

# LETTERS

ON

## **The Atonement:**

IN WHICH

A CONTRAST IS INSTITUTED BETWEEN

THE

## **DOCTRINE**

OF THE

**OLD AND OF THE NEW SCHOOL;**

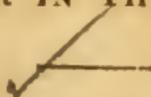
OR BETWEEN THE

**DEFINITE AND INDEFINITE SCHEME,**

ON THIS IMPORTANT SUBJECT.

ADDRESSED TO

A BROTHER IN THE MINISTRY.



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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UNTIL of late years the writer of these Letters scarcely ever, in the course of his public ministry, touched on the *extent* of the atonement. He was in the habit of explaining its *true nature*, as a satisfaction for sin; and, on the ground of the infinite merit of the death of Christ, making a free offer of salvation to his hearers; assuring them that whosoever believed would certainly be saved. But lately the *extent* of the atonement has been made a subject of controversy in the Presbyterian church; and some advocates of the indefinite scheme have represented this as a point of such importance as to allege, that those who do not adopt their views cannot preach the gospel; and indeed their zeal to carry a favourite dogma, has, in the author's opinion, led them to abandon the *true nature* of the atonement.

In these circumstances, it appeared advisable to draw a *contrast* between the *new* and the *old* doctrine on this most important subject. The writer thought proper to do it in a course of letters to a ministerial brother. At the commencement, he had not determined to give them publicity; but having mentioned to a friend what he was doing, he was requested to publish them in the *Christian Advocate*. He complied; and now being informed that they have been well received by many, he is induced, by the request and advice of two brethren of high standing in the Presbyterian church, on whose judgment he places much reliance, to collect them in this little book, in which they may be read with greater facility and advantage, than in the *Christian Advocate*, in which they are mixed up with various other articles in two large volumes.

LETTERS  
ON  
THE ATONEMENT.

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LETTER I.

*Extent of the Atonement.*

DEAR BROTHER,

The doctrine of the atonement made by our blessed and Divine Lord, is, you well know, of unspeakable importance. It lies at the foundation of a sinner's hope of salvation. Had no atonement been provided, darkness must forever have shrouded our guilty world; no ray of light from heaven would have cheered our hearts; the whole race of fallen man must have sunk beyond recovery, under the tremendous curse of a violated law. But infinite mercy beheld our ruined and helpless condition; it pitied

our misery, and determined on the salvation of sinners, by a method at once safe for them, and glorious to God.

As this method was devised, so it was revealed, by Infinite Wisdom; and consequently nothing in relation to its true nature and blessed effects can be known, but what the sacred scriptures have taught. To the scriptures, then, must be our appeal in every dispute on this all-important subject. What they teach it behoves us carefully to inquire and cordially to believe; always remembering that philosophical speculations on matters of pure revelation, are apt to mislead. If Jehovah is pleased to conceal any thing from us, it is vain for man to attempt to discover it.—“Secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed, belong unto us and to our children for ever.”

Two theories on the subject of the atonement are advocated by members of the Presbyterian church. The one is the *definite*, the other the *indefinite* scheme. The advocates of the former have been denomi-

nated *The Old School*, and the advocates of the latter *The New School*.

In the course of the letters which I am writing to you, my design is, to institute a comparison between the two theories—A short statement of each will facilitate the accomplishment of this design.

The friends of the *definite* plan believe, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in execution of his engagements with his eternal Father in the covenant of redemption, came into the world in the fulness of time; that having assumed our nature into a personal union with his Divine nature, he appeared in the world as the Saviour of sinful men. They believe that the immaculate Redeemer was made under the law, and consequently subject to its penal demands, as well as to its preceptive requisitions; that he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; and that the whole of his sufferings, from the beginning to the close of his spotless life, constituted that all-sufficient sacrifice which he offered for sin. They believe that Jesus Christ, as the

*substitute* of his people, was charged with their sins, and bore the punishment of them, and thus made a full and complete satisfaction to Divine justice for all who shall ever believe on him; and that this atonement will eventually be applied to all for whom, in the intention of the Divine Redeemer, it was made: or, in other words, to all to whom the wise and holy God has, in his adorable sovereignty, been pleased to decree its application.

They believe, moreover, that, in making an atonement or satisfaction for the sins of all who were given to him by the Father to be redeemed, the Lord Jesus Christ did offer a sacrifice or make an atonement, sufficient, in its intrinsic value, to expiate the sins of the whole world; that this infinite worth necessarily arose from the nature of his work, and the infinite dignity of his Divine person; and that, if it had been the pleasure of God to apply it to every individual, the whole human race would have been saved by its immeasurable worth.

On the ground of the infinite value of

the atonement, they further believe that the offer of salvation can be consistently and sincerely made to all who hear the gospel: accompanied with the gracious and divine assurance, that whosoever believeth shall be saved; and enforced by the solemn and alarming denunciation—that he who believes not, but wilfully rejects the overtures of mercy, will increase his guilt and aggravate his damnation.

Such are the views of the Old School; views that were entertained by the illustrious leaders in the glorious Reformation; views embodied in the creeds of almost all the Protestant churches, that flourished immediately after that grand epoch in the history of the Christian church.

The views of the friends of the *indefinite* plan are different. They do not believe that Jesus Christ, in the great transaction of dying for the redemption of the world, was charged with the sins of his people, or bore the punishment due to them, or endured the penalty of the law. They assert, that he suffered for sin in ge-

neral; that by his sufferings a display was made of the evil of sin, and an exhibition of Divine justice; that his sufferings were designed to be a substitute for our sufferings, and in this way were vicarious, but not as being the sufferings of one who took the sinner's place. In this, say they, consisted the atonement: and thus the obstacle to the salvation of our sinful race being removed, God can now exercise his sovereign mercy, and apply the benefits of the atonement to whom he pleases; and as it was not made for one man more than for another, the offers of salvation can be freely made to all mankind without distinction.

They deny that the Redeemer made a plenary satisfaction for the sins of believers; because such a satisfaction would in their view be incompatible with the grace that reigns in the salvation of sinners. Yet some admit a satisfaction to what they choose to denominate *public justice*; but at the same time they contend, this was no satisfaction to Jehovah's *distributive justice*, or to the penal demands of his holy and

violated law—Believers are saved, in opposition both to the demands of the law and to the claims of justice. A provision, however, they think has been made by the sufferings of Christ, in consequence of which it becomes consistent with the stability and honour of Jehovah's moral government over rational creatures, to save all who believe in Christ; but still they assert, that the ransomed of the Lord will never be free from guilt, and that Paul and his compeers are now as guilty as when on earth, and will forever deserve the punishment of hell. The demands of the law, and the claims of distributive justice too, they acknowledge will forever remain unsatisfied; because they were not cancelled by the Saviour's death, and never can be satisfied by the redeemed themselves.

This is the new scheme; a scheme which its advocates recommend as being far preferable to the *old one*; which has for so many years obtained the approbation of the Presbyterian Church. They prefer it on three accounts. It gives, they imagine,

greater extent to the atonement; is more compatible with a free and general preaching of the gospel, and with an unfettered and unreserved offer of salvation to all sinners; and corresponds best with the freeness and sovereignty of Divine grace, displayed in the recovery of fallen man.

While the advocates of the two schemes thus differ in their views of the atonement, they are agreed in the belief of the two following points. First, they receive the doctrine that teaches us that Jehovah, in his adorable sovereignty, has, from all eternity, elected to everlasting life some, and not all, of the human family: secondly, they believe that the atonement never was, and never will be, applied to any individual of our race, in any other way than by the power of Almighty grace. "Ye will not," said our Redeemer, "come unto me that ye might have life." And again, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him."

These two points, you know, are inseparably interwoven with the great subject

under discussion; and, therefore, ought, as we go along, to be distinctly recollected, and their bearings on it ascertained. Let us now examine the pretensions of the New School, and see if their scheme has, as they apprehend, in the particulars stated above, any superiority over that of the Old School.

I. It is affirmed that *THE INDEFINITE is of far greater extent than THE DEFINITE atonement.*

Christ, say its advocates, died as much for one man as for another. He made atonement for sin in general: and thus opened the door of mercy for all mankind—opened the way in which every believer, of whatever denomination, or sect, or nation, may be saved.

