many more could be found, were it worth the trouble to search for them.

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E.—CLEMENS ROMANUS. (P. 17.)

THE following observations of Dr. Priestley, in reference to the opinions of Clement and the other Apostolical Fathers, on the doctrine of atonement, seem to me so judicious and important, that I transcribe them at full length. I do so the more willingly, because the writings of that great philosopher and divine are now, I fear, less read and studied than their intrinsic merit would justify us in expecting.

“ When any mode of speech may be understood either in a *literal* or in a *figurative* sense, there must be some difficulty in ascertaining the real meaning of the person who makes use of it. For it is the same thing as if the word was properly ambiguous. Thus a Papist and a Protestant equally make use of the words of our Saviour, *this is my body*; but it does not therefore follow that they think alike with respect to the Lord's supper. For one of them uses the expression as a mere figure of speech, meaning that the bread and wine are representations, or memorials, of the body and blood of Christ ; whereas the other takes them to be the body and blood itself, without any figure.

“ In like manner, it cannot be determined from the primitive Christians calling the death of Christ a *sacrifice for sin*, a *ransom*, &c., or from their saying, in a general way, that Christ died in our stead, and that he *bore our sins*, or even if they carried this figurative language a little farther, that they really held what is now called the *doctrine of atonement*, viz., that it would have been inconsistent with the maxims of God's moral government to pardon any sin whatever, unless Christ had died to make satisfaction to divine justice for it. Because the language above-mentioned may be made use of by persons who only believe that the death of Christ was a necessary circumstance in the scheme of the Gospel, and that this scheme was necessary to reform the world.

“ According to the modern system, there is nothing in any of the good works of men, that can at all recommend them to the favour of God ; their repentance and reformation is no *reason or motive* with him to forgive their sins, and all the mercy which he ever shews to them is on the account of the righteousness of Christ, imputed to them. But it will appear that this language was altogether unknown in the early ages of christianity ; and, accordingly, Basnage,\* ingenuously acknowledges, that the ancients speak *meagrely* (*misagrement*) of the satisfaction of Christ, and give much to good works ; a sufficient indication, I should think, that they had no such ideas as he had concerning the satisfaction of Christ, and that they

\* Histoire des Eglises Reformées, vol. i., p. 75.

considered the good works of men as *in themselves* acceptable to God, in the same manner as the virtue, or merit of Christ was acceptable to him.

"In the epistle of Clemens Romanus are some expressions, which, taken single, might seem to favour the doctrine of atonement. But the general strain of his writings shews that he had no proper idea of it. Exhorting the Corinthians to repentance, and to virtue in general, he mentions the example of Christ in the following manner. 'Let us consider what is good and acceptable, and well pleasing in the sight of him that made us. Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ, and see how precious his blood is in the sight of God, which being shed for our salvation, has obtained the grace of repentance for all the world.'<sup>e</sup> This seems to be little more than a repetition of what is said in the Book of Acts, of Christ being *exalted as a prince and a saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.*

"He farther says,† 'Let us search into all ages that have gone before, and let us learn that our Lord has, in every one of them, still given place for repentance to such as would turn to him.' He then mentions the preaching of Noah to the old world, and of Jonah to the Ninevites, of whom he says, 'Howbeit they, repenting of their sins, appeased God by their prayer, and were saved, though they were strangers to the covenant of God.' After this he recites what Isaiah, Ezekiel, and other prophets have said to this purpose; and in all his subsequent exhortations he seems to have no idea of anything but repentance and the mercy of God, and the immediate consequence of it, without the interposition of anything else. 'Wherefore, says he,‡ 'Let us obey his excellent and glorious will, and imploring his mercy and goodness, let us fall down upon our faces before him, and cast ourselves upon his mercy.'

"This writer also speaks of virtue alone as having immediately great power with God, 'And especially,§ let them learn how great a power humility has with God, how much a pure and holy charity avails with him, how excellent and great his fear is, and how it will save all such as turn to him with holiness in a pure mind.' He speaks of the efficacy of faith in the same language with the Apostle Paul, 'The Jews,' he says,|| 'were all greatly glorified, not for their own sakes, or for their own works, or for righteousness which they themselves had wrought, but through his will' (in consequence of the blessing promised to Abraham). 'And we also, being called by the same will in Christ Jesus, are not justified by ourselves, either by our own wisdom, or knowledge, or piety, or the works which we have done, in the holiness of our hearts, but by that faith by which God Almighty has justified all men from the beginning.' But by *faith* this writer only means another virtue of the mind, viz., that regard to God, belief in his promises, and submission to his will, which supports the mind of man in great difficulties and trials. This was plainly his idea of the justification of Abraham himself. 'For what was our Father Abraham blessed,¶ was it not that through faith he wrought righteousness and truth?'

"It is possible that persons not acquainted with the writings of the apostolical Fathers would imagine that, when they used such phrases as being *justified by the blood of Christ*, they must mean, as some now do, that without the death of Christ our repentance would have been of no avail; but when we consider all that they have written, and the language of those who followed them, who treat more fully on the subject, and who appear not to have been sensible that they thought differently from them with respect to it, we shall be satisfied that those phrases conveyed no such ideas to them as they now do to us."

\* Sect. 7. Cotelarii edit, vol. 1., p. 150.

† lb.

‡ Sect. 9.

§ Sect. 21.

|| Sect. 32.

¶ Sect. 31.

F.—FLACIUS ILLYRICUS ON THE HETERODOXY OF THE  
ANCIENT CHURCH. (P. 18.)

THERE is a passage in Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History*, relating to the statements of Flacius Illyricus on the heterodoxy of the early Christians, which, as it powerfully confirms an argument handled in my second lecture, I shall do my readers and myself the pleasure of inserting here. It occurs in the article on the celebrated Lactantius, who flourished about A.D., 306. Dr. Lardner, in the previous part of his article, had cited a great many passages from that eminent writer, in which he maintains, that, whenever sinners repent, they are pardoned; that sincere piety, humility, repentance, and confession of sins, are propitiatory sacrifices, with which God is well pleased; (*Hæ sunt victimæ; hoc sacrificium placabile; hic verus est cultus*); that God will receive, as his children, worshippers who thus approach Him, and will bestow upon them eternal life; that no one dare affirm that God is only inclined to wrath, and not to shew favour; that, if we are reconciled to our rebellious children, when they repent and reform, it is not to be doubted that God our Father will be appeased by repentance; that such is the uniform teaching of all the inspired prophets; that Christ was sent to teach all nations under heaven, converting them from vain and impious superstitions to the knowledge and worship of the One True God, from folly to wisdom, from sin to holiness; and to be to them as a living law, to raise up a new name and temple, and to spread true religion over the world by his doctrine and his example; that he died and rose again, to assist men in overcoming death, to give them also hopes of rising again, and of obtaining the reward of immortality; and that he underwent the ignominious death of the cross, that he might be a complete example of virtue, and of patience under sufferings, that so he might more easily lead and encourage such as are poor and mean in this world. In a subsequent part of his article, Dr. Lardner says:—"Gallæus observes that Lactantius says little or nothing of Christ's priestly office. I do not remember that Jerome has anywhere taken notice of this; but it is likely enough to be true, and that Lactantius did not consider Christ's death in the modern way, as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, or a satisfaction made to divine justice for the sins of the human race. This may be argued from his passages before transcribed, concerning the value of repentance and the ends of Christ's death.

