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ADAM AND CHRIST:

OR

THE DOCTRINE OF REPRESENTATION

STATED AND EXPLAINED,

✓ BY  
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# A SERMON

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## ADAM AND CHRIST.

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Rom. v. 12—19.

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

THE general subject of this passage is the fall and recovery of man. A lead-

ing purpose of the apostle is to magnify the grace of God, and exalt our conception of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The method by which he seeks to compass this design, is by instituting a comparison between the evils resulting from the apostasy of Adam and the benefits flowing from the mediation of Christ.

No other passage in the whole Bible has gained an equal celebrity with this in the annals of interpretation. It has generally been thought not a little obscure, and its interpretation encompassed with difficulties. But the chief difficulty appears to me to lie, not so much in the obscurity of the writer, as in the philosophy of the interpreter. The struggle is between the pride of human reason on the one side and the humbling doctrines of the gospel on the other; between human wisdom and di-

vine wisdom; between metaphysics and the word of God. Philosophy disdains to bow the head or bend the knee before the cross of Jesus. The sublime mystery of the redemption is a scandal to the swelling arrogance of human merit. The doctrine of a representative goodness, an imputed righteousness, is equally offensive to the wisdom of the Greek and the prejudice of the Jew, to the pride of philosophic scepticism, and the self-sufficiency of learned and unlearned Pharisaism.

Here lies the difficulty in the interpretation of this passage. Philosophers and philosophizing theologians, with whatever subtleties of logic and refinements of learning, have sought to bring the teachings of the Holy Spirit into harmony with their speculative systems. The doctrine of Paul must be made to harmonize with the dogmas of human

science. A compromise must be effected between human merit and divine grace, between the wisdom of man in the utterances of philosophy and the wisdom of God in the utterances of revelation. The attempt to accomplish this object has opened the floodgates of metaphysics, giving full scope to the ingenuity of the most acute and subtle dialecticians. The multitude of interpreters have come to the study of this passage with some preconceived theory to defend. Hence they have sought, not so much to draw their opinions from it, as to make it yield a sense, which harmonizes with opinions previously existing in their own minds.

But, notwithstanding the obscurity and perplexity thus thrown around the passage, the great truths taught in it seem to me to be set forth with remarkable perspicuity. It contains the state-

ment of a general principle, together with a two-fold application of it. The principle is that of substitution or representation as an element in God's moral government. The first application of the principle is in the person of Adam under the covenant of works. The second application of it is in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ under the covenant of grace.

This analysis of the passage suggests the order of thought proper to be pursued in our study of it. The three leading truths here taught are :

1st. That a public and representative character belongs to both Adam and Christ.

2nd. That our entire nature was tried, miscarried, and fell under condemnation in Adam.

3d. That the same nature that sinned was admitted to a new probation in

Christ, which issued favourably, so that sinners who believe in him are recovered by his righteousness.

It is proposed, by the help of the divine Spirit, to open, establish, and illustrate these doctrines, in the ensuing discourse.

I. My first proposition is: A public and representative character attaches both to Adam and to Christ; herein the former was a type of the latter, the relation which Adam bore to his posterity being the same as that which Christ bears to believers.

The representative relation of Adam is evident from the whole drift of the apostle's argument. He reasons thus in v. 12—14: Sin was introduced into the world by one man. Death is the fruit of sin. All die, because all are sinners. But in what manner have all sinned? Multitudes have never sinned



after the similitude of Adam's transgression. They have never violated, personally, either the law of nature or the law of revelation. This is the case of all who die in infancy. But sin is not imputed where there is no law. The very essence of sin lies in the transgression of law. Hence infants are sinners, since they die as well as adults. Hence, too, they are sinners by the transgression of some law. But there is no law, which infants can have broken, except the law given to Adam; and there is no sin, of which infants can have been guilty, but their sin in Adam. Consequently, Adam must have borne to his posterity the relation of representative; and what he did in that character, they did in him. In other words, and more concisely—where there is death, there is sin; where there is sin, there is law; where pen-

alty is inflicted, there must have been a violation of law; where those are punished who have no personal sin, the sin of another must be imputed to them; and where the sin of one is imputed to another, the one must be the representative of the other. The reasoning is from death to sin; from sin to law; from the infliction of penalty to the violation of law; from the punishment of the personally innocent to imputation; and from imputation to representation.

Moral arguments, do not, I think, admit of a nearer approach to mathematical demonstration than this. The only thing assumed, in this paraphrase of the apostle's argument, is, that by the persons designated as those who "have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," infants are meant. It is difficult to imagine any

other rational meaning of the phrase. Accordingly, by the persons who thus sinned, Warburton, Whitby, Bloomfield, and other Arminian as well as Calvinistic interpreters, understand—to borrow the very words of the learned prelate first named—“those who died before they came to the knowledge of good and evil, viz. : infants and idiots.”

The doctrine of Adam's representative relation is also unequivocally taught in vs. 15—19. Here, by almost every conceivable form of expression, it is affirmed that a condemnatory sentence was passed upon all men on account of one man; nay, on account of a single offence of that one man. What rational interpretation can be given to such a proposition, but that the many acted in the one on the principle of representation?