But in what respect has the indefinite greater extent than the definite atonement?

1. *Not in regard to the MERIT of Christ's death.* Let our opponents magnify it as they please, they cannot go beyond us in their views. We are ready to join with them in celebrating its praises in the loftiest strains. We believe the merit

of Immanuel's death to be, like his divine dignity, really *infinite*; sufficient, if it had been Jehovah's pleasure to apply it to all, to save every son and daughter of our apostate race; and unnumbered millions more of such accountable creatures, if such had existed.

2. *Not in regard to its APPLICATION.* To whom, and to how many human beings, the atonement will, in the course of revolving ages, be applied, it is impossible to tell. The final day will show multitudes which no man can number; thousands and thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand—all washed in the blood of the Lamb, cleansed from every sin, and made pure as the light. Our brethren will accord with us in saying, that the atonement will save every soul to whom it shall be applied, not excepting the vilest of human beings. Beyond this they dare not go; they will not say that a single individual of Adam's race can be admitted into heaven, in any other way than through the sprinkling of the peace-speaking blood of our adored Lord and Redeemer.

3. *Not in regard to the OFFER of salvation.* To whom can the advocates of an *indefinite* atonement, in preaching the gospel, tender its blessings, that the advocates of a *definite* atonement cannot? You, Sir, well know, that we are taught by our Divine Master to offer his great salvation to every one, to whom, in the course of his providence, we are called to minister in holy things. Whenever we stand up in his name to speak, we are authorized to announce the joyful truth, that salvation is come unto them. We can say to every one of our hearers, young and old, rich and poor, bond and free, to the profligate as well as to the moral part of our auditory, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "And the Spirit and the Bride say, come; and let him that heareth say, come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." And let it be distinctly observed, that all our offers of salvation are grounded

on the atonement, and that we have none to make but through the medium of Christ's death.

4. *Not in regard to the DIVINE PURPOSE.* Believing in the infinite intelligence of Jehovah, and in the infinite wisdom of the Redeemer, our brethren cannot but admit, that both the Father and the Son knew, from all eternity, to whom the atonement would be applied in time; and believing also in the doctrine of a personal election to everlasting life, they must concede that Jehovah had decreed the precise number of our race, to whom he would apply its sovereign virtue. Here then we are perfectly agreed. They believe, as well as we, that the Father gave to his Son, in the covenant of redemption, a *definite* number to be saved; and consequently that they only will certainly and eventually be saved. One of the New School speaks of "the *certainty* of the salvation of those for whom, *electively*, Christ died;" "and in this sense," he believes, Christ "died for the *elect alone*." "I grant freely,"

says another disciple of the same school, "that *only a part* of mankind were given to the Son in the covenant of redemption, and that the salvation of these was one important object he had in view in laying down his life:" and in another place he observes, "I feel no difficulty in admitting, that there is a sense in which Christ laid down his life for the sheep, in which he *did not* for others. As far as his object in laying down his life was to *secure the salvation* of those for whom he died, he laid down his life for the *sheep ONLY*; for he never INTENDED to *secure the salvation of any others.*"

It is conceded then, that the benefits of the atonement will be applied only to those to whom an infinitely wise God decreed to apply them; and that the Redeemer died to *save* only the elect. Now, this is *precisely the reason* why we affirm the atonement to be *definite*: the grand object of it, so far as respects man, is the salvation of that portion of our lost race which Jehovah was pleased, in the exercise of bound-

less and unmerited mercy, to determine to deliver from the deplorable ruin into which all had fallen. “Christ loved the church and gave himself *for it*; that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”—Ephes. v. 25—27. “All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him that hath sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”—John vi. 37—40. “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth

me, even so know I the Father : and I lay down my life for the sheep.”—John x. 14, 15. “I pray for them : I pray NOT for the *world*, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”—John xvii. 9.

It appears then that, in regard to the MERIT of *Christ's death*,—in regard to its *application*,—in regard to the *offer of salvation*,—and in regard to the *Divine purpose*, the *indefinite* is not at all more extensive than the *definite* atonement.

In what respect, then, we demand, is the former more extensive than the latter? Will the advocates of the new theory affirm, that the atonement was made for all men? But they have already admitted, that Christ died *intentionally* to save the *elect only*; and that God did not by the atonement *design* to save any other men. How then was the atonement made for all mankind? They cannot pretend to say, that the gospel has been preached universally to our fallen race; they cannot deny that millions have died without ever hearing of the name of Christ, or having the

offers of salvation made to them. And is it credible that the atonement was made for all men, and yet the larger portion of mankind never heard a word about it, and died without having their ears saluted with the joyful sound? If the atonement had really been made for all, would not that infinite love which provided it for all, have so ordered, that all should have come to the knowledge of the delightful fact? Did an infinitely wise Jehovah provide this most costly and magnificent feast, for millions and millions in every age of the world, to whom he never sent an invitation to partake of it; and whom he suffered to live and die in absolute ignorance of its existence? Incredible!

But one advocate of an indefinite atonement says, "It opened a door of hope for all men;" and another, "That all men, being placed in a state of probation, have an opportunity to secure their eternal salvation." Indeed! The heathen then, who never heard the gospel of the grace of God, have, notwithstanding their stupid igno-

rance and debasing idolatry, a door of hope set open before them; and those who never heard a syllable about the atonement, have an opportunity for securing their salvation! Who taught this doctrine? Not inspired men. They teach very differently. They have no such favourable views of a state of heathenism. Listen to the Evangelist Matthew: "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light; and to them which sat in the *region and shadow of death* light is sprung up." Hearken to Paul: "For whosoever shall call upon the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"—Romans x. 13, 14. "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the flesh made with hands; that at that time ye were *without Christ, being aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the*

*covenants of promise, having NO HOPE, and WITHOUT GOD in the world.*” Surely these texts do not teach us that the heathen have a door of hope set open before them; and that *all* heathen have an opportunity of securing their salvation.

But the friends of the new scheme will say, The atonement is one thing, and the Divine intention is another; and that the atonement ought to be considered *abstractedly* from the purpose of God. The atonement abstractedly considered! A grand mistake. It cannot be thus contemplated; it was the purpose of God that made the death of his Son an atonement; and consequently if you view his death apart from this purpose, you can see no atonement. In the cross of Christ thus contemplated, you may behold suffering and ignominy; you may behold a display of fortitude and patience: but you can see no atonement. To discover this, you must ask, why on Calvary was exhibited that amazing spectacle? why did the Son of God submit to such bitter agonies and overwhelming

shame? for until these inquiries be answered, and Jehovah's design in the crucifixion of his own Son be ascertained, you can contemplate no atonement. The death of Christ is an atonement, because his Father designed it to be an atonement; so that the atonement necessarily involves in its idea, that of Jehovah's *intention*, in bruising his Son and putting him to grief.

You see a man presenting to another a valuable jewel, but you are ignorant of his intention. Is it a *gift*, or is it a *ransom*? It is impossible for you to tell. But you are informed it is a *gift*. Immediately you connect in your mind the jewel with the *intention* of the donor. Or you are informed it is a *ransom*; and then you immediately connect the jewel with the *intention* of its owner, to deliver prisoners from captivity and bondage. So that both a gift and a ransom, necessarily involve the idea of the intention, for which a sum of money or a jewel is presented by one person to another. Thus stands the matter in relation to the death of Christ. While you

contemplate it abstracted from the Divine intention, it will suggest to you no other ideas than those of pain, ignominy, patience, and fortitude; but when you contemplate this mysterious occurrence, in connexion with the Divine intention to make the blood of Christ a propitiation for sin, you behold the great atonement.