"But, then, many other ancient Christians will come in for their



share in this charge. For, according to Matthias Flacius Illyricus, in the preface to his *Clavis Scripture, or Key to the Scriptures*, 'the Christian writers, who lived soon after Christ and his apostles, discoursed like philosophers, of the law and its moral precepts, and of the nature of virtue and vice; but they were totally ignorant of man's natural corruption, and the mysteries of the Gospel, and Christ's benefits.' (*Præf. ad Clavem Scrip. Sac.*, p. 7.) 'His countryman, St. Jerome,' he says, 'was well skilled in the languages, and endeavoured to explain the Scriptures by versions and commentaries. But, after all, he was able to do very little, being ignorant of the human disease, and of Christ, the physician, and wanting both the key of Scripture and the lamb of God to open the door to him.' (*Id. ib.*, p. 8.)

"The same Flacius, or some other learned writer of his time, in the preface to the *Centuriæ Magdeburgenses*, observes of Eusebius of Cæsarea:—'That it is a very low and imperfect description which he gives of a Christian: making him only a man, who, by the knowledge of Christ and his doctrine, is brought to the worship of the one true God, and the practice of sobriety, righteousness, patience, and the other virtues. But he has not a word about regeneration or imputed righteousness.' (*Præf. ad. Hist. Eccl. Magdeb.*, p. 1.)

"Poor, ignorant, primitive Christians! I wonder how they could find the way to heaven! They lived near the times of Christ and his apostles. They highly valued and diligently read the Holy Scriptures, and some wrote commentaries upon them; but yet, it seems, they knew little or nothing of their religion, though they embraced and professed it with the manifest hazard of all earthly good things, and many of them laid down their lives rather than renounce it. Truly, we of these times are very happy in our orthodoxy; but I wish we did more excel in those virtues which they, and the Scriptures, likewise, I think, recommend, as the distinguishing properties of a Christian. And I am not a little apprehensive that many things which now make a fair shew among us, and in which we mightily pride ourselves, will, in the end, prove weeds only, on which the owner of the ground sets no value.

"The early Christians after the apostles were not infallible. I do not represent them as such. They had their errors. But we should be sensible that we, also, are liable to err. And, possibly, they had, in some things, juster notions of religion than we have."  
—(*Credibility of the Gospel History*, vol. iii., p. 521-2)

## G.—THE GNOSTICS. (P. 19.)

THERE were, in the early ages of our faith, a number of men called Gnostics, who sought to combine, with the profession of Christianity, adherence to the systems and theories which they had learned in the schools. Among the oriental sects of philosophy it was a doctrine universally recognised that all matter is essentially corrupt, and cannot possibly proceed from a pure source. The Gnostics adopted this principle. Hence, they all held that the creation of the world is not the work of the Supreme God, for He is perfectly good and holy; but of another being, inferior to Him, and either wicked, or, at best, imperfect. Another inference which they drew from this tenet was, that Christ, our blessed Saviour, being an emanation and messenger from the Supreme God, could have nothing material in his nature; for that would argue him to be, to some extent, under the influence of the corrupt principle by which matter was formed and controlled. Hence, they denied that he possessed a true human body. But, as the evangelic history everywhere ascribes to him bodily functions, acts, and affections, such as a human birth, visibility, tangibility, motion from place to place, hunger, thirst, fatigue, laceration, death—most of the Gnostics accounted for these things by attributing to him a frame not truly material, though exhibiting the same appearance to the senses of men as a real body would have done. Those who held this opinion were called *Docetæ*, from a Greek word which signifies, *to seem; to appear*. Their name might be fitly translated, *apparitionists*. Others held, that the Christ, the emanation from the Pure and Holy Deity, was a different being from the man Jesus of Nazareth, in whom he dwelt, and through whom he acted and spoke; and that he did not really partake of his sufferings and death. Dean Milman says that, to all the Gnostics, “the death of Jesus was a serious cause of embarrassment. They seem never to have entertained the notion of an expiatory sacrifice; and the connexion of an ethereal mind with the sufferings of a carnal body was altogether repulsive to their strongest prejudices. Before the death, therefore, of Jesus, the Christ had broken off his temporary association with the perishable body of Jesus, and surrendered it to the impotent resentment of Pilate and the Jews; or, according to the theory of the *Docetæ*, adopted by almost all the Gnostic sects, the whole union with the material form was an illusion upon the senses of men; it was but an apparent human body, an impassive phantom, which seemed to undergo all the insults and the agony of the cross.” (*History of Christianity*, vol. ii., p. 112, 113.)

The tendency to Gnosticism manifested itself very early in the Christian church. Some learned men suppose that there is a reference to the distinguishing dogma of the sect in the Apostle John's declaration ; "Every spirit that confesseth that *Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*, is of God ; and every spirit that confesseth not that *Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*, is not of God : and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard it should come ; and even now already is it in the world." (1 John iv., 2, 3) It is perfectly certain that there were Gnostics in the time of Polycarp, who suffered martyrdom in extreme old age, in the middle of the second century ; and who is commonly, (and apparently with good reason,) believed to have been personally acquainted with the Apostle John. He says, "Whosoever does not confess that *Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*, he is Antichrist ; and whosoever does not confess *his sufferings upon the cross*, is of the Devil ; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says *there shall neither be any resurrection nor judgment*, he is the first-born of Satan." (*Epistle to the Philippians*, sec. vii.) We see here a most determined opposition to three of the most prominent points of Gnosticism ; but no reference to the doctrine of satisfaction for sin, as the ground, or one of the grounds, of that opposition.

Saturninus, of Antioch, was a Gnostic who adhered to the Docetic system ; he flourished in the beginning of the second century. Basilides, of Alexandria, was his contemporary ; but he was one of those who thought that the divine Æon, or Christ, was distinct from the man Jesus of Nazareth, and deserted him when he came to be crucified. Bardesanes the Syrian, and Marcion of Pontus, belonged to the apparitionists. Many others are enumerated, by the church historians and writers on heresy, as having held similar opinions. I refer the reader to the histories of Mosheim, Waddington, and Dean Milman ; or to Lardner, (*History of Heretics*, Works, vol. viii., pp. 293, &c.,) Norton, (*Genuineness of the Gospels*, vol. ii., pp. 269-277. London ed.)