The language of the 19th verse places

this point in the clearest possible light, surrounding it with a blaze of demonstration. Literally translated, it reads thus: "As by the disobedience of the one the many were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of the one the many shall be constituted righteous." What form of words could more plainly declare the doctrine of representation? It is, indeed, alleged by theologians who deny this doctrine, that the first proposition here means no more than that Adam's sin was the occasion of other men's becoming sinners. They aver that all the apostle teaches is, that, somehow, as a consequence of Adam's sin, all men become depraved, and that the sole ground of their condemnation is this inherent corruption of nature, and the personal sins flowing from it.

But see the violence which this interpretation does to the apostle's lan-

guage, as also the dangerous heresy which it involves. The passage consists of two propositions. The mould into which these two propositions are cast, is the same. The structure of both is the same. The leading terms in both are the same. Of course the principle of interpretation applicable to both must be the same; and the sense of both must be commensurate. That is to say, the same words, in the same relations, and having the same grammatical construction, must have a like interpretation. What follows? Clearly this: that, if the first proposition mean simply that, as a consequence of Adam's disobedience, men become personally sinful, and this personal sinfulness is the alone ground of their condemnation, then the second proposition must mean, that, as a consequence of the obedience of Christ, believers become per-

sonally holy, and this personal holiness is the alone ground of their justification. And what is this but a subversion of the gospel, and a republication of the covenant of works?

Having proved the representative relation of Adam to his natural children, let us inquire whether Christ stood in a similar relation to his spiritual children.

A main purpose of the apostle in the passage before us, is to establish a similitude between Adam and Christ. The same reasoning, therefore, is applicable to both. The same terms are, again and again, employed in reference to both. In v. 14, the former is expressly declared to be a type of the latter. It follows that, if the one is a representative, so is the other. The representative character of Adam draws after it the representative character of Christ.

Nothing can be plainer from scripture, than that Adam and Christ sustained peculiar relations to the human family ; insomuch that they are called by the apostle “ the first man ” and “ the second man,” as if the whole human race were either annihilated in their presence, or absorbed in their persons.

The whole doctrine of atonement, which constitutes the sum of the gospel, is built upon the representative character and relation of the Lord Jesus Christ. This divine person is everywhere spoken of in the scriptures as a sacrifice for sin. The sacrifices of the law were but shadows of this only real sacrifice for sin, deriving all their efficacy from their relation to it. But all the expiatory sacrifices of the law were of a vicarious and representative import. Into every such sacrifice there entered three leading ideas, viz.: the

symbolical transfer of the offerer's sins to the sacrificial victim, the symbolical pollution of the victim consequent upon this translation of guilt, and the redemption of the transgressor by the substitution of the victim in his place.

This view of the nature and import of the Jewish sacrifices is held by all orthodox Christian divines, and by the most illustrious of the Hebrew doctors. The very heathens themselves—doubtless deriving their ideas from that original light of revelation, which, though clouded and dispersed, still continued to emit some rays of its primeval splendor—held to the notion of a substitution of the sacrificial victim to suffer death in place of the transgressor. Such, as we learn from classic authors of undoubted authority, was the belief of the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Gauls, and other nations of anti-



quity. A remarkable passage to this effect occurs in Ovid, where the poet represents the several parts of the victim as equivalents for the corresponding parts of the offerer. It was an express dogma of the Druidical theology, that, unless the life of men were given for the life of men, the immortal gods could not be appeased.

But what ideas on this subject do we find in the writers of the New Testament? The forerunner of Messiah, in announcing his advent, said, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." These words could not fail to call up in a Jewish mind all those ideas, which entered into the general notion of sacrifice—substitution, transfer of guilt, vicarious suffering, atonement, and redemption. Thus was the Lord Jesus, in the first proclamation of his personal presence

upon earth, presented to the church as the surety and representative of his people. And faithfully did the inspired penmen of the New Testament, as it would be easy to show by a detail of passages, reproduce, amplify, and enforce this consolatory conception of the relation of our adorable Redeemer to the church which he purchased with his blood.

II. My second proposition is this: No mere private individual was tried in Eden; the probation, though in the person of Adam, was of the nature that God had made; and, as a consequence of the miscarriage of the trial, the whole race of mankind fell under condemnation, became obnoxious to punishment, and are actually subjected to penal evils, on account of their sin in him.

There are two principles, which must

be assumed as the basis of our reasonings on this subject. The first is, that death is a penal evil; the second, that the infliction of a penalty implies the violation of a law. These principles, besides being very much of the nature of axioms, are plainly taught in the Bible. Both reason and revelation, therefore, bear concurrent testimony to their truth.

The doctrine of our church, on the point under consideration, is thus set forth in the Larger Catechism: "The covenant being made with Adam, as a public character, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in that first transgression." (A. to 22 Q.)

This cardinal doctrine of revelation, the doctrine of the representative character of Adam, and of our sin and fall

in him, is clearly and impressively taught in our text. It is a striking fact, that within the compass of eight verses, the doctrine is, either explicitly or implicitly, set forth in no less than ten distinct propositions. Here they are: 1. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," v. 12. 2. "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," v. 12. 3. "Sin is not imputed, where there is no law; nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," vs. 13, 14. 4. "Adam was a type of Christ," v. 14. 5. "Through the offence of one many are dead," v. 15. 6. "The [sentence] was by one that sinned," v. 16. 7. "The judgment was by one [offence] to condemnation," v. 16. 8. "By one man's offence death reigned by one," v. 17.

9. "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation," v. 18. 10. "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners," v. 19.