As then the atonement necessarily involves the Divine intention in relation to the death of Christ, we are authorized to ask the friends of an indefinite scheme a question on the subject. Do you believe that the Father delivered up his Son, and that the Son delivered up himself to an accursed death, with an *intention* to save all mankind? To answer this question *affirmatively*, would be to establish universal salvation; because the purpose of God must stand, and he will do all his pleasure. But they have already answered the question in the *negative*. They believe that the Father gave to his Son in the covenant of redemption a particular, *definite* number of the human race to save; and that for

*these*, and for these *alone*, did the Son die with an *intention* to save them; and that to none beside the elect will the atonement be applied. Thus the *decree of election* is brought into connexion with the death of our great Redeemer; and the atonement becomes *definite*, because infinite sovereignty chose it should be so. No matter when the decree of election takes effect; whether before, as in the case of infants, or after a rejection of the atonement, as in the case of most adults, the subject is not altered; the truth remains the same; the atonement is *limited, definite*. You may call it otherwise; you may call it *general*, you may call it *indefinite*. But it retains its true character. It is what the Divine purpose has made it—*definite, limited*; not indeed in its value, which is unlimited and infinite; but in its application, and in respect to the intention of the Father who appointed, and of the Son who made the atonement.

Another proof of this point will be found in the meaning of the word atonement. Its

proper signification is, *agreement, concord, expiation, reconciliation*. Accordingly we find this meaning attributed to the original Greek term: *καταλλαγή*, in Rom. v. 11, translated *atonement*, properly signifies *reconciliation*. So it is rendered in other places; and in correspondence with its cognate verb, which is translated *reconciled*.

The Hebrew term כפר translated *atonement*, is derived from a verb that signifies *to cover*; and therefore, when it expresses the *effect*, it signifies a *covering*; and when it expresses the *cause*, it signifies *that which covers sin*, and thus removes the Divine displeasure from the offender.

In strictness of speech we ought to distinguish between the *death* of Christ, and the *atonement*; just as we distinguish between a cause and its effect. The death of Christ is one thing, and the atonement is another thing; the former being the *cause*, and the latter the *effect*. In human language it is not unusual for the cause and its effect to receive the same denomination.

Thus the *sensation* produced, and the *fire* which produces it, are both, though very different things, denominated *heat*. So also *cold* signifies the *cause* of a certain sensation in the human frame, and the *sensation* itself.

Here then we see the reason why the death of Christ has been called *atonement*: it is so denominated because it produces atonement, or reconciliation between God and sinful man; and as it has produced this glorious effect in millions of instances, it is justly entitled to this appellation. So it may be called in reference to all who have been, or who shall be, *atoned for, reconciled to God*; but with what propriety can it be so denominated in reference to individuals who never will be reconciled to an offended God by its influence? In truth, the death of Christ is an atonement to no man, before it has been applied; when it has been applied and produced its effect, then, and not till then, is it an atonement to him. You may call the death of Christ a *satisfaction to public justice, an amends*

*for sin, a substitution for our sufferings;* still this reasoning will apply. It cannot be a satisfaction for those who perish for ever under the hand of Divine justice; it cannot be an amends for the sins of those in respect to whom it never produces this effect; it cannot be a substitute for the sufferings of those who suffer for ever under the penalty of the law.

We have admitted the merits of Christ's death, or of the atonement, to be infinite, and that if applied, it would save millions more than shall ever be saved; but it will not follow that the atonement was made for those who will never be saved. The earth is large enough to have sustained many millions of inhabitants more than have ever lived on it, and probably to sustain millions more than will ever descend from Adam: but on this account it cannot, with any propriety, be said, that it was made for human beings who shall never be created. The sun is large and luminous enough to send his beams to more planets than exist in the solar system, and to en-

lighten and warm their inhabitants; but, on account of his greatness and grandeur, it could not be said with any propriety that he was formed to enlighten and warm inhabitants of planets that shall never be created. So it is with the atonement; although sufficient in value for all, yet it was made only for those to whom it shall be applied, only for believers to whom the death of Christ shall become an atonement; and not for sinners to whom it has not been, and never will be, applied; not for unbelieving sinners, to whom the death of Christ is not, and will never be atonement, or a cause of reconciliation.

But our brethren ask, Do not all men partake of benefits resulting from the death of our Redemer? Are they not in better circumstances than they would have been placed, if no atonement had been made for our fallen race? Does not the commission given by Christ to his ministers, authorize them to preach the gospel to all mankind? Are not all who hear the gospel invited and commanded to come to Christ? And

will not the guilt and punishment of those who perish in Christian lands be greatly increased by their rejecting the offers of salvation through a Redeemer? All this we readily admit; but, as our brethren believe the doctrine of election, and teach, not only that the atonement will never be applied to those who finally perish, but also that Christ did not die with an *intention* to save them, all this will not amount to an atonement for them. The benefits referred to in the above questions are merely the collateral benefits, resulting to others from the atonement made for believers.

In conclusion, after all that has been said on this point, we are willing to admit, that between the friends of a *definite*, and the friends of a *general* atonement, the difference is rather *verbal* than real. They both agree in their views of the *nature* of this mysterious transaction. With them we wish to have no dispute. But between the advocates of the *definite* and the advocates of the *indefinite* scheme, the differ-

ence, in regard to their respective views of the *nature* of the atonement, is great, as will hereafter appear.

On the extent of the atonement, I have insisted so largely, because, as you know, our opponents attempt to disparage our doctrine, by representing their views as more liberal than ours; but it has, I trust, been shown, that the atonement they advocate, though *called* universal, is not more *extensive* in fact, than the atonement we advocate; and that their doctrine on the subject has no advantage whatever in this respect, over that which we maintain.

Yours, affectionately.

## LETTER II.

*Offer of Salvation in preaching the Gospel.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

At the close of the preceding letter it was admitted that between the *definite* and the *general* atonement, the difference is *verbal* rather than real. I am therefore unwilling to represent three theories on the subject, as prevailing in the Presbyterian church. But as the word *general* seems to correspond with the term *indefinite*, better than it does with the term *definite*; and consequently intimates that the advocates of a general atonement harmonize more in their views with the friends of an *indefinite*, than with those of a *definite*, atonement; it may be proper to state, that this is by no means the fact. By turning to the description given of the opinions of the new school on this all-important doctrine of divine revelation,

it will be seen that it does not at all suit the views of those who have been known, in the Presbyterian church, as the advocates of what is termed a *general* atonement. For they believe, as well as we, that Christ was the *substitute* of his people—that he was *charged with their sins*—that he bore the *penalty* of the law—that he made satisfaction to the justice of God for all who shall believe—In fact they differ from us only in relation to the terms they prefer, in speaking on the extent of the atonement. While they maintain that Christ died *especially* for the elect, they believe that, in a certain sense he died for others. With them, let it be repeated, we wish to have no dispute. We think alike, although we make choice of different words, in communicating our thoughts in regard to a particular point. The comparison I am drawing, is not between our views of the atonement and theirs; but between ours and those which are entertained on this great subject, by persons whose sentiments were stated in my first letter, and who are usually known by the

name of Hopkinsians. And should these letters ever meet the public eye, I wish the friends of a general atonement to see, that I am not contending with them, but opposing certain views of a most important doctrine, which they, as well as we, believe to be *unscriptural and dangerous*.

You will not, my dear friend, understand what I have said in relation to the heathen, in my first letter, as representing the salvation of all who are destitute of the light of the gospel, as being impossible. I have only said, that if the atonement had been made for all mankind, the knowledge of it would have been sent to all nations; and that, as an inspired writer has expressly represented the heathen as being "*without Christ, strangers from the covenants of promise, having NO HOPE and WITHOUT GOD in the world,*" it is altogether improper to say, *a door of hope has been opened for all men—for the heathen*, who are destitute of divine revelation, just as much as for Christians, to whom the gospel is preached. Still I believe, that, as *infants*, who are inca-

pable of hearing and believing the gospel, are saved, not as being free from guilt and depravity, but through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ; so some of the heathen *may* be saved, by the application of the same precious blood. *How* they are brought to participate in the salvation of Christ, I do not know. Jehovah may, if he please, reveal to some, at any time he chooses, so much of the gospel as may be sufficient for the exercise of faith. But in whatever way the application of the atonement may be made, it is altogether *extraordinary*. Of the *means of grace*, the heathen are manifestly destitute: they have no Bible, no Sabbath, no gospel, no ministry of reconciliation; they are ignorant of God and Christ, of the way of peace and salvation.