Several of the ancient fathers of the church drew their pens in controversy against the errors of the Docetæ, among whom it may suffice to mention Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Epiphanius, and Philastrius. All these writers enter largely, not only into the description, but the confutation, of the apparitionistic hypothesis ; much more largely, indeed, than any one at the present day would think necessary : yet not one of them objects to the theory as upsetting the sole ground of the satisfaction for sin by the death of Christ ! Is not this a presumptive argument, that the doctrine of satisfaction was not believed in their day ? Is it not a demon-

stration that it was not generally recognised as one of the essential or characteristic doctrines of the Gospel, or of the church ?

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## II.—COVENANT OF REDEMPTION. (P. 24.)

THE subject of this covenant has been discussed by none of the orthodox writers more carefully than by Witsius, *De Œconomia Fœderum Dei*; in which work, the second chapter of the second book treats "Of the Bargain between God the Father and the Son;" (*De Pacto Patris et Filii*). I translate the following from the tenth section :—

"But let us now come to particulars, and examine all the parts of this covenant, so that it may not only be made evident that there is a covenant between Christ and the Father, but also what that covenant is, and of what kind. The *contracting parties* are, on the one side, the Father, whom Christ calls his Lord, (Psalm xvi. 2); on the other, the Son, whom the Father calls His servant. (Isaiah liii., 11.) The *conditions* of the covenant are proposed by the Father. 'This commandment have I received from my Father. (John x., 18.) 'The Father who sent me, He gave me a commandment.' (John xii., 49.) To those conditions a promise is annexed by the Father. 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed,' &c. (Isaiah liii., 10, 11, 12.) 'It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob,' &c. (Isaiah xlix., 6, 7, 8.) These conditions being fulfilled, a *right* is granted to the Son to claim the reward. 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' (Psalm ii., 8) Thus far the proposal of the covenant on the part of the Father; the *acceptance* on the part of the Son consists in his willingly submitting himself to the conditions of the covenant: 'Thou hast bored my ears,' (Psalm xl., 7, 8, 9); that is, thou hast gained me as thy willing servant, having agreed to grant me remuneration," &c., &c. (*De Œconom. Fœdd. Dei*, p. 136.) Witsius cites, as agreeing with him in this representation, Arminius, Amesius, Gomarus, Cloppenburgius, Voetius, Essenius, Owen, and others. "Wherefore," he adds, "it is manifest that we are not to be reproached with the singularity of this opinion respecting the bargain between the Father and the Son." (P. 142.)

To these authorities Witsius, had he been aware of the fact, might have added that the covenant between the Father and the Son was re-

cognised by the divines of the Westminster Assembly, (*Lar. Catechism*, Q. 31,) and is minutely described in the *Sum of Saving Knowledge* appended to the Westminster Confession and Catechisms; wherein it is stated that "God, for the glory of His rich grace, hath revealed in His word a way to save sinners—viz., by faith in Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, by virtue of, and according to, the tenor of the Covenant of Redemption, made and agreed upon between God the Father and God the Son, in the council of the Trinity, before the world began. The sum of the Covenant of Redemption is this:—God, having freely chosen unto life a certain number of lost mankind, for the glory of His rich grace, did give them, before the world began, unto God the Son, appointed Redeemer, that, upon condition he would humble himself so far as to assume the human nature of a soul and body, unto personal union with his divine nature, and submit himself to the law, as surety for them, and satisfy justice for them, by giving obedience in their name, even unto the suffering of the cursed death of the cross, he should ransom and redeem them from all sin and death, and purchase unto them righteousness and eternal life, with all saving graces leading thereunto, to be effectually, by means of his own appointment, applied in due time to every one of them. This condition the Son of God, (who is Jesus Christ, our Lord,) did accept before the world began; and, in the fulness of time, came into the world, was born of the Virgin Mary, subjected himself to the law, and completely paid the ransom on the cross. But, by virtue of the aforesaid bargain, made before the world began, he is, in all ages, since the fall of Adam, still upon the work of applying actually the purchased benefits unto the elect; and that he doth by way of entertaining a covenant of free grace and reconciliation with them, through faith in himself, by which covenant he makes over to every believer a right and interest to himself and to all his blessings."—(*Westminster Confession, &c.*, pp. 446, 447.)

But in no writer do I find a more clear and simple statement of the manner in which this bargain was contracted than in Flavel's Sermons, which were once exceedingly popular, and were highly approved by learned divines, but are now comparatively disregarded. To judge by some of his expressions, it might almost be thought that Flavel had been standing by as a witness at the time of the compact, and that the parties haggled with each other about terms, as dealers at a country fair. The following extracts are long; but they will repay perusal.

Flavel's third sermon is on "Christ's Compact with the Father for the Recovery of the Elect." (Isaiah liii., 12)

“Doctrine, that the business of man’s salvation was transacted upon covenant terms, betwixt the Father and the Son, from all eternity.” “The substance of this Covenant of Redemption is dialogue-wise expressed to us in Isaiah xlix. Having told God how ready and fit he was for His service, he will know of Him what reward he shall have for his work, for he resolves his blood shall not be sold at low and cheap rates. Hereupon the Father offers him the elect of Israel for his reward, bidding low at first, (as they that make bargains use to do,) and only offers him that small remnant, still intending to bid higher. But Christ will not be satisfied with these: he values his blood higher than so. Therefore, he is brought in, complaining, *‘I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought.’* This is but a small reward for so great sufferings as I must undergo; my blood is much more worth than this comes to, and will be sufficient to redeem all the elect dispersed among the isles of the Gentiles, as well as the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Hereupon the Father comes up higher, and tells him he intends to reward him better than so.” “The persons transacting and dealing with each other in this covenant are great persons: God the Father and God the Son; the former as a creditor, and the latter as a surety. The Father stands upon satisfaction; the Son engages to give it.” “And, forasmuch as the Father knew it was a hard and difficult work His Son must undertake—a work that would have broken the backs of all the angels in heaven and men on earth had they engaged in it—therefore, he promised to stand by him, and assist and strengthen him for it.” “The Father so far trusted Christ, that, upon the credit of his promise to come into the world, and in the fulness of time to become a sacrifice for the elect, He saved all the Old Testament saints, whose faith also respected a Christ to come”

In the next sermon, in John iii., 16, we read:—“God’s giving of Christ implies His delivering him into the hands of justice to be punished, even as condemned persons are, by sentence of law, given or delivered into the hands of executioners. The Lord, when the time was come that Christ must suffer, did, as it were, say, ‘Oh! all ye roaring waves of my incensed justice, now swell as high as heaven, and go over his soul and body: sink him to the bottom: let him go like Jonah, his type, into the belly of hell—unto the roots of the mountains. Come all ye raging storms that I have reserved for this day of wrath, beat upon him—beat him down. Go, justice, put him upon the rack, torment him in every part,’” &c. (P. 9.) This terrible vengeance is represented as but fulfilling what the Father in the compact had announced to the Son, thus:—“My

Son, if thou undertake for them, thou must reckon to pay the last mite : expect no abatements : if I spare them, I will not spare thee." (P. 8.) "To wrath, to the wrath of an infinite God, without mixture, to the very torments of hell, was Christ delivered, and that by the hands of his own Father." (P. 10.)