Such is the copiousness with which the spirit of inspiration has here exhibited this fundamental truth of our holy religion. There is no human formulary that teaches the probation of the race in Adam, the apostasy of the race in Adam, the condemnation of the race in Adam, and the punishment of the race on account of their sin in Adam, with anything like the clearness and fullness of this inspired exhibition of the truth.

One of two things is certain: Either we were tried in Adam, or we were not. If we were not tried in him, then each individual of the race is placed on trial for himself—the covenant of works is still in force—we have re-

nounced the cross, and are gone back to Sinai. If we were tried in Adam, then, as the issue of our miscarriage in him, we have become obnoxious to all the penal evils, in which our principal or representative himself was involved.

The sum is, that God, in his supreme and sovereign wisdom, gave his law to Adam in Paradise, not only as a rule of obedience, but also as a covenant of life; that Adam, in this covenant, acted for himself and his posterity; that he was not a private but a public person, sustaining the persons of all mankind; and that, during the pendency of the trial, he had in him, not merely as a natural root and common father, but also as a federal head and legal representative, the whole race of men, who “sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.”

Although the doctrine of the impu-

tation of Adam's first sin to us lies, as Dr. Owen has said, "in the very foundation of all wherein we have to do with God," yet it is a doctrine denied and opposed by many in our day. These persons object to it chiefly on the ground, that such a constitution of things is a breach of justice. But is it so? Is the principle of representation, the principle that one person may act in and by another, a violation of justice? This is so far from being true, that human society could not exist, nor the affairs of life move on, except under the operation of the representative principle. Guardianships, trusteeships, commercial agencies, constitutional legislation, and international negotiations, are all based upon this principle.

Innumerable illustrations might be adduced. I must content myself with one or two.

The President of Mexico, aggrieved by the annexation of Texas to this country, refused to receive a minister plenipotentiary from the United States. We construed his refusal to be the refusal of the Mexican nation. Was not such a construction in accordance with the universal conceptions of men?

A British subject a few years ago burned an American steamer on the waters of the St. Lawrence. The whole country was in a blaze. It was a question of war with a powerful empire. But that question turned upon another, viz.: whether the man acted in a private or public relation; that is to say, whether the deed was the act of the individual, or the act of the nation in him.

Our own government affords a good illustration of the representative principle. We are in the constant habit of speaking of the American people as



assembled in Congress, and as making their own laws. But how are the people assembled in Congress? and how do they make their own laws? No otherwise than in and by their representatives. It is a point, deserving special attention here, that the whole body of the people are bound by the acts of their representatives—not only voters, who bind themselves, but non-voters—women, children, and aliens—who have no voice in the choice of representatives.

Thus it appears, that the principle of representation is founded in nature and necessity. It pervades all the operations of society. It meets a response in every human heart. It has its seat in the very depths of our mental and moral constitution. It is familiar to the thought and the practice of our universal humanity. And, (a consider-

ation investing it with supreme dignity and importance,) it would seem to be an essential condition of a scheme of redemption for fallen men. For, upon what other principle than that of representation are vicarious obedience and suffering possible? Upon what other principle can the righteousness of Christ become the righteousness of believing sinners?

To the perverse disputer, who, in the insolent pride of human reason, would prescribe to the Almighty the way in which he should conduct his creatures to happiness, we might reply by applying his own argument to the ordinary course of events. For he who impugns the doctrine of representation and imputation does, in the same breath, impeach the justice of providence. If a father pursues a career of crime, do not his children, at every turn, meet the

evil consequences of his conduct? It avails nothing here to say, that these providential evils are the effect of an established constitution. That constitution itself is the effect of a decree of God; and every one of its operations is as much the appointment of the almighty Framers, as if it were the direct result of his creative will.

After all, they who reject the idea of imputed guilt, do but escape from one difficulty, to rush into another of still greater magnitude. That all mankind are involved in the consequences of Adam's sin, is a fact too clearly revealed in the Bible, and too evident from universal experience, to be disputed. The doctrine of representation accounts for this fact upon a principle congenial to our nature, familiar to our conceptions, and incorporated into our daily practice. Any other view of the

matter involves the absurdity of an effect without a cause. To say that the evil happens according to the established order of things, and in the way of natural sequence, is but to push the difficulty a little further off. It is not to meet it, but to sidle past it. It is not to remove it, but to bury it beneath unmeaning verbiage. Who ordained that constitution of things, by means of which the evil comes? Did not God? And are not all its sequences as properly his acts, as if they were independent operations, and wholly disconnected from second causes?

But the deepest darkness, on any theory of moral administration other than that of imputation, gathers around God's providence towards infants. If it is unjust to impute sin to them, and on that ground to subject them to suffering, what shall we say of the justice

of subjecting them to the very same suffering on no ground at all, and in disregard and despite of a spotless innocence? Believers in imputation hold that infants are treated as sinners, because they are sinners; not indeed by personal disobedience, but judicially constituted such, by having the disobedience of their federal representative imputed to them—charged to their account. Disbelievers in imputation hold that infants are treated as sinners, though they are as free from guilt as Adam at the instant of his creation. Which of these theories is most dishonouring to God I leave to your own candour to judge.

III. My third proposition is: By the abounding grace of God, a new probation has been admitted in the person of his incarnate Son; this second trial issued favourably, the illustrious pro-

bationer having fulfilled all righteousness; and, as a consequence, believing sinners are redeemed and saved by his merits.