In my former letter, the two theories in regard to the atonement, that prevail in our church, were compared, in regard to the extent of the atonement. It was, I trust, fairly shown, that the *new* has no advantage over the *old* scheme in this point; that the greater extent which is attributed to *inde-*

*finite* atonement is *nominal*, and not *real*; and that the definite atonement, in respect to the *merits* of Christ's death, the *invitation* of the gospel, the *offers of salvation*, and the *divine purpose*, is quite as extensive as the other.

II. In this letter I propose to examine the second claim of the *New School*; which is, *that their views on this most interesting subject are more compatible WITH A FREE AND GENERAL PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL, AND AN UNFETTERED AND UNRESERVED OFFER OF SALVATION TO ALL SINNERS.*

To this claim we cannot yield. It is a mere gratuitous assumption. You well know, the advocates of the doctrine on this fundamental point that has prevailed in the Presbyterian church from its foundation in this country, and by the teaching of which this church grew and flourished for more than a century, have felt no embarrassment in preaching the gospel indiscriminately, and offering salvation to all, to whom it was their privilege to bear the delightful messages of divine grace.

With the utmost freedom have they published to all their hearers, the great and precious truths embodied in the gospel. They have delighted in celebrating the infinite love and unmerited mercy of Jehovah in providing salvation for sinners, by the mission of his own Son into our fallen and ruined world; and in proclaiming the grand and fundamental truth, that the Redeemer, by his obedience unto death, made a full satisfaction for the sins of his people, and wrought out for them a complete justifying righteousness. They have constantly exhibited him as an all-sufficient Saviour, able and willing to save unto the uttermost, all that will come unto him; assuring their hearers that his blood cleanseth from all sin, and that his righteousness can make the vilest sinner righteous in the eyes of immaculate Purity. They have not ceased to invite all to come to this glorious Redeemer for salvation; urging the acceptance of the invitation, by showing that all are commanded to believe the gospel message, and that God has promised that he will cast

out none who come to him. They ground the offer of salvation on the *atonement* of Christ; and proclaim it as an infallible truth, that whosoever believeth on him shall, without a single exception, be saved. And to all they add the awful truth, that all who refuse the overtures of Divine mercy, and continue in unbelief, will burden their consciences with aggravated guilt, and bring down upon themselves a more terrible condemnation.

Now, in the enunciation of these truths, consists the preaching of the gospel—in exhibiting the infinite love and unmerited mercy of God towards our fallen world, and in setting forth the death and righteousness of his Son, as sufficient for saving the vilest of sinners, and every one who believes; and in grounding on the merits of Immanuel's atonement, a full and free offer of pardon and life, to all who will accept of them on the terms prescribed by Infinite Majesty.

What more can the friends of *indefinite* atonement add? Will they reply—We can assure all our hearers that Christ died for

them? But in what sense? Did he die with an *intention* to save them? No; he died *intentionally* to save the elect alone; God did not *design* by the atonement to *secure* the salvation of others. And how does this view of the subject show the consistency of offering salvation to all, any more than the view we take; who represent the merits of the atonement as sufficient for all, and therefore on this ground offer salvation to all who will accept it? Can they make the offer on any other terms? Can they tell unbelievers that they will be saved? By no means. They declare, as well as we, that he that believeth not shall be damned; and that none can partake of the saving benefits of Christ's death, unless it be applied by faith.

It will, we know, be said, that as Christ, according to the definite scheme, made atonement only for his elect, the offer in preaching the gospel, is made to them alone. But this is a groundless assertion. Ministers are not entrusted with the execution of the secret purposes of Infinite Wisdom; nor

are they acquainted with the elect of God, any further than he is pleased to designate them by the bestowment of his grace. Election is no rule to them, in discharging their official duties. They must publish the gospel to all, and tender salvation to all indiscriminately ; leaving it to the Most High to make the application, and to call his chosen to the enjoyment of salvation, in his own way and time.

Still it may be objected, that, if the atonement has not been made for all, the offer of salvation to all cannot be grounded on the atonement. Why not? The atonement is, in its own nature, sufficient for all ; and if it were applied to all, every son and daughter of Adam would be saved ; but because Jehovah, in his adorable sovereignty, is pleased to apply it to some, and not to all, it certainly does not follow that the benefits of it cannot be offered to all.

But suppose, it may be said, a non-elect person were to believe in Christ and accept the offer of salvation ; would he, for whom no atonement has been made, be saved?

Without hesitation I answer *affirmatively*; just as I would say, that if an elect person were to die in unbelief, he would be damned.

But, before I assign the reasons of this answer, it may be proper to show how the same difficulty applies to the scheme of the new school. They believe in the doctrine of election; they say Christ died *intentionally* to save only the elect; that God did not *design* to secure by the atonement the salvation of any other men: and they must admit that Christ intercedes, not for the world, but for them whom God has given him. Now, we ask, suppose a non-elect person were to believe, would he be saved? one whom they say Christ did not die *intentionally* to save; one whose salvation God did not design to secure by the atonement; one for whom the great High Priest in heaven does not intercede: would such a person, in these circumstances, be saved, if he were to believe? Our brethren have to meet the same difficulty. And in fact it comes in the way of every one who ad-

mits the *foreknowledge* of God, and believes that the application of the atonement depends on his *sovereign grace*.

But, after all, cannot the difficulty in reference either to election, or to a definite atonement, be lessened, if not solved? Election secures the salvation of its objects; but it interposes no obstacle in the way of the salvation of the non-elect. Jehovah will, in his own appointed time and manner, bring to a saving union with his Son, all whom he has destined to immortal glory; but the grace which he is pleased to impart to his chosen, does not prevent others from repenting and believing, as he commands them. He only withholds from them what they have no right to claim; yet, if in obedience to his command, they were to repent and believe, he would doubtless fulfil to them the promise directed to all believers.

These observations will apply to the atonement. Were a non-elect person to believe in Christ, he would receive all the benefits of his death; which, in that case,

would actually become to him an atonement; for let it be remembered, it is the *application* of his death that makes it truly an atonement or reconciliation. The purpose of God to apply the merits of his Son's death to his chosen, ensures the application to them, and their consequent salvation; but this divine purpose does not create any hindrance to others; it only leaves them to the influence and operation of their native depravity and wicked unbelief.

The answer we have given to the question, grounded on a supposed case that will never happen, can be justified on the principles that regulate common conversation, and on the principles that governed the language of inspired teachers, by the infallible connexion between faith and salvation, and by the nature of the atonement—

1. *On the principles that regulate common conversation.* Of a man who has just escaped from the flames that consumed his dwelling, we say, he would have perished, if he had slept longer; and of one lost at sea, he might have been living, if he

had not gone on that voyage. The farmer says, I should have had a fine crop, had it not been for that drought which withered my grain; and, again, I should have made a profitable sale of my articles, if the market had not been so glutted. Ten thousand similar observations are made; all predicating a different state of things, on the supposition that the cause that has produced the existing state of things had not occurred.

2. *The principles that governed the language of inspired teachers, justify the answer.* That perverse generation of Israelites that came out of Egypt, failed to enter into the land of promise; and from the event it is certain that it was the Divine *intention* not to bring them into the possession. Yet this generation was commanded and encouraged to march forward, and take the promised inheritance. "Behold," said Moses to them, "the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; *fear not, nei-*

*ther be discouraged.*” And when they were dismayed at the report of the spies, their leader said, “Dread not, neither be afraid of them. The Lord your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes.”—Deut. i. 21, 29, 30.

The event also proved it to be the secret purpose of Jehovah to establish the kingdom of Israel in the family of David; yet hear the language of Samuel, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, on the supposition that Saul had been obedient to the Divine commandment: “And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.”—1 Sam. xiii. 13, 14.

Tyre and Sidon, the Saviour assures us, would have repented in sackcloth and ashes, if the mighty works that were done in Chorazin and Bethsaida had been done in them; and he also says, that if the mighty works that were done in Capernaum had been done in Sodom, it would have continued to his day.—Matt. xi. 21, 23.