With equal plainness does this earnest and outspoken Calvinist insist, in his eighth sermon, that God could not exercise His mercy without satisfaction to His justice. "He, therefore, that will be a mediator of reconciliation betwixt God and man, must bring God a price in his hand, and that adequate to the offence and wrong done Him, else He will not treat about peace." (P. 21.) "Our mediator, like Jonah, his type, seeing the stormy sea of God's wrath working tempestuously, and ready to swallow us up, cast in himself to appease the storm." (P. 22.) More distinctly still we read in the twelfth sermon :—"The design and end of this oblation was to atone, pacify, and reconcile God, by giving Him a full and adequate compensation or satisfaction for the sins of these, His elect. From this oblation Christ made of himself to God for our sins, we infer the inflexible severity of divine justice, which could be no other way diverted from us and appeased but by the blood of Christ. And, though he broke out upon the cross in that heart-rending complaint, 'My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?' yet no abatement : justice will not bend in the least, but, having to do with him on this account, resolves to fetch its penny-worths out of his blood." (P. 35.) In the fourteenth sermon, Flavel says :—"Only the blood of God is found an equivalent price for the redemption of souls." (P. 41.)

Conformed to these representations is Flavel's description of the actual sufferings endured by Christ, thus :—"The wrath of an infinite, dreadful God beat him down to the dust. His body full of pains and exquisite tortures in every part. Not a member or sense but the seat and subject of torment." (P. 88.) "His cry was like the perpetual shriek of them that are cast away for ever. Yea, in sufferings at this time in his soul, equivalent to all that which our souls should have suffered there to all eternity." (P. 102.) "As it was all the wrath of God that lay upon Christ, so it was wrath, aggravated in divers respects, beyond that which the damned themselves do suffer." (P. 106.)

Flavel did not believe that God would grant to Christ anything beyond the covenant as it embraced the elect. Sermon xv. :—"Hence we infer the impossibility of their salvation that know not Christ, nor have an interest in his blood. Neither heathens nor merely nominal Christians can inherit heaven. . . . I know it

seems hard that such brave men as some of the heathens were should be damned. But the Scripture knows no other way to glory but Christ put on and applied by faith. And it is the common suffrage of modern sound divines, that no man, by the sole conduct of nature, without the knowledge of Christ, can be saved." (P. 44.)

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I.—DECREE OF THE SYNOD OF DORT. (P. 25.)

As Calvinists have sometimes complained, that instead of the genuine decrees of the Synod of Dort, an abridgment, first published by D. Tilenus, has been quoted and referred to by Heylin, Tomline, and others, and that writers who have had the authentic document before them have not set forth its statements in full, I here subjoin a translation of the whole chapter on the death of Christ, as it stands in the authentic canons, published in the *Corpus et Synagma Confessionum Fidei, &c.*; Geneva, 1654, 4to. It was too long to be introduced into a popular discourse :—

"ON THE DEATH OF CHRIST, AND MAN'S REDEMPTION THROUGH IT.

I. "God is not only supremely merciful, but also supremely just. But His justice demands, (as He hath revealed Himself in His word,) that our sins, being committed against His infinite majesty, be punished not only with temporal, but also with eternal pains, both of mind and body ; which pains we cannot escape unless the justice of God be satisfied.

II. "But, since we ourselves cannot make satisfaction, and deliver ourselves from the wrath of God, God, of His unbounded mercy, gave to us His only-begotten son, as our substitute, who, that he might satisfy for us, was made a sin and a curse, upon the cross, for us, or in our stead.

III. "This death of the son of God is the only and most perfect victim and satisfaction for sins ; of infinite value and price ; abundantly sufficient for the expiation of the sins of the whole world.

IV. "And this death is of so great value and price, because the person that underwent it is not only a true and a perfectly holy man, but also the only-begotten son of God, of the same eternal and infinite substance with the Father and the Holy Spirit, as it behoved our Saviour to be, and also because his death was conjoined with the consciousness of the wrath and curse of God, which we had deserved by our sins.

V. "But the Gospel promise is, that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Which promise, together with a command to repent and believe, ought to be announced and set forth to all nations and men, promiscuously and indiscriminately, to whom God, of His own good pleasure, sendeth the Gospel.

VI. "Moreover, it arises not from the defect or insufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ offered upon the cross, that many, though called by the Gospel, neither repent nor believe in Christ ; but by their own fault.



VII. "But to all them that truly believe, and are delivered and saved from their sins and from perdition, through the death of Christ, this benefit comes from the grace of God alone, which he oweth to none, given to them from all eternity, in Christ.

VIII. "For this was the most free counsel and most gracious pleasure and intention of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of His son's most precious death should manifest itself in all the elect, so as to endow them—but them alone—with justifying faith, and conduct them infallibly, through it, to salvation. That is to say, God was pleased that Christ, through the blood of the cross, (by which He confirmed the new covenant,) should effectually redeem, out of every people, tribe, nation, and tongue, all those—and those only—who had been from all eternity elected to salvation, and given to him by the Father; should endow them with faith; (which, as well as the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, he purchased for them by his death;) should cleanse them, by his blood, from all their sins, both original and actual, as well those committed after, as before they believed; should preserve them faithfully, even unto the end; and should at length place them before Himself in glory, without stain or spot.

IX. "This purpose, proceeding from [God's] eternal love for the elect, hath, from the beginning of the world, even to the present time, in spite of the opposition of the gates of hell, been powerfully fulfilled, and will hereafter be fulfilled; so that the elect shall, in their own times, be gathered together in one, and that there shall always be a church of believers, founded in the blood of Christ, which shall firmly love, perseveringly venerate, and here and to all eternity celebrate him, its Saviour, who, for it, yielded up his life upon the cross, as a bridegroom for his bride."—(*Corpus et Syntagma Confessionum Fidei, Pars IIIda*, pp. 31–33.)

To these articles is subjoined a repudiation of seven "errors," or opinions, regarded as erroneous, which the Synod attributes to certain persons who dissented from its own doctrines. It is to be remarked that the Synod of Dort, though it was held in the United Provinces, and at the appointment of the States General, for the settlement of the disputes which had arisen in the churches and schools of that republic, between the Calvinists and the Arminians, (or Remonstrants,) was not composed of Dutch theologians alone; but of them, together with eminent divines, deputed by, or on behalf of, the churches of England, Scotland, the Palatinate, Hesse, Switzerland, Nassau, Geneva, Bremen, and Embden; so that it may be regarded as speaking the general sentiment of all the *Reformed*, (as distinguished from the Lutheran,) Protestant churches in Europe. All the Reformed churches, except those of France, which were not permitted to send deputies, were represented at the Synod; but its Decrees, being pronounced in a convention summoned by the States General, were not obligatory, *vi propria*, beyond the limits of the United Provinces. The Church of England was represented at the Synod of Dort; yet its canons never possessed any ecclesiastical authority in the British Isles.