On the criminal revolt and apostasy of man, his Creator might in justice have exacted the penalty denounced against transgression. He might have proceeded at once to vindicate the majesty and authority of his law. No attribute of the divine nature, no utterance of the divine voice, no principle of the divine equity, demanded even a reprieve of the sentence against man; much less, any effectual interposition in his behalf on the part of Deity. Such interposition, therefore, would be an act of sovereign grace. One necessity there was in the case, and only one, viz.: that if God interposed at all, it should be in a manner consistent with the infinite perfections of his nature.

The fact of God's gracious interposition for man's deliverance from death and restoration to life, is manifest and acknowledged. We are now to inquire into the manner and extent of it.

In v. 14, the apostle affirms, that Adam was a type of Christ. With wonderful exactness do the type and the antitype agree together. The comparison consists of five couplets; Adam and Christ, sin and righteousness, sinners and righteous persons, condemnation and justification, death and life. Placing the five terms on each side of the comparison together, the relation may be denoted thus: Adam, sin, sinners, condemnation, death — Christ, righteousness, righteous persons, justification, life. As Adam by his sin made sinners of all his natural posterity, involving them in condemnation and death, so Christ by his righteous-

ness constitutes righteous all who believe in him, procuring for them justification unto life.

How exact the correspondence! Is Adam the author of sin? Christ is the author of righteousness. Is Adam the cause of other men's becoming sinners? Christ is the cause of other men's becoming righteous. Is the sin of Adam the ground of condemnation? The righteousness of Christ is the ground of justification. Does the condemnation through Adam bring death? The justification through Christ brings life. Are the many judicially constituted sinners by the disobedience of the one? The many are judicially constituted righteous by the obedience of the other. Does the principle of representation obtain under the one economy? So does it under the other. Is imputation the mode whereby this principle exerts its



force in the one case? So is it in the other. Is the first covenant the ministry of death to all men descending from Adam by ordinary generation? The second covenant is the ministry of life to all men who believe in Christ. Was Adam the federal head of his natural children? Christ is the federal head of his spiritual children.

In all these respects the similitude is admirable. In the principle of their respective economies, and in their relation, in the one case to the apostasy, in the other to the recovery, the correspondence is exact to a tittle. The mode of the apostasy is the mode of the recovery. The federal headship of the first Adam, and the federal headship of the second Adam, are counterparts of each other. The first Adam sustained the persons of all who were federally in him, *i. e.*, of his natural pos-

terity; and the second Adam sustained the persons of all who were federally in him, *i. e.*, of elect sinners. God accounts as done by the represented what was done by the first representative; and he equally accounts as done by the represented what was done by the second representative. Sin and death were conveyed by the one to all his natural seed; righteousness and life are conveyed by the other to all his spiritual seed. The demerit of Adam is imputed to us to condemnation; the merit of Christ is imputed to us to justification.

Thus it appears that the Lord Jesus Christ, in the redemption, is the representative of his people, and that the method by which he redeems them is that of substitution—the substitution of his obedience for their obedience, the substitution of his death for their death,

the substitution of himself for them, "the just for the unjust." Substitution as a means of atonement for sin and reconciliation to God, as we have seen under the first head, was a doctrine held by the entire ancient world, as well Gentile as Jewish. This doctrine of a vicarious obedience and a vicarious suffering is the cardinal doctrine of revelation. It pervades the whole Bible. It gives tone and colouring to all its teachings. It is the keynote to both its Testaments. It is the sum and essence of a religious system suited to the wants of sinners. Hence the Christianity which denies it is no Christianity. At best, it is but the mangled and distorted form, the meagre skeleton of religion, as religion is revealed in God's word. As a religious system, it scarcely makes an approach to what the deepest consciousness of our moral nature, in its

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fallen state, imperatively demands, as a condition of spiritual peace.

All this is abundantly taught in our text, as also in many other scriptures, which there is not time now to cite.

It remains to inquire into the extent of Christ's satisfaction. It is important, in this inquiry, to bear in mind, that the comparison is between the results of the apostasy, and the results of the recovery. Keeping this in memory, let us bring together, in one view, all the parts of the passage bearing upon the point in question. I will present them in a more literal version than that contained in the common translation, a version whose verbal exactness will aid us in understanding the mind of the Spirit. "If by the offence of the one the many died, much more the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, hath

abounded unto the many." "As by one offence sentence came upon all men to condemnation, so also by one righteousness the free gift came upon all men to justification of life." "As by the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of the one man the many shall be made righteous." The main difference between this translation and the common one consists in the retention of the article, as it stands in the Greek, by which a definite sense is obtained, instead of a somewhat indefinite one. On the several propositions of the apostle, as rendered above, I observe, first, that when, in speaking of a multitude, the persons composing it are distinguished as the one and the many, the many, in antithesis to the one, must be equivalent to all. Secondly, the many, of whom condemnation is predicated, are, obviously,

all who were in Adam, when he was a public character. Thirdly, it is but a fair corollary from this, that the many, of whom justification is affirmed, must, in like manner, mean, not all mankind, but all who are in Christ, all to whom his federal headship extends.