When Paul was in danger of shipwreck, as he was sailing to Rome, he was assured, by promise, that his life and the lives of all on shipboard, for his sake, should be preserved. No condition was annexed to the promise; it was absolute. Yet this inspired man, who had unshaken confidence in Jehovah's word, when he saw through the sailors' design to escape with the boat, under pretence of casting out anchors, did not hesitate to say to the centurion and the soldiers: "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." From this declaration we may unquestionably infer, that they would have perished, if the sailors' design had been accomplished. What then would have become of the promise? But Jeho-

vah took care of his own faithfulness. The warning of Paul produced its effect. "The soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off." Thus this promise of God, like his other promises, was accomplished by appropriate means. See Acts xxvii. 22-25. 30-32. See also 2 Kings viii. 10. ch. xiii. 19.

3. Our answer can be justified by the *certain and infallible connexion which God has established between faith and salvation*. "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me, shall never die." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." But I need not cite passages to prove what will not be denied. Now, this infallible connexion between faith and salvation, authorizes a minister of the gospel to assure every individual to whom he preaches, that if he believe he will most certainly be saved. Jehovah has pledged his word, and he can and will fulfil his promise.

4. *The nature of the Redeemer's work will justify the reply.* In what did this work consist? In his obedience unto death in our nature; or in his active and passive obedience. In regard to the first branch of the Saviour's work, it is manifest that, while obeying the precepts of the Divine law, in the room and stead of his chosen people, he observed them as perfectly, and his obedience was as glorious, as if he had been acting as the representative of many millions more. And in regard to the second branch, we believe, that the great Redeemer, in effecting the salvation of all who shall be saved, submitted to as much humiliation, and endured as extreme misery, as would have been demanded from him, on the supposition that the sins of all mankind had been imputed to him. He bore the *curse* of the divine law, the punishment due to our sins: and by the infinite dignity of the sufferer, more honour was done to the penalty of the law, than would have been done to it by the everlasting punishment of our whole race.

Hence while the atonement is *definite*, being *intentionally* made only for those given to Christ by the Father to be redeemed by him, it was necessarily, in its *own nature* and *intrinsic value*, sufficient for the salvation of every son and daughter of Adam.

Now, on this infinite worth of the atonement, are grounded the general invitations and offers of the gospel. In preaching, we are not indeed authorized to tell every man that Christ died *specifically* for him, or that an atonement was made for him: but we are authorized to say, that the Son of God came to save sinners of our race; that he has, in our nature made an atonement for sin, suited to the case of human sinners, and that, in its intrinsic value, it is infinite; and that he is able and willing to save unto the uttermost, all that will come to him. On this basis we invite all to apply to him for salvation, and tender to all the offers of Divine mercy; assuring them that if they will accept the offers made, they shall certainly be saved: for

the mouth of the Lord has uttered the promise, and it cannot fail to be accomplished. It will follow, then, that if a non-elect person were to believe, he would certainly be saved.

Let this be further illustrated, by advert-  
ing to the covenant made with Adam, who  
represented all his natural posterity. Such  
was the nature of that covenant and of his  
representative conduct, that had his poste-  
rity been two-fold more numerous than  
they in fact will be, the consequences of  
his disobedience would extend to them the  
same destructive influence that will reach  
all who shall actually descend from him.  
Similar was the nature of the covenant of  
redemption, and of the work of obedience,  
done by the Saviour as the representative  
of his people. Had it pleased his eternal  
Father to have increased the number given  
to him to be redeemed, no alteration in his  
work of suffering and obedience would  
have been required.

In regard to Adam's posterity it is true,  
that as the number had been determined on

before his apostacy, the number could not be increased after that fatal event; because this would have brought evil on immortal beings not originally represented by him, and so an act of injustice would have been done to them. But were the number appointed to salvation to be increased, no objection could be made to the increase on the score of injustice; because they would be made partakers of a *benefit*, and not of an injury. Besides, were any to whom it was not the Divine intention to apply the merits of the Redeemer's death to believe, they would, by their faith, be brought into a saving union with him; and consequently would come into contact with that blood that cleanseth from all sin, and gain an interest in that righteousness "which is unto all and upon all them that believe." Thus united to Christ and interested in his merits, they would be sheltered from Divine wrath, and be entitled to eternal life. "There is therefore, now, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

In this representation, I do not perceive any inconsistency with the statements made in my former letter. For whatever was said in regard to the connexion between the death of Christ and the Divine intention, it was shown, that, in strictness of speech, the death of Immanuel *is not* an atonement to *any* UNTIL IT BE APPLIED; and consequently it follows, as stated above, that it will infallibly produce reconciliation between God and all and every one, without excepting any individual, who shall believe, and thus have its efficacy applied to his soul.

But will it be objected, that, on the ground on which we represent the offers of salvation to be made to the non-elect, they might be made to devils? We think not, for two reasons: first, because our commission does not extend to them: and this reason, our brethren must allow, precludes the offers of salvation to damned spirits, for whom, they say, the atonement was made: and secondly, because the atonement is not suited to the case of devils, not having

been made in the nature of angels, but in the nature of man. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also, likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through death were all their life long subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him *the nature* of angels; but he took on him the *seed* of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it BEHOVED him to be made *like to his brethren*, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."—Heb. ii. 14–17.

It now appears, I trust, that, on the plan of *definite* atonement, the invitations of the gospel can be most sincerely given to all who hear it preached; that the offers of salvation can be most freely and unreservedly presented to all who will accept them; that it is the duty of all to believe, because Jehovah commands them so to do; and that those who refuse the overtures of mercy,

and wilfully reject an offered Saviour, will be justly punished for their *unbelief*, as well as for their other sins. No unbeliever will, in the day of judgment, be able to discover in our views of the atonement, as its opponents imagine, any thing insincere or unreasonable, on which to found a fair excuse for unbelief. It will then appear, that although Christ died to make an atonement for his own people, yet, if others had believed, his death would have been an atonement to them also, and would have saved them from the curse of God, under which they must for ever sink in hopeless misery.

Addressing the Jews, who had crucified the Lord of glory, Peter said, "Him being delivered by the *determinate counsel and foreknowledge* of God, ye have taken, and with *wicked hands* have crucified and slain."—Acts. ii. 23. Here it is affirmed, not only that God foreknew how the Jews would treat his Son, but that he did, by his *determinate counsel*, deliver him into their hands; and yet the inspired speaker

charges on the consciences of his hearers the horrible crime of having, with wicked hands, seized him, and put him to death. Of consequence, sinners can derive from the secret purpose of Jehovah, no excuse for their unbelief and wilful rejection of an offered Saviour.

Very affectionately, yours, &c.

## LETTER III.

*Divine Grace in the Recovery of fallen Man.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

In my last letter it was, I hope, fairly proved, that the doctrine of the new school has no advantage over that of the old, in respect to a general and free preaching of the gospel, and an unfettered and unreserved offer of salvation to all men. We can invite all to come to Christ, as sincerely as any of our brethren. We can offer salvation to all, as freely as they; and hold out as many inducements and encouragements to incline the perishing to come to the munificent feast which grace has prepared. We can exhibit the promises in all their fulness and riches, as well as they; and thunder out the denunciations of a righteous God, against all who disbelieve the gospel and reject the Saviour.

III. But the advocates of *indefinite* atonement claim that their views correspond best with THE FREENESS AND SOVEREIGNTY OF DIVINE GRACE, *displayed in the recovery of fallen man.*

They contend that to represent the death of Christ as a real and complete satisfaction to divine justice for the sins of his people, is to set aside the grace of God in their salvation. If, say they, salvation was really purchased for them by the Redeemer's sacrifice, then salvation must be granted to them as a matter of *debt*, and not as a *free and gratuitous gift*; and besides, as the price has been paid and accepted, justice requires that all for whom it was paid, should be immediately justified and released from captivity.

In reply to the latter part of this statement, I shall here observe briefly, that the scheme sketched by the wisdom of our opponents, is not the plan devised by infinite wisdom. That sinners should be justified before they were born, and be released from condemnation as soon as they came

into the world, was no part of Jehovah's plan. It was the pleasure both of the Father who gave them to his Son to be redeemed, and of his Son who bought them with his blood, that they should remain under the curse of the law, until they should believe on the Redeemer. Then, and not till then, are they, or can they be, justified. This was the plan of infinite wisdom; and so it is drawn by the pen of inspiration. Christ paid the price of our redemption, that the benefits of it might be applied to his people in the way and time determined on by divine sovereignty: and surely he had a right to arrange the economy of salvation, as was most pleasing to himself.