## K.—LUTHER ON THE IMPUTATION OF SIN TO CHRIST. (P. 25.)

ALTHOUGH the language of Luther in reference to the imputation of sin to the person of Christ borders upon blasphemy—if it do not actually amount to it—it is worthy of being quoted as an example and proof of the length to which men will go in support of a favourite theory. I take the following specimens from the Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, which, of all Luther's works, has been the most frequently reprinted and most widely circulated. A very large edition of it was published a few years ago in London, and is already completely sold off.

"Christ is innocent so far as relates to his own person, and therefore he ought not to have been hanged upon a tree; but, forasmuch as, according to the law of Moses, every thief and malefactor ought to be hanged, therefore Christ, also, according to the law, ought to be hanged, because he sustained the person of a sinner and a thief—not of one, but of all sinners and thieves. \* \* \* \*

"And this, doubtless, all the prophets foresaw, through the spirit, that Christ should become the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, rebel, and blasphemer, that ever existed, or could exist, in the world. For he, being made a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, is not now an innocent person, and without sin—is not now the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary—but a sinner, who hath and carrieth the sin of Paul, who was a blasphemer, an oppressor, and a persecutor; of Peter, who denied Christ; of David, who was an adulterer, a murderer, and caused the Gentiles to blaspheme the name of the Lord; and, briefly, who hath and beareth all the sins of all men in his body; not that he himself committed them, but for that he received them, being committed or done by us, and laid them upon his own body, that he might make satisfaction for them with his own blood. (Isaiah liii., 5; Matthew viii., 17.) Therefore, this general sentence of Moses comprehendeth him also, (albeit, in his own person he was innocent,) because it found him amongst sinners and transgressors; like as the magistrate taketh him for a thief, and punisheth him whom he findeth among other thieves and transgressors, though he never committed anything worthy of death. Now, Christ was not only found amongst sinners, but, of his own accord, and by the will of his Father, he would also be a companion of sinners, taking upon him the flesh and blood of those who were sinners, thieves, and plunged into all kinds of sin. When the law, therefore, found him among thieves, it condemned and killed him as a thief.

"But some man will say, it is very absurd and slanderous to call the Son of God a cursed sinner. I answer, if thou wilt deny him to be a sinner, and to be accursed, deny, also, that he was crucified and dead. For it is no less absurd to say that the Son of God, (as our faith confesseth and believeth,) was crucified, and suffered the pains of sin and death, than to say that he is a sinner, and accursed. But, if it be not absurd to confess and believe that Christ was crucified between two thieves, then it is not absurd to say, also, that he was accursed, and of all sinners the greatest." (*Comm. on Gal. iii., 13.*)

Can any contrast be more striking than that between Luther's language and ideas, and the whole tenour of the New Testament ?

As to the interpretation of the words in Gal. iii., 13, on which Luther has erected all this superstructure, it may suffice to quote the following judicious note, by Grotius, who certainly was not prejudiced *against* the satisfaction theory :—

“*Being made a curse for us.*—Here there is a two-fold figure of speech ; for ‘a curse’ is put for ‘a cursed person,’ as ‘the circumcision’ is for ‘those who are circumcised ;’ and the words ‘as it were’ are understood. For Christ was treated as if he had been a person cursed of God. Nothing worse could have happened, in this life, to the worst of mankind ; hence it appears how highly he prized our salvation ; and the apostle’s object is to prevent his benefits from being lightly esteemed.”

I may add that very many of the best commentators, from Chrysostom downwards, understand the “redemption from the curse of the law,” of which St. Paul speaks, as signifying *deliverance from the oppressive restrictions of the Jewish ceremonial law*. The note of Crellius on the text is well deserving of attention. (See *Fratr. Polon.* iii., 404–5.)

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L.—CALVIN ON CHRIST’S MERIT AND GOD’S FREE GRACE. (P. 67.)

As it may be thought by some readers strange that Calvin should have maintained that Christ’s meritorious satisfaction for the sins of men sprung purely from the will and pleasure of the Father, who was pleased to appoint that it should be so, I think it proper to translate the whole section of the *Institutes* to which I have referred ; from which it will be seen, as might, indeed, by other passages, be still more abundantly demonstrated, that such was the settled and deliberate opinion of that illustrious reformer.

“This question must be argued in the style of an attorney ; for there are some perversely acute men, who, although they confess that we obtain salvation through Christ, yet cannot bear to hear a word about *merit*, by which they think God’s grace is obscured : and so they conceive that Christ is only the instrument or minister of life, not its author, or captain, or prince, as he is called by Peter. And, truly, I confess that, if any one were to plead Christ, simply and of himself, in opposition to the judgment of God, there would be no room for merit ; because no such worthiness will be found in man as can lay God under an obligation ; nay, as Augustine most truly writes, ‘Our Saviour, the man Christ Jesus, is himself the brightest light of predestination and grace ; who, in his human

nature, acquired the power of being our Saviour, by no antecedent merits, whether of works or of faith. Pray, tell me, how did that man merit that he should be taken into unity with the person of the Word, which is co-eternal with the Father—and should be the Only-begotten Son of God? Therefore, let the very fountain of grace appear in our Head, from whom it diffuses itself through all his members, according to the proportion of each. Every one, from the commencement of his faith, becomes a Christian, by the very same grace by which that man from the beginning of his life became Christ.' (*De Prædestin. Sanct.*, l. I. c. 15.) And so in another place—'There is no more illustrious example of predestination than the Mediator himself; for He who made him of the seed of David, a righteous man who should never be otherwise than righteous, without any merit of his own antecedent will, makes those who are the members of him as the Head, righteous from being unrighteous,' and so forth. (*De Bono Perseverantiæ*, c. vii.) When, therefore, we speak of the merit of Christ, the origin [of salvation] is not placed in it; but we ascend to the ordinance of God, which is the first cause; because of his mere good pleasure, he appointed a Mediator who might purchase salvation for us. And, therefore, it is only through ignorance that the merit of Christ is set in opposition to the mercy of God. For it is a common rule that things which are subordinate are not opposite to each other; and, therefore, there is nothing to hinder the justification of men from being gratuitous out of the mere mercy of God, whilst, at the same time, the merit of Christ, which is subordinate to the mercy of God, interposes. But both the gratuitous favour of God and the obedience of Christ are properly set in opposition to our own works, each in its own order. For Christ could have no merit except out of God's good pleasure, and because he was ordained to this end that he might appease the wrath of God by the sacrifice of himself, and by his obedience blot out our transgressions. In fine, since the merit of Christ depends on the sole grace of God, which hath appointed this means of salvation for us, it is not less properly set in opposition to all human righteousness, than is grace." (*Institu. Chris. Rel.* l. II. c. xvii., sec. 1.)