It is true, that in both cases the terms employed are unlimited; yet in both there is a limitation. All men are not brought into a state of condemnation by the sin of Adam—not the man Christ Jesus; and all men are not brought into a state of justification by the righteousness of the second Adam—not unbelievers. The condemned through Adam, and the justified through Christ cannot be co-extensive; for such a doctrine would lead to blank universalism, and overthrow the plainest truth in all the Bible. Two consequences, abhorrent alike to reason and Scripture,

would be involved in such an interpretation; first, the Lord Jesus Christ would have been born under condemnation; and, secondly, the salvation of the whole human race would be not only possible, but certain. What the apostle teaches, and all that he teaches, is, that as on account of the sin of Adam, all connected with him by ordinary generation are condemned, so on account of the righteousness of Christ, all connected with him by faith are justified.

The passage, therefore, affords no support to the doctrine of indefinite atonement, or universal redemption. On the contrary, so far as it bears upon the point at all, it is opposed to that theory. It does not, perhaps, decide the question, but it fairly opens it. Let us, therefore, briefly interrogate both reason and Scripture on this point.

It is safe to reason from the effect produced by a designing agent to the purpose of such agent. Corn is grown in a certain field ; from this it is certain that the cultivator purposed to raise corn there. A father has given a liberal education to one of his sons, and withheld it from the rest ; this makes clear his purpose to that effect. In regard to human agents and their actions we reason in this manner with confidence. Why should we hesitate to apply the same method to the divine doings? We ought to feel the greater confidence in such reasoning when applied to the supreme agent, since his wisdom is omniscient, and cannot be baffled, since his power is infinite, and cannot be defeated. How, then, is it possible to deny the force of such arguments, or the justness of such inferences, as these following? A part of the an-



gels maintained their allegiance to God ; therefore it was the purpose of God that they should stand firm. Another part apostatized ; therefore it was the purpose of God that they should fall. Adam transgressed the covenant of his God, and involved himself and his posterity in guilt and condemnation ; therefore it was the divine purpose that this should be. A part of the human race are saved by Christ, and another part are not ; such, therefore, was the divine purpose concerning them. Wisdom never acts without a purpose, and eternal wisdom can frame no new purposes. To say that God acts without a purpose is to deprive him of wisdom ; to say that any new purpose can arise in his mind is to impute to him mutability. As surely, therefore, as God saves a part of the human family, and leaves the rest to perish, so surely did he purpose to do it.

The certainty of the action determines the certainty of the purpose, and the extent of the action determines the extent of the purpose; while the immutability of God involves the eternity of the purpose.

It is objected to this view, that it converts men into machines, and makes God the author of sin; and the modern objector, like the cavillers of Paul's day, exultingly asks, "Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?" The point of the objection is, that a divine purpose and a free human agency are incompatible; so incompatible that, if such purpose have respect to a sinful action, the human agent is free from blame, and God is the author of the sin.

Is this so? It was the purpose of God that Pharaoh should not let his people go, till he had shown his wonders in Egypt; that Sennacherib should

invade the territory of Israel for the punishment of its inhabitants; and that Jewish scribes and priests should crucify his Son. Did these divine purposes destroy the free agency of the actors, or make God the author of their sin? No man will dare utter such a blasphemy. How, then, does a divine purpose that some angels should fall, destroy their free agency in rebelling, or make God the author of their sin? How does a divine purpose that man should apostatize, destroy his freedom in apostatizing, and make God the author of his sin? How does a divine purpose not to save a part of the human race, interfere with their freedom in sinning, or make God the author of their damnation? If a divine purpose does not clash with free agency in one instance, it need not clash with it in any. If it is consistent with man's freedom in one event, it is

consistent with his freedom in all events. But a divine purpose and free agency, a divine purpose and a sinful free agency, did meet in the obstinacy of Pharaoh, in the ambition of Sennacherib, and in the malignity of the murderers of God's incarnate Son. This none can deny, without denying the plainest Scripture testimonies. Why, then, may not a divine purpose and a sinful free agency have met in the rebellion of angels and the apostasy of man? Why may they not meet in the final condemnation and ruin of men? If God must necessarily be the author of sin by decreeing these events, then, by a like necessity, he must be the author of Pharaoh's sin in refusing to let the people go, of Sennacherib's sin in his wars against Jerusalem, and of the Jews' sin in crucifying the Lord of glory, because he decreed those events. No difference can

be shown in the principle of these several cases. "God decreed the fall of man, therefore he is the author of the sin, by which that event was effected," and "God decreed the death of Christ, therefore he is the author of the sin, by which that event was effected," are one and the same argument. If the conclusion is logical in the one case, it is logical in the other, and if it is illogical in the one, it is illogical in the other. If we feel that it would be blasphemy when stated in reference to the death of Christ, we must own that it would be an equal blasphemy when uttered in reference to the fall of Adam. It is true, that we know the reasons which moved God to decree the death of his Son, while the reasons which moved him to decree the fall of angels, the apostasy of man, and the restriction of salvation to a part of mankind, are un-

known to us. Doubtless there are reasons for these decrees, as wise in themselves and as honourable to God, as for the decree respecting the death of his Son; and, if we knew them, we should see the divine glory shining as radiantly in the former as in the latter. The unfathomableness of the divine decrees is no argument against their existence, their wisdom, or their goodness. To suppose that the counsels of the Most High are not good and glorious, because we cannot fathom the reasons on which they rest, is to make man's folly superior to God's wisdom. It is to exalt human ignorance to sit in judgment on the divine sovereignty.

The teaching of reason, then, on this subject is, that the original design of the death of Christ must have had the same extent, which the ultimate actual application of it to saving purposes shall

have. If all men shall finally be saved, then the design of Christ's death embraced all men. If only a part shall be saved, then, since God cannot be disappointed of his purpose, his design in the death of his Son must have been from the beginning limited to a part.