In regard to the former part of the statement, examination will show, that the objection, if it have any force, will apply to the doctrine of the *new*, as well as to that of the *old* school. Man was fallen; and God, in infinite mercy, determined to save him. But a mighty obstacle was in the way of his salvation. It must be removed, or man must perish. None in heaven or on

earth, among all the creatures of God, is able to remove it. The Son of God alone is equal to the stupendous undertaking; and even he can accomplish it in no other way than by humiliation the most profound, and sufferings the most overwhelming. His obedience unto death is required, to make it consistent for a righteous God to exercise his mercy in saving sinful men. Now, it cannot be denied that the inspired writers speak of the Saviour's death as an invaluable price, by which his people were purchased. "For," says Paul, "ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. vi. 20. By the same motive does Peter enforce a holy and heavenly conversation: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not *redeemed* with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the *precious blood* of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

By his death *we* say that Christ satisfied

divine justice for all true believers: and our *brethren* say, by his death Christ made an exhibition of divine justice, and satisfied *public* justice, so that God can now save all who believe. But if we view his death in either light, it will appear that it was the *procuring cause* of our salvation; and that without the intervention of his fearful sufferings, none of our guilty race could have been saved. The death of Christ our brethren represent as being a *substitute* for our sufferings, and some, if not all, will allow it to have been an equivalent for them. If then the justice of God, (call it what you will, *public* or *distributive*,) required the amazing sufferings of his own Son for the salvation of sinners, and he, by them, actually satisfied the demands of justice; where, to adopt their own language, we ask, is the free and sovereign grace of God in a salvation thus dearly bought? The objection then applies to the doctrine of the *new* school, as well as to that of the *old*.

When it is affirmed that sinners are saved

by *absolute* grace, our brethren do not mean that salvation is bestowed on them *without respect to the atonement of Christ*; for they affirm an atonement to have been so necessary, that none of our sinful race could, without the death of Christ, have been saved consistently with the glory of the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Where then, we again ask, is the grace of God, in salvation procured by so costly a sacrifice?

A writer, I know not where to place him, says, if I understand him, that the sufferings of Christ were not a full equivalent for the execution of the penalty of the law on those who are saved; because this would be destructive to the grace of God in our salvation. Now, if this objection have any weight, it must depend on the assumption, that so far as the sufferings of Christ were necessary to our salvation, the grace of God is diminished: because if a full equivalent for our sufferings, or a complete substitution for them, be wholly inconsistent with the freeness and sovereignty

of divine grace, then, for the same reason, a partial equivalent, or a partial substitution for them must be, in its degree, inconsistent with the freeness and sovereignty of divine grace. What consequence follows? Clearly this: if we had been saved, without the intervention of the death of Christ, by a sovereign act of Jehovah in remitting our sins, there would have been a *more* glorious display of free and sovereign grace. But who that has read the scriptures attentively, does not know that such a conclusion would be at war with the strains in which they celebrate redeeming love? Do they not teach us to consider the method of saving sinners, through the humiliation and death of the Son of God, as affording the highest display of divine love and mercy? Hear our Lord himself: "God so loved the world, that he *gave his only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Hear his Apostle John: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because *he laid down his life* for us." "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.*” Now, these declarations are manifestly based on the fact, that a richer and more glorious display of divine love has been made in our salvation, through the incarnation, sufferings and death of Christ, than could have been made in saving sinners without so costly a sacrifice; and that grace is magnified, not in proportion as the Saviour’s sufferings are diminished, but rather in proportion as they are increased. The exhibition of the Father’s love brightens at every step in his Son’s humiliation; and shines with the greatest splendour, when the Lord of glory, in the midst of the preternatural darkness, suffering under the hidings of his Father’s face, is heard to exclaim, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” and then bows his head and gives up the ghost.

This objection, then, militates against the plain language of holy scripture, which teaches us, that, if we would form exalted views of Jehovah's infinite love and sovereign grace, we are not to diminish the Redeemer's sufferings, but look at them in all the extent of agony, terror and dismay to which they were carried by divine justice. "He that SPARED *not* his OWN Son, but *delivered him up* for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

We believe, my dear sir, you well know, all the benefits of salvation to be the fruits of Christ's death, and purchased by him for all who will accept them; and yet, in perfect consistency, we believe that they all flow from unmerited grace and infinite love. Both these propositions are plainly taught in holy scripture.

1. The inspired writers represent every blessing of salvation as the fruit of Christ's death.

*Forgiveness* is the fruit of his death. "In whom we have redemption through

his *blood*, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the *riches* of his *grace*." Ephes. i. 4. "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for *Christ's sake* hath forgiven you." Ephes. iv. 3. *Reconciliation* is the fruit of his death; "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." 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. "And, having made peace through the *blood* of his cross, by him to *reconcile* all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the *body* of his flesh through *death*, to present you holy, and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight." Col. i. 20-22. *Justification* is the fruit of his death. "Being *justified* freely by his grace, through the *redemption* that is

in Christ Jesus." Rom. iii. 23. *Peace* is the fruit of his death. "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our *peace*, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." Ephes. ii. 13, 14. *Adoption* is the fruit of his death. "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the *adoption* of sons." Gal. iv. 4, 5. *Sanctification* is the fruit of his death. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might *sanctify* and cleanse it by the washing of water, by the word." Ephes. v. 25, 26. The *heavenly inheritance* is a fruit of his death. "And for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament that, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of *eternal*

*inheritance.*” Heb. ix. 15. “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is *eternal life* THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.”

From these texts of holy scripture, it appears undeniable, that all the blessings of salvation come to us as fruits of the Redeemer’s death; and as his death was the *price* which he paid for them, it must conclusively follow, that they were all purchased for believers by his death.

2. But the inspired writers, while they teach this truth so fully, teach with equal plainness and fulness, that all the blessings of salvation are the *fruits of free and sovereign grace*. In the present discussion it is unnecessary to go into any laboured proof of this point; because it is freely and cordially admitted by our brethren, from whom we differ in our views of the atonement. Were proof required, it might, by an induction of particulars, be shown that each benefit of salvation is attributed to the free and abounding grace of God. “By *grace* are ye saved, through faith; and that

not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Ephes. ii. 8. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his *grace*, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Tit. iii. 5—7.

Now, as the scriptures teach us that we are saved by the death of Christ, or that all the blessings of salvation were purchased by his blood; and teach us also that we are saved by free grace, or that all the blessings of salvation flow from unmerited mercy; if there be any difficulty in reconciling these two doctrines so fully and distinctly taught in the Scriptures, the difficulty manifestly grows out of the revelation of an omniscient God. It is our duty in humble submission to his infallible teaching, to receive both truths, how irreconcilable soever they may appear to our feeble understandings. A little more light, and difficulties

of this kind would vanish. What mysterious doctrine of the Bible would be received by us, if it were not received till all difficulties attached to it were removed? Who can fully explain the doctrine of the *Trinity*, the doctrine of the *incarnation* of the Son of God, the doctrine of *divine influence*? Yet every Christian believes them.

But the Scriptures contemplate no difficulty in regard to these two important truths; they consider them as perfectly consistent and harmonious: for they exhibit them in close connexion in the same verses; as will appear from a reference to the texts just quoted. “In whom we have *redemption* through his *blood*, the forgiveness of sins, according to the *riches* of his *grace*.” Here the blood of Christ is represented as the *price* of our redemption; and yet forgiveness is represented as flowing from the *riches* of *divine grace*. Again: “Being justified *freely* by his *grace* through the *redemption* that is in Christ Jesus.” Here justification is attributed to the free grace of God; and at the same

time it is attributed to the *redemption* of Christ, or to his blood, which is the *price* of our redemption. Again: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might *grace* reign through *righteousness* unto eternal life." What is the meaning of this passage? Plainly this: As sin, the procuring cause of every evil, reigns in all the calamities brought on our guilty world, and extends its destructive ravages unto death; so grace, the original spring of our salvation, reigns, through the *righteousness* of Christ, the procuring cause of every blessing, from the beginning to the consummation of salvation.