It will have been seen that, although Calvin represented the merit of Christ's sacrifice as depending altogether on the free-will and mere good pleasure of God, he nevertheless held that it had the effect of appeasing God's wrath, and rendering him placable and propitious. The two ideas seem essentially incompatible; but Calvin maintained the latter with as much zeal and firmness as the former.

The following passages are pointed, especially the last three.

“It would have been nothing if Christ had only died a bodily death ; but it was well worth his while to feel the severity of God’s vengeance, in order to intercept His wrath and satisfy His just judgment. Wherefore, also, it behoved him to struggle, hand to hand, as it were, with the powers of hell and the horror of eternal death. We have just quoted the words of the prophet, who says, that ‘the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him ; that he was smitten on account of our crimes, and bruised on account of our infirmities.’ (Isaiah liii., 5.) By which expressions he signifies that he was sent down into the region of the damned, (*in locum sceleratorum,*) as their surety and deputy, and, therefore, like a guilty person, to pay all the penalties that would have been exacted from them ; this one thing excepted, that he could not be held by the pains of death. Therefore, if it be said [in the creed] that he descended to hell, it is no wonder, since he bore that death which is inflicted on the damned, (*sceleratis,*) by an angry God. And the objection of those who say that by this interpretation the natural order of things is inverted, because it is absurd that what preceded Christ’s burial should be placed after it, [in the Apostles’ Creed,] is very frivolous and perfectly ridiculous ; for, when those things which Christ suffered in the sight of men have been enumerated, [in the Creed,] very suitably is that invisible and incomprehensible judgment mentioned which he endured in the presence of God ; that we may know that not only was the body of Christ delivered for our offences, but that there was another greater and more excellent price paid, by his enduring in his mind the dreadful torments of a damned and lost man.” (*Instit. C. R.*, l. II., c. xvi., sec. 10.)

“Now that Christ, by his obedience, truly acquired and merited grace for us from his Father, is certainly and soundly concluded from several passages of Scripture. . . . The sense, therefore, is, that God, by whom we were hated on account of our sins, was, by the death of His son, appeased, so as to be propitious to us.” (*Instit.*, l. II., c. xvii., sec. 3.)

“It is easily perceived that the grace of Christ is too much extenuated, unless we attribute to his sacrifice the power of expiating, appeasing, and making satisfaction. . . . The burden of damnation, of which we were relieved, was thrown upon Christ.” (*Instit.* l. II., c. xvii., sec. 4.)

“There is no other satisfaction, [than the death of Christ,] by which an offended God can be propitiated or appeased.” (l. III., c. iv., 26.)

And to the same effect in many others places.

## M.—OSIANDER AND STANCARUS. (P. 68.)

OSIANDER was a very famous man in his day; and is still remembered as the author of a most remarkable work, the *Harmony of the Gospels*; which is constructed upon the principle that every word and syllable in the sacred books is inspired, and that not only the statements, but the very order in which they are placed, were dictated to the evangelists by the divine spirit. Hence, wherever he finds the slightest discrepancy between two narratives in different Gospels, whether in the circumstances as related, or the order in which they are placed in the history, Osiander refers them to different periods in our Saviour's life;—a principle which leads to endless confusion in the details of his biography. He was preacher at Nuremberg about the year 1522; and was the means of converting Albert, Margrave of Brandenburg, to the reformed religion. By him he was afterwards placed at the head of the theological department in the University of Königsberg, which he had founded. Stancarus was professor of Hebrew in the same institution. They were both somewhat impetuous in their tempers, and did not agree very well together. Of their final rupture, Mosheim gives the following account:—

“Franciscus Stancarus, an Italian, and professor of Hebrew at Königsberg, a turbulent and passionate man, in attempting to confute the error of Osiander respecting the mode of obtaining justification before God, fell into another opinion which appeared equally false and dangerous. Osiander maintained that the man Christ was under obligation to keep the divine law on his own account, and, therefore, that he could not, by obeying the law, procure righteousness for others; and, of course, it was not as man, but only as God, that Christ expiated the sins of men, and procured us peace with God. Stancarus, on the contrary, excluded the divine nature of Christ from the work of redemption and atonement, and maintained that the office of mediator between God and men pertained exclusively to the human nature of Christ. Finding himself to be odious on account of this doctrine, he left Königsberg, and retired first to Germany, and then to Poland, where he died in 1574. He likewise excited considerable commotion in Poland.” (*Eccles. Hist.* Cent. xvi., sect. 3, part 2.)

Stancarus, though he is said to have contributed indirectly to the spread of Unitarian sentiments in Poland, never joined himself to the Unitarian community there; nay, we find him frequently opposing and endeavouring to refute the most illustrious teachers of the sect. But, under the protection of the great principle of religious freedom, he was safe from any injury or insult, such as had driven him from his former residence.

## N.—VICARIOUS PUNISHMENT PRACTICALLY TESTED. (P. 83.)

THAT such an occurrence as I have described in p. 83 of the foregoing lectures actually took place, is a fact too strongly impressed on my memory to permit me to entertain a doubt of its reality. Nevertheless, I am now of opinion that it was not in the case of Mr. Fauntleroy, but of some other person, moving, like him, in a respectable rank of society, that the offer to undergo vicarious punishment, in the room of the criminal, was made. The circumstance, at the time when it took place, made a profound impression on my mind, which was deepened by reading soon afterwards an imaginary conversation, composed on the model of *Fur Prædestinatus*, between the stranger who had offered to bear the punishment of the criminal vicariously, and the chaplain of the gaol, to whose particular attention he had been recommended by the magistrate who committed him to prison. But, on looking to the *Annual Register*, and several periodical publications for the year 1824, I can find no trace of any such occurrence in reference to Mr. Fauntleroy.

As to the petition of the China-man to be permitted to procure a substitute, when he had been sentenced to be hanged, I have received the following letter from Sir John Bowring, late Governor-General of Hong Kong, than whom few living persons are better acquainted with the habits, principles, and feelings of the Chinese:—

“Larkbear, Exeter, 11th March, 1860.

“MY DEAR SIR,—The purchase of a man to be executed for another is of common occurrence in China, substitution being allowed in many cases; and candidates for the executioner are seldom wanting when the regular market price, (about 100 ounces of silver,) is offered. Such sacrifices would be deemed a merit in the Buddhist religion, and would entitle the person to advancement in a future state of being. I do not remember the case you allude to; but it would be quite natural that a Chinese should make the suggestion, and it would scarcely excite attention. The Mandarins, when a China-man was murdered by a foreigner, always asked for a *foreigner* to be handed over, but never requested *the criminal*; and were accustomed to express astonishment at our unwillingness to comply with a demand so easily satisfied, as they said.

“Yours very truly,

JOHN BOWRING.”

“Rev. J. Scott Porter.”