But what is the voice of Scripture on this subject? What does it teach respecting the divine purpose in the death of Christ? The general answer is, "It teaches that it was a purpose of redeeming mercy." But whom did that purpose embrace? A number without number of sinners of mankind. Still the purpose has its limits—limits given to it by sovereign wisdom. It is confined to a part of mankind. God, in his sovereignty, passed by angels, and redeemed men; and, in the same sovereignty, he passed by a part of men, and redeemed the rest. The exceed-

ing great multitude that no man can number, who shall be found on the right hand of the Judge at the last day, are spoken of in Scripture as Christ's sheep, Jno. x. 11; as his elect, Mark xiii. 27; as the church which he loved and gave himself for, Eph. v. 25; as those who were given him by the Father, Jno. xvii. 24; as predestinated by the Father's good pleasure to the adoption of children, Eph. i. 5; as ordained to eternal life, Acts xiii. 48; as chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, Eph. i. 4; as elect according to the foreknowledge of God unto obedience, 1 Pet. i. 2; as saved according to God's own purpose and grace given them in Christ Jesus before the world began, 2 Tim. i. 9; as chosen from the beginning to salvation, 2 Thess. ii. 13; as an election of grace, Rom. xi. 7; as appointed to salvation,



1 Thess. v. 9; and as predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, and called according to his purpose, Rom. viii. 28, 29.

These Scriptures are very plain. He that runs may read. Ingenuity cannot torture them into any other meaning than that God had a determinate purpose to accomplish by the mission of his Son. They are clear and explicit to the point, that redemption had its origin in that eternal agreement between the persons of the Godhead, commonly called the covenant of grace, on which the whole dispensation of mercy to mankind is based. An elect people was, in this convention of peace, given to the Son as the reward of his mediatorial work. The whole scope and intent of that divine covenant transaction will be fulfilled to a tittle. "The Lord's portion is his people," and sooner shall

heaven and earth pass away, than a particle of that inheritance shall be lost. The plan of infinite wisdom and love, conceived in the fathomless depths of eternity, was complete in all its parts, and fixed in all its results, stretching away over all ages, all climes, and all peoples, the perfect and immutable counsel of Jehovah.

A consideration of the efficacy of Christ's satisfaction evinces its limitation to a part of mankind. This efficacy, as Witsius has said, is twofold. It regards both Christ and the elect. By his satisfaction, he obtained for himself a right to the elect, who, by the promise of the Father, are made sure to him, as his "inheritance and possession." This right cannot be vacated: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice," John. x. 16. Christ's sheep are his property. He has a right to

them, which he will assert. But Christ, by his satisfaction, also obtained for the elect a right to eternal life, to be applied to them in effectual calling, regeneration, sanctification, and glorification. See Matt. xxvi. 28, Gal. i. 4, Rom. viii. 29, 30, Tit. ii. 14, Eph. v. 25—27. These scriptures show that the satisfaction of Christ procured, not a bare possibility of salvation, but a certain salvation for all in behalf of whom it was made.

The same truth appears from those passages of the word of God, which represent the work of Christ as a redemption. Now a redemption is a buying out of captivity. The effect of it is liberty, and not a mere possibility of liberty. Christ is a true Redeemer. He restores to freedom every miserable captive to sin and Satan, whose ransom he has paid. If it be said, that redemption is for all who will accept it, I reply, That is true, but none ever accept it,

save those who are "made willing" by a gracious exercise of divine power. And this grace is granted only to the elect. "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded."

The nature of Christ's suretyship proves the limitation of his mediatorial work. He is called "the surety of a better covenant." He is a surety, not on God's part to us, of which there could be no need; but on our part to God. A surety is one who engages for another. There can be no suretyship, where there is no engagement; and there can be no engagement, where there is no certainty. It would be a contradiction in terms to speak of suretyship, and yet, at the same time, disconnect it from the persons, in whose behalf it is assumed. Christ therefore, if he be a surety at all, which the scriptures plainly affirm, is the surety of persons known and selected beforehand. He took the law

place of a chosen people, paid their debts, satisfied the claims of justice, and redeemed them from death and hell. He is, then, the surety of the saved only; he can be the surety of none else. Are all men saved, or only some? If some only are saved, then he is the surety of some, but not of all; he died to redeem some, but not all. If he is the surety of all, then he satisfied for all, and all will be saved. For he himself testifies, that of all whom the Father had given him, of all who were embraced within the saving purpose of his death, he should lose nothing.

Again, particular election and particular redemption are doctrines inseparably connected. The former involves the latter, as the cause involves the effect. He who denies the one must deny the other. Election by the Father and redemption by the Son are of the same breadth, and embrace the same

persons. All the chosen were redeemed, and all the redeemed were chosen.

This is consonant to reason, for why should the Son redeem those whom the Father had not chosen to salvation? What were the purpose of such redemption? Surely, the will of the Father and the will of the Son concerning man's redemption were one. They were of accord in this design. Yet if the Father elected only a part, and the Son redeemed all, the Son undertook more than the Father did. The purpose of the one had a greater compass than the purpose of the other, and there was a conflict of wills in them, which it were both absurd and impious to affirm.