We cannot, my dear brother, but feel surprised that any should apprehend an inconsistency between the two propositions—that the righteousness of Christ is the *procuring* cause, and divine grace the *original spring*, of our salvation.

The scriptures, you know, set OUR *works* and the *grace* of God in opposition; and represent salvation by works, and salvation by grace as being wholly incompatible. "And if by grace, then is it no more of

works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." Rom. xi. 6. But, while this opposition between grace and our works, as the procuring cause of salvation, is abundantly exhibited by the inspired writers, no where, not in a single passage, do they set the grace of God in opposition to the *works* or *righteousness* of Jesus Christ.

To the great Redeemer the covenant of redemption was indeed a covenant of works. His obedience unto death was the very work the law demanded of him as our *Surety*; and consequently to *Him* the reward was not of *grace*, but of *debt*; a reward secured by the promise of his Father to him, for the glorious services he had done in execution of his mediatorial office. At the close of life, when offering up his intercessory prayer for his church, HE could say "Father I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do:" and on the ground of his obedience utter that divine language, "Father, I *will*, that they also whom thou hast given me, be

with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me ; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." John xvii. 4, 24.

But to *us* the covenant is *wholly* of grace ; inasmuch as it secures to us all the blessings of salvation, not on the footing of *our own works*, but on the footing of our Redeemer's righteousness. All is the fruit of grace. It was grace that planned our salvation. It was grace that chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. It was grace that accepted the mediation of Christ. It was grace that provided the Mediator in the person of God's own son. It was grace that revealed the wonderful plan of redemption. It is grace that offers salvation, and grace that applies it. It is grace that remits our sins and justifies us when we believe in Christ. It is grace that begins the work of sanctification ; grace that carries it on ; and grace that crowns it with glory. To our own salvation we do not contribute a *particle of merit*. It is not for *our righteousness*, but purely for the *righteousness of Christ* that we are saved. I am, &c.

## LETTER IV.

*Objections Answered.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

The object I had in view in my last, was to show how well our doctrine of the atonement corresponds with a full and glorious display of the free and sovereign grace of God in man's salvation.

In this, I propose to resume that subject, by replying to some of the objections urged in recent publications.

To illustrate the entire harmony between the grace of God in our salvation, and the righteousness of Christ as its procuring cause, the subject may be viewed in a different light from that in which it has already been presented.

Speaking of the great Redeemer, the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews says, "Though he were a *Son*, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered ;

and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him." Heb. v. 8, 9. Salvation, then, is the work of Christ; and consequently the whole of it from beginning to the end must be attributed to his grace. All its blessings are deposited in his hands; and HE distributes them as he pleases. Hence it is recorded, "Of HIS *fulness* have all we received, and grace for grace:" John i. 16; and he himself says, "As thou, Father, hast given him power over all flesh, that *he should give* eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." John xvii. 2. He is the inexhaustible fountain from which all blessings flow to believing sinners. "Our life is hid with *Christ* in God." Col. iii. 3. He is the *vine* that bears all the branches, and imparts to them life and fruitfulness. John xv. 5, 6. He is the *Head*, from which all vital influence is derived to every member of his mystical body. Col. ii. 19. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:" Gal. ii. 20. "I give unto" my sheep "eternal life; and

they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." John x. 28.

It is plain, then, that Christ both procured salvation for us, and distributes all its blessings according to his sovereign pleasure. But shall we imagine his grace to be less free and glorious, because he became obedient unto death, in order that he might become the author of eternal salvation unto all who obey him? Do we owe him less, because he fulfilled the law in our place, and satisfied all the demands of justice against us by enduring the penalty due to sin? Would his grace have been more free, more conspicuous, more illustrious, if he had humbled himself less, and suffered less, in accomplishing our salvation? Let an inspired writer answer these questions: "Ye know the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich." 2 Cor. viii. 9. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who *loved* me, and *gave* himself for me." Gal. ii. 20. It is in the

depth of that humiliation to which the great Redeemer submitted, and in the greatness of those sufferings which he endured for our sins, that the riches of his grace, and the fervency of his love are to be seen to the best advantage; and it is from the purchase he made of salvation for us, while hanging on the accursed tree, that the strongest motive to obedience is drawn. “For ye are *bought* with a *price*: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” 1 Cor. vi. 20. “The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.” 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

Now, if the sufferings of Christ for our salvation do not detract from his grace in saving us; and if the payment of his life as the *price* of our redemption is not at all inconsistent with his love in redeeming us, nor with his sovereign pleasure in bestowing redemption on sinners; then it will fol-

low that his sufferings do not detract from his Father's grace, and that the payment of the inestimable price he made is not inconsistent with his Father's love in our salvation, and does not at all infringe upon his adorable sovereignty in its application; because the Father and the Son, being one in nature and perfections, are most perfectly harmonious in all their counsels, designs, and operations. But this idea will receive a fuller illustration, when the objection referred to is taken up.

Previously to that, let us see how the difficulty is removed by the new doctrine, and how its advocates harmonize the *justice* and the *grace* of God displayed in the salvation of sinful men. While they admit that, by the death of Christ, *public* justice was satisfied, they maintain that *distributive* justice is not satisfied. They further say that "public justice demands that the greatest good of the universe should be promoted, that the greatest possible sum of happiness among intelligent beings should

be brought into existence;”\* consequently public *justice demands* the salvation of all who believe in Christ. Now, here is the very difficulty to which they object in the doctrine of the old school: for if *justice* demands the salvation of believers, where, to use their language, is the *grace* displayed in the salvation of sinners? How can they be saved by *grace*, if they are saved by *justice*? But, it has been shown, according to our views of the scheme of redemption, that grace and justice perfectly harmonize. Our brethren, however, by trying to get rid of what seemed to them an insuperable objection, have created a real difficulty. They represent the justice of God as at once demanding the *salvation* and the *damnation* of believers: for it will scarcely be denied, that both public and distributive justice are the justice of one and the same divine Being. Distributive justice they say, “demands that every person should be treated according to his moral character,” and “that the guilty

\* Dial. on Atonement, p. 21.

should be punished.”\* It follows, therefore, that as believers will for ever remain, as they teach, *guilty* even in heaven, that distributive justice will eternally demand their *punishment*. But the demands of public justice, it seems, will prevail over the demands of distributive justice; and consequently the public justice of God will forever preserve all believers in the enjoyment of heavenly happiness, in opposition to the unceasing demands of his distributive justice. So much for this scheme of removing the difficulty.

In a recent publication, I have met with the following remarks: “And if Christ has suffered that very penalty involved in the eternal condemnation of the elect, as some contend, then they ought to be liberated on the principles of the law. Their debt is paid. There is but *one being* in the universe to whom these persons would be indebted for their release; and that is the friend who paid their debt, or suffered the

\* Dial. on Atonement, p. 29.

penalty of the law in their stead.”\* Bold assertions indeed! The writer is led to the conclusion he has here formed, merely by pushing a metaphor far beyond the limits intended by those who use it. It is well known that the disciples of the old school illustrate the doctrine of the atonement by referring to transactions occurring between debtor and creditor. With this illustration they have been furnished by the Saviour himself; as will appear from the petition prescribed by him, “Forgive us our *debts* as we forgive our *debtors* ;” and from the parable he spake about the servant who owed his Lord ten thousand talents. Here the Redeemer compares sins to debts, and the forgiveness of them to the remission of a debt by a creditor.