The first thought that arises in the mind on perusing the foregoing statement doubtless will be—what a wretched religion that of Buddha must be, which countenances and encourages such a shocking perversion of justice! The next may, perhaps, be—how difficult it must be for an orthodox or evangelical missionary to

expose, as he ought, the abominable principles of the Buddhist religion, without abandoning or suppressing some of the tenets of his own cherished faith! If it were to happen that one of our Protestant missionaries—the very ablest of them—should encounter, in a discussion on the *Buddhist doctrine of substitution*, a Bonze who had heard of the *orthodox doctrine of vicarious punishment*, I can readily conceive that the latter—if he handled his weapons with any dexterity—might send his opponent away vanquished and crest-fallen. For, if Christ vicariously endured the punishment which God would have been bound to inflict on the elect, and if all men are bound to imitate Christ, can it be otherwise than praiseworthy in any of them to take upon themselves the penalty of other men's offences, and thereby follow, as closely as they can, the example set by the Son of God? Or, if it should please the inhabitants of the "Central Flowery Land" to send over to Great Britain a few ship-loads of missionaries to convert us, the "Outside Barbarians," to the doctrines of Buddhism, would they not find the way prepared before them, by the general acknowledgment of the Common Doctrine of Atonement, as an essential article of the faith of Christendom?

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O.—DYING DECLARATIONS OF CRIMINALS. (P. 86.)

It would not be difficult to compile a moderately-sized volume of extracts from "Last Speeches, Confessions, and True Dying Declarations" of criminals, who, when about to be executed for the most horrible atrocities, professed themselves fully assured of salvation through the merits of Christ and the atoning efficacy of his blood. For this purpose, it would only be necessary to turn over the files of the newspapers published in the different assize-towns in the British Empire; consulting the numbers published at or soon after the assize-week in each year. Enough would soon be found to satisfy the most incredulous, that the common doctrine of atonement is wonderfully adapted to soothe to peace the most polluted conscience, and suppress any emotions of penitent remorse that might otherwise be awakened in the souls of abandoned miscreants about to be launched into eternity. I have several such instances in my mind's eye; but local considerations induce me to select for an example of the facts to which I have alluded in my lecture, the dying declarations made at the last public execution, which took place in the town of Belfast.



On the 6th of September, 1816, John Doe and John Magill were executed in the streets of this town, for an attempt to commit an inhuman murder, or rather a multitude of such murders, involving several individuals from whom no injury, real or imaginary, had been received, and against whom no cause of provocation was or could be alleged. The crime arose out of those combinations of workmen against their employers, which have led to many atrocities, not only in Ireland, but in England and Scotland. Mr. Francis Johnston was a manufacturer, who had in his employment a considerable number of hands. Some dissatisfaction arose between him and the workmen engaged in the trade which he carried on, respecting his arrangements with his men. He received intimations of danger to himself and his family; but he felt that the demands made upon him were such as he could not concede, and ought not to concede. Enough came out on the trial to shew that his fate had been deliberated upon at a meeting of the executive committee of the workmen's society; and that it had then and there been resolved that Mr. Johnston should die. It was determined to make of him and his, a terrible example, which should strike terror into the hearts of all in like circumstances. It was determined that the house in which he resided, with his wife, children, and domestic servants—eight persons in all—should be blown up with gun-powder. An infernal machine was, accordingly, introduced into it, on the night of the 28th of February, 1815; which exploded with tremendous force; but, happily, the side-wall of the building, being weaker than had been calculated on, gave way; and, instead of blowing the sleeping apartments into the air, the explosion merely threw down some of the lower walls and partitions. It was clearly proved that Doe and Magill were among the persons by whom the machine was brought to the premises, introduced into the house, and fired; but it was the general opinion that the means by which the fell purpose had been carried out, were suggested, planned, and organised by some person of superior intelligence, who has not yet been brought to justice.

Previously to his execution, Doe drew up a paper, in which he declared "his confident hope of redemption through the merits of his Saviour: and acknowledged the justice of his sentence. The remainder of the speech or dying declaration," says the newspaper from which we quote, "consists of a good number of texts of Scripture, intermixed with a variety of remarks upon the interpretation of them, touching on many of those controversies which have long agitated different religious sects. It is almost impossible to discover the real point of doctrine which he aims at." [*To me*

*it seems of no consequence what opinion a murdering villain like John Doe sought to establish ; but it is interesting to observe how, instead of dwelling on his own atrocious guilt, he turns aside to lecture his fellow-creatures on points of doctrine. J. S. P.]* “In one part he says, ‘Many teachers have kindly visited me, unconscious that they were equally their own and my greatest enemies, desiring me to be very busy in making my peace with God, as my time was very short.’ [*Not bad advice, as it seems to me ; nor at all unseasonable.—J. S. P.*] ‘But, blessed be God, my teaching is not of man.’ [*If the tree is known by its fruit, we might refer to Mr. Doe’s teaching to a far worse than human origin.*] ‘The same spirit that testified to my heart, from His written word, that Christ was the only Saviour, informed me, from the same word, that he was also the true and only peace-maker and mediator between God and man, reconciling sinners to God’s perfect and only plan of salvation by his blood,’” &c., &c. Happy Mr. John Doe, who *only* attempted to send eight persons into the presence of their Maker without a moment’s preparation, and who feels himself reconciled to God’s plan of salvation “*through the Saviour’s blood !*” No wonder that he should be anxious to amend the doctrinal errors of people, who, having never either planned or executed deeds like his, have yet fallen into erroneous belief, far more damning than midnight murder ! No wonder that his mind, engrossed with these interesting topics, cannot waste a thought on the enormity of his own crime—on the swift destruction which he had plotted and attempted to bring on a number of his fellow-creatures, of whom only one had given him ground of displeasure, and that one had neither done nor designed to do him any injury ! No wonder that he should forget to beg their forgiveness—to warn his fellow-conspirators against persevering in the guilty course in which he and they had been jointly engaged ! No wonder that he should forget to ask pardon of society, and pardon of God ! Possibly, indeed, he thought it needless to implore forgiveness of a crime which he believed had been already atoned for on the cross !

John Magill, his companion in iniquity, died “*imploping the pardoning mercy of God.*” He added :—“*Forgiving all my enemies, I die, trusting to the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, my only Redeemer.*” Although it would have been more becoming in this unfortunate man to implore the forgiveness of those to whom he had been a cruel, ferocious, and unprovoked enemy, than to depart from life with an air of injured innocence, “*forgiving all his enemies ;*” and, although I am bound to hold up, as a warning, the presumptuous confidence which he cherished “*in the atoning*

blood of Jesus Christ," I feel indisposed to remark severely on the language of one who, in his awful circumstances, shewed a consciousness of his guilt and contrition for his sin, by "imploping the pardoning mercy of God;" and, therefore, I say no more of him.