But what reason suggests, scripture confirms. In his intercessory prayer, our Saviour, referring to himself, says: "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life

to as many as thou hast given him.” John. xvii. 2. Here those whom the Son crowns with eternal life, and those who were given to him by the Father in the decree of election, are represented as the same persons. Election and redemption answer to each other, as face answers to face in a glass. Still more explicit is the declaration of the apostle in Eph. i. 4—7: “He hath chosen us in him, . . . in whom we have redemption, through his blood.” What can be plainer than this? The persons redeemed by the blood of Christ are the same as those who were chosen in him. Election measures redemption, as one bushel measures another. They are of the same extent. They relate to the same persons. They relate to all such, and to no others. This truth, from the passages cited, is as clear as a sunbeam; and it draws after it the doctrine, that Christ died to re-

deem, not all mankind, but a chosen number only.

The doctrine is, that God provided a remedy for sinners, which was not to be applied to all sinners. Does any one charge, that this doctrine makes God partial in his treatment of his creatures? The same charge lies, with equal force, against the doctrine, that he has elected some to salvation, and passed by others. Nay, it presses, with as heavy a weight, upon the certain and admitted fact, that God elected to redeem fallen men, and not fallen angels. To redeem men and not angels is as contrary to the righteousness of God, as to redeem some men and not others. Some are scandalized by the doctrine of particular redemption, who yet hold to the doctrine of particular election, though the distinction between these doctrines is clearly a distinction without a differ-



ence. Others reject both the doctrines, who, nevertheless, are constrained to own, because they cannot deny, that God, in the dispensation of his grace, discriminated between apostate angels and apostate men. Let the former defend the election of particular men to the exclusion of other men against the charge of unrighteous partiality in God, and the latter the election of men to the exclusion of angels against the same charge, and every word they utter, pertinent to the issue, will be of equal force in defending the doctrine of particular redemption. When it is a question of bestowing benefits on persons, all of whom are equally unworthy of them, to discriminate and select some to the exclusion of others is simply a prerogative of sovereignty. So God himself represents the matter: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"

Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" Rom. ix. 20, 21. Here God, in amazing condescension, stoops to vindicate the equity of his ways in selecting the objects of his favour. It has been well said, that the objection of partiality springs from the pride and envy of man. In effect, our Saviour himself tells us so, when he says, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" How unequally does God bestow the blessings of his providence! Some are rich, others poor; some are well, others sick; some are clothed in purple, others in rags; some are lords, others slaves. Yet no one dares to impugn

the righteousness of God on the ground of these unequal distributions of his providence, since all feel that they suffer less than their sin deserves, and enjoy more than their goodness merits. And why should it be deemed less impious to arraign the justice of God on the ground of the unequal communications of his grace?

But while the Scriptures teach that the Lord Jesus Christ died to redeem a chosen and peculiar people, they do also teach that "the death of Christ is a most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins; of infinite value and price; abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world." The cross is accessible to all, and available for the recovery of all, who will repair to it. There is not a sinner of mankind, to whom the offer of eternal life is not unfeignedly made on the ground of Christ's

atoning mediation. If any perish, it is not for want of an adequate remedy, but through their own voluntary rejection of the remedy. There is no bar to salvation, but the want of a will to accept it on the terms proposed in the gospel. It is true, that the want of a will in a moral agent is a want of power in the fullest sense; but it is not such a want of power as will justify the sinner in unbelief. If we are so in love with sin that we cannot repent, so in love with self that we cannot accept a vicarious righteousness, so in love with the world that we cannot love God, such an inability, though invincible by any might of ours, cannot justify impenitence and unbelief. The more a man is inclined to sin and disinclined to holiness, the worse he is. Hence inability of will is no excuse for sin. Yet this is the inability of the sinner. If he

were willing to believe, he would be able to believe; and he is unable, because he is unwilling. The love of sin is what disables him.

Notwithstanding the sufficiency of the gospel provision, and the sincerity of the gospel call, the natural state of men's hearts—their inability of will—presents an obstacle in the way of their salvation, which nothing can overcome but the power of the Divine Spirit. Here the election of grace comes in. God has provided a remedy in the atonement of Christ, adequate to the removal of all the evils occasioned by the fall of Adam. On the ground of this atonement, he has made an unlimited offer of saving mercy to the whole human family. But all spurn the offer. All continue in sin. All will perish in unbelief, unless the grace of God prevent it. Foreseeing this, God determined to

put forth a gracious influence upon the will of many sinners, and constrain them to accept the offer of salvation, so making sure to his Son, as the reward of his sufferings, a "willing people." But the provision of the gospel, being sufficient for all, and suited to the wants of all, was made accessible to all. All are invited to share in it, and nothing hinders, but inability of will, which is so far from extenuating, that it aggravates their fault. Those, therefore, who thus wilfully refuse the proffered grace, God determined to pass by and leave to perish in their neglect. They were not embraced within the saving purpose of Christ's death. Nor is any wrong done them in this procedure. They are not shut out of heaven by election, but by unbelief. Election includes its own; it excludes nobody.