It is a feature of the old school divinity, of which it is hoped its pupils will never be ashamed, and one in which they differ from most of the new school writers, that they are fond of the language of scripture, and have little regard to any theological

\* Beman, p. 41.

reasonings which are not clearly sanctioned by the authority of the inspired penmen. In regard to the point before us, it should be remembered that not only do we find such expressions and illustrations in the New Testament as those already quoted, but such as the following: "Ye are not your own, for ye are *bought with a price.*" 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. "*Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men.*" 1 Cor. vii. 23. "Denying the Lord that *bought them.*" 2 Pet. ii. 1. Nay, the whole work of our salvation is frequently denominated from a pecuniary transaction—It is called REDEMPTION, and believers are said to be REDEEMED. Now *redemption*, it is well known, in its literal signification, refers to the price which is paid for a prisoner or a slave—The same is also the import of the term RANSOM—"Justified through the *redemption* that is in Christ." Rom. iii. 24. "In whom we have *redemption* through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Ephes. i. 7. "Having obtained

eternal *redemption* for us." Heb. ix. 12. "Christ hath *redeemed* us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Gal. iii. 13. "Ye were not *redeemed* with corruptible things as silver and gold—but with the precious blood of Christ." 1 Pet. i. 18. "Thou hast *redeemed* us to God by thy *blood*." Rev. v. 9. "The Son of man came to give his life *a ransom* for many." Matt. xx. 28. "Who gave himself *a ransom* for all, to be testified in due time." 1 Tim. ii. 6. While we have such a warrant as is contained in these, and many similar passages, we shall never hesitate to illustrate the doctrine of atonement by the similitude of debtor and creditor; nor to speak confidently of the *satisfaction* of Christ. At the same time, we shall be careful not to push this similitude to an *unlawful extreme*, nor to represent the satisfaction of Christ as *tallying in all respects*, with that which is made in human transactions.

But all these illustrations, although borrowed directly from the volume of inspira-

tion, appear to be thought improper by the writer on whom we remark; for from one of them, which virtually embraces the whole, he derives an argument which he deems subversive of our whole doctrine. Hear him: "Your neighbour becomes indebted to you in a large amount, which he is utterly unable to pay. You resort to legal coercion—institute a prosecution, and eventually lodge him in prison. A third person, actuated by benevolence, inquires into the affair—is touched with pity for the tenant of the jail—becomes his legal surety—pays the whole demand, and restores him to personal freedom. Now, we ask, on what principle that man is permitted to cross the threshold of his prison? Must he come to your feet, and beg to be released; or may he boldly demand liberty on the principles of law? And when he again rejoices in the light of heaven, to whom shall he express his gratitude; to his benefactor who paid the debt, or to you who set him at liberty when the last jot and tittle of your demand was extinguished? It

is manifest that you have no farther claim upon this man, because the debt is paid. He has a legal right to a discharge; and on the score of gratitude he is indebted to that benefactor alone who cancelled the demand.”\*

This case the author adduces as parallel to that of the atonement, according to the views of his brethren whom he is opposing. We deny the fact. Let him find, in pecuniary transactions, if he can, a *perfect parallel*; and then he may push the comparison as far as he pleases, and we shall be ready to meet all the consequences. But this case is by no means parallel. Here it is supposed that the creditor has no agency in bringing forward the surety; and of course no gratitude is due to him for the payment of the debt. But let us suppose the creditor to provide the surety, and to engage his own son to become responsible for the debt, and to consent to his being found in a state of humiliation, while procuring the means to enable him to make the payment;

\* Beman, p. 39

would not, we ask, the debtor be, in that case, under obligations of gratitude to his merciful creditor, and have reason to thank him for the recovery of his liberty? Surely Mr. B. has not yet to learn that the Father, who demands from sinners payment of the debt which they have contracted by violating his holy law, is constantly exhibited by us as being so merciful that HE *provided* the surety for our fallen race, and that he sent into the world his *only begotten Son*, in a state of the deepest humiliation, to pay the debt which we could never have extinguished!

Again, in this case it is supposed, that the debt is paid *absolutely*, so that the creditor is compelled by law and justice to release the debtor immediately. But let us change the circumstances. Suppose a benevolent individual visits a prison filled with debtors—He finds one who had contracted his debt through folly and vice. But he is touched at the recital of his case, and determines to pay his debt. Wishing, however, to reclaim the unfortunate man,

and to humble his lofty spirit, he tells him, I will pay your debt; but remember, the payment will be made on this condition, that you shall not enjoy the intended benefit and obtain your freedom, till you acknowledge your fault to your creditor, and ask his forgiveness of your improper conduct towards him. Now, from this arrangement it is plain, that this debtor could not, on principles of law or justice, claim a release, until he had submitted to the prescribed condition; and his creditor could justly detain him in prison, with a view of humbling his proud heart, and bringing him to the required acknowledgment.

Jehovah had a perfect right to arrange the economy of salvation as he pleased; and his Son had a perfect right to pay the price of our redemption under what stipulations he chose. For aught we know, the plan, in respect to the application of the atonement, might have been different from what it really is, in a variety of respects. The whole economy of salvation was arranged in the counsels of infinite wisdom.

It is what the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost chose it should be; and to carry into effect this wonderful scheme, the eternal Son of God laid down his life as a ransom for us, or as the price of our redemption.

But pecuniary transactions, we not only admit but insist, can furnish no *perfect* parallel to the mysterious transaction of saving sinners. A creditor cannot refuse the payment of his debt by a third person: but Jehovah might have exacted the debt from every sinner, and refused the mediation of a surety. A debtor may provide his surety; but a sinner cannot, and must be indebted for the blessing to the bounty of his offended sovereign. The creditor's pecuniary demands are satisfied the moment his debt is paid: but the demands of God upon the sinner are not satisfied till he believe in Christ, although the price of our redemption was paid long before he came into existence. The debtor, after the payment of his debt by another, is not commonly under obligation to his creditor for releasing him from prison: but the sinner must, accord-

ing to the provisions of the covenant of redemption, be under eternal obligations to the Father, for delivering him from the curse of the law and the prison of hell, through the atoning sacrifice of his own Son. In human transactions the surety is a different individual from the creditor: but in the divine transaction of saving sinners, the Son, our surety, though a different person from the Father, yet is with him one and the same infinite Being.

It is absurd then to infer that because the inspired writers illustrate the doctrine of atonement by referring to pecuniary transactions, that it must resemble them in every particular; and it is equally absurd from the fact that the atonement does not agree with pecuniary transactions in every particular, to infer that it cannot agree with them in some general principle, and is not *a price* in any sense whatever.

Let us view the remarks of the writer last quoted, a little closer, and we shall find in them several important errors.

“Their debt is paid. The law has no

further demand; grace and pardon are out of the question." So says this author, but so say not the inspired writers. The entire consistency between the grace of God in our pardon and the satisfaction of Christ for sin, has already been shown; and any further proof on the subject is deemed unnecessary. But in regard to the law, it is perfectly plain from the testimony of scripture, that on *unbelievers* it has all its demands, and that they must remain under the curse, till they believe in Christ; for the stipulations between the Father and the Son are such, that they secure an actual release from its *penal* demands ONLY to *believers*.

"There is but ONE BEING in the universe to whom they would be indebted for their release; and that is the friend who paid their debt, or suffered the penalty of the law in their stead." Is this the language of a professed *trinitarian*? Does he not know that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are ONE BEING? Does he not know that they are so perfectly ONE, that

if in prayer we address the Son, we address the Father and the Spirit; and that if we address the Father we address the Godhead? He has surely read what our Lord declared to the Jews: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." John vi. 22, 23. Does he not know that there is a perfect concurrence of all the persons in the Godhead in all their works; and that although one part of the work of man's redemption is peculiarly appropriated to one person, and another to another person in the divine Trinity, yet they all concur in every part? Has he not read the Saviour's declaration? "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doth the Son likewise." John v. 19. And after all this, in opposition to the perfect *unity* of the Father, Son and

Spirit, and to their entire concurrence in all their works, does he venture to make so round and unqualified an assertion—"There is but ONE BEING in the universe to whom they would be indebted for their release; and that is the friend who paid their debt or suffered the penalty of the law in their stead?" Now, from this difficulty the writer cannot extricate himself by saying he admits the *unity* of the *Divine Being*, and that we are indebted both to the Son and the Father; because this would be abandoning his argument, which was to show, that, if Christ paid our debt, or suffered the penalty of the law in our stead, then we are indebted for our release not to the Father, but to the Son alone, as if they were not *one and the same being*.

This objection to the truth betrays