It must be added that many criminals, who have given utterance to similar sentiments, have only spoken the words, and cherished the hopes, that were put into their mouths and into their minds, by the judges who have sentenced them, the clergymen and others who have visited them, and the religious communities in which they have been born and brought up. I had intended to give a few passages from the addresses delivered by learned judges in passing sentence on notorious offenders, but this Appendix has already extended to too great a length; and perhaps another opportunity may be found of presenting to the public some specimens of the folly that has been talked, on such occasions, by some of the great magistrates who adorn the judicial bench. But I cannot refrain from saying that, while, for many more weighty reasons, I should rejoice to see an end put to the practice of capital punishment, my pleasure would be enhanced by the consciousness that, under an amended system of jurisprudence, there would be no longer an opportunity for the highest functionaries of the law to propound, from the very seat of justice, absurd theological nostrums, by which their own understandings are brought into contempt, religion disgraced, and morality endangered.

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P.—GROTIUS ON THE SATISFACTION OF CHRIST. (P. 90.)

THIS celebrated treatise was written in reply to a short tract by Faustus Socinus, *On the Efficacy of the Death of Christ, in the matter of our Salvation*; and was published with a prefatory letter by Ger. Joannides Vossius, in the year 1617; just one year before the assemblage of the Great Council of the Reformed Churches, known as the Synod of Dort. What a change did the decisions of that congress create, in the situation of Grotius and his friends! Within a short space after it was convened, he was no longer in a post of dignity and honour, the first jurist and the first theologian of the republic; but a condemned heretic; sentenced to imprisonment for life; stripped of all his property by a decree of absolute confiscation; and confined in a fortress, from which he never could have escaped, save for the heroic enterprise and energy of his wife; worthy consort of such a man. The doctrine defended by Grotius, though his book may have been in part designed to disarm the hostility

of the Calvinistic party, neither was accepted as sound by the orthodox of his own day, nor would be accepted by the evangelical Christians of ours : yet his work is the great store-house from which succeeding writers have drawn forth their most powerful weapons. I can affirm that there is not a text, nor a valuable criticism, nor an argument of any weight in the more celebrated recent works on the popular doctrine of Atonement, which is not to be found, in substance, in *Grotius De Satisfactione Christi*.

Having mentioned this book, I feel bound to refer to the answer to it, which proceeded from the pen of the great Joannes Crellius, the author of the work *On the One God, the Father*, and the most illustrious of the divines of the Polish Unitarian Church. It will be found at the beginning of the 5th volume of the *Fratres Poloni* ; and along with it the Tract of Socinus *On the Death of Christ*, and the work of *Grotius De Satisfactione* ; so that the reader has the whole controversy before him. There are also given a few letters which passed between Grotius and Crellius, in which these celebrated men speak of each other with great, and manifestly unfeigned, respect. Some of the expressions in the letters of Grotius might seem to imply that he had been led by the strictures of his opponent, to reconsider the doctrines which he had maintained, and the arguments by which he had supported them. But he does not openly avow himself a convert to the opinions which he had impugned.

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Q.—ARCHBISHOP MAGEE ON ATONEMENT, &c. (P. 93.)

ARCHBISHOP MAGEE was early distinguished by talents and industry, which, his friends predicted, would lead him to eminence in any walk of life that it might please him to pursue ; nor were their anticipations unfulfilled. At an unusually early age he became Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, and was successively Dean of Cork and Archbishop of Dublin. The germ of his most celebrated book consisted of two discourses “on the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice,” which he delivered, in the chapel of his college, on Good Friday, in the years 1798 and 1799. These were published, with a large body of supplementary notes, in 1801 ; a second edition appeared in 1809, with numerous additions ; a third, still more augmented, in 1812 ; two other editions have since appeared. In these is included a third volume, which, however, contains but little on the doctrine of Atonement, being chiefly occupied with strictures on the *Improved Version of*

*the New Testament*, published by the "Unitarian Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge," now incorporated with the "British and Foreign Unitarian Association." Thus it appears that the work has enjoyed a reputation, and obtained a degree of public favour, rarely granted to any theological book in modern times. The influence which it has exerted over the minds of the readers of divinity, and more especially on the opinions of the clergy of the Church of England, must have been very great. It would be mere folly to deny that, with some glaring faults, it displays qualities which justify the favour which it has been received. Its arrangement, though not favourable for a work to be read through continuously, is extremely convenient for one that is to be consulted occasionally, when wanted. It abounds in rich and varied learning; and is not deficient in the acuteness necessary in one who would detect a sophism, or pull to pieces a fallacious argument. No one who reads it will deny that several mistaken arguments had been employed by the writers whom the Archbishop opposes; and that he has done the cause of truth, which always suffers by the employment of sophistry in her defence, good service, by exposing them. The great fault of the book is, that it shows a total disregard for the feelings of the men whose reasoning it impugns; that its whole tone and character bespeak the advocate rather than the impartial inquirer; and that it is singularly vague and indefinite in stating the precise doctrine which its author undertakes to defend. To the uncertainty which the careful reader feels respecting the aim and purpose of the book, the inconsistency which appears to exist between statements made in different parts of it, contributes not a little. At times the author speaks like a follower of Bishop Butler, whom he quotes with commendation. At other times his language is such as would be expected from an adherent of the Westminster Assembly, or the Synod of Dort.

But it is far from my intention to enter into a consideration of the merits and defects of the celebrated book which I have named at the head of this article. Rather would I call attention to an essay on "Imputed Righteousness" from the pen of Dr. Magee's successor in the metropolitan see of Dublin, Archbishop Whately; which forms the sixth of his Grace's *Essays on Some of the Difficulties on the Writings of St. Paul, and in other portions of the New Testament*. His Grace there shews that the doctrines of Imputed Sin and Imputed Righteousness, which have, as he truly states, proved a stumbling-block in the path-way of Faith, and impeded the progress of the Gospel, are not inculcated in those passages of the New Testament in which many persons believe that they are

taught ; and, in fact, are as little supported by the teachings of the Gospel as they are by reason and conscience. It is quite true that Archbishop Whately does not seem to me to carry out his own principles to their legitimate consequences ; but the volume ought to be carefully studied by every sincere and earnest Christian who has access to it, and leisure for its perusal.

It is possible that the following passages from the pen of the learned and justly celebrated Archbishop, may impress some readers, who would pay but little attention to any cautions of mine. After shewing that the doctrines of "Imputed Sin" and "Imputed Righteousness" have really no foundation in the writings of St. Paul, the author goes on to say :—

"It may be said, however, that the system which has been treated of in this Essay, is, even if unsound, not practically dangerous, and, therefore, not one which needs to be refuted. That it has been held by pious and worthy men, I am well aware ; nor would I contend that it had any tendency to make them otherwise, and that their notions upon this point were inconsistent with their religious and moral characters. But it would be rash to conclude thence that their error, if it be one, must be altogether harmless. Nothing is harmless, which may put a stumbling-block in the way of any sincere Christian ; nothing is harmless that tends to give an undue advantage to unbelievers ; to disgust some with what they are told is the orthodox faith, and to furnish others with objections against it, by inserting doctrines which the Scriptures do not warrant." (*Essays, &c.*, p. 213.)

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