If, then, the question be asked, "For

whom did Christ die?"—no categorical answer can be given. We cannot say absolutely and unqualifiedly, that he died for all sinners; for then all would be saved. Neither can we say absolutely and unqualifiedly, that he died only for elect sinners; for then the offer of salvation could not be unfeignedly made to all men. The answer therefore, will vary according to the different relations, in which Christ's death is viewed. If we consider his death simply as a satisfaction for sin and without reference to the particular persons to be saved by it, the answer will be, to borrow the words of Dr. Mason, "He died for sinners as sinners." But if we consider his death with reference to the saving design of it, the answer will be, "he died for the elect." In other words, since there is a fulness of merit in the atonement sufficient to save any

number of sinners, there is no impossibility in the way of the salvation of all mankind, except an impossibility resulting from the state of their own minds; and the purpose of God not to remove that impossibility is simply a purpose to withhold from them an aid which he is under no obligation to bestow; an aid, the bestowment of which is never represented in Scripture as necessary to the consistency of invitations to believe and be saved.

Both these views I find in the Bible. In conformity with the one, the inspired teachers of the primitive church addressed the gospel call to all without discrimination, fearlessly proclaiming that "the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men." In conformity with the other, they uniformly ascribed the faith of the saved to a divine operation, and their



redemption to a divine decree. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Discriminating grace is the fountain of salvation.

To some these views appear inconsistent with each other. There is a difficulty without doubt. But it is a difficulty which belongs to the general subject of the divine sovereignty and human agency. Nay, almost all the cardinal doctrines of the Bible are beset by difficulties quite as great. They all have two aspects, which it is difficult for the mind to bring into one view, just as it is difficult for the eye to bring into one view the two opposite sides of an object. The eternal necessary existence of the Infinite One combined with spontaneity of will, the unity and plurality of the Godhead, and the union of divinity and humanity in the same person—these doctrines,

received by the whole orthodox Christian world, to my mind involve greater difficulties and reach to a profounder depth of incomprehensibility, than the doctrine of an atonement limited in its application to an elect people by the sovereign decree of God, and yet, by reason of its infinite value, made the ground of an unlimited call to repentance and faith, and of an unlimited promise of eternal life on condition of compliance with that call. Certainly, these two aspects of the atonement are no more irreconcilable the one with the other, than the doctrine of the divine sovereignty in regeneration is irreconcilable with the doctrine of human responsibility in using the means of grace. Yet, while it is the pleasure of God to employ human means in his kingdom, as readily might the soft strains of an æolian harp allay the rising

storm or calm the surging ocean, as the power of man quicken a soul dead in trespasses and sins. At any rate, if these two doctrines—the doctrine of an atonement unlimited in its nature because of its infinite value, and the doctrine of an atonement limited in its application because of the election of grace—were a thousandfold more incomprehensible than they are, still, since I see them both written, as with a sunbeam, on the pages of God's word, I heartily accept them both, as I do many other mysteries in the divine nature and government, inexplicable to my narrow, weak, and purblind intellect; and I await, with adoring patience and hope, the illuminations of eternity.

In conclusion, fathers and brethren, let us gratefully adore the riches of the divine wisdom and goodness. What a sublime history do we read in the dis-

pensations of God's grace! The Creator stoops to enter into covenant with the creature. The natural father is made the federal head of the human race. God promises life to Adam and his posterity on condition of obedience to a just and reasonable law. Death is threatened as the penalty of disobedience. The trial fails. Despair, dark as midnight, settles down upon our guilty race. The Ruler of the universe is not a man that he should lie. He cannot say one thing and do another. Law and justice, under his government, must have their course. The terrors of that law fill us with amazement, the thunders of that justice overwhelm us with horror. The judge has prepared his glittering sword, and his hand takes hold on judgment. But in the midst of our consternation, the sweet voice of mercy sounds in our ears—"Deliver

from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." The Son of God descends from the heights of his glory. He comes to stand between us and justice. Law and justice still roll on; they cannot do otherwise; but they move in a new direction. Upon the head of the Surety, to whom our sin is imputed, they fall. This divine Person enters the arena, a solitary combatant against the powers of darkness. The flames burn fiercely around him. His humanity is consumed. He dies as a malefactor. But he conquers death by dying. In proof of which, he bursts asunder the iron bars of his prison-house, and comes forth victorious, leading captivity captive. Accompanied by the angelic hosts, and laden with the spoils of his vanquished enemy, he cleaves the obedient air, and enters heaven in triumph, taking possession of its joys as the re-

presentative of those who put their trust in him.

Thus a door of hope is opened for us in the valley of weeping. Repine not, then, presumptuous man, at the sovereignty of God, nor dare to arraign his justice in the constitution of the old covenant. Rather hasten to secure the deliverance made possible to you under the new. If the first Adam failed, the second Adam can never fail. If all was made gloomy by our fall in the one, all is made radiant by our recovery in the other. Through this mighty Restorer, it is in the power of every one of you, my beloved hearers, to rise from the death and shame and misery of sin, to a life that shall know no end, to a glory that shall suffer no eclipse, to a bliss that shall dread no forfeiture

The new covenant in Christ can

never fail. It is ordered in all things and sure. It is founded on the rock of eternal equity and truth. It cannot fail on the part of the Father, for he "rests in his love, and changes not." It cannot fail on the part of the Son, for he has brought in an "everlasting righteousness." It cannot fail on the part of the Spirit, for he dwells in our hearts as the pledge of an eternal redemption, and the earnest of an eternal inheritance. The God of the covenant—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—can never fail us nor forsake us. Not Gabriel on his throne, nor Paul with his crown, is more secure than the feeblest saint, who struggles on and struggles ever, feeding a trembling hope of heaven with sighs and tears and inward groanings of the spirit. Amen.

THE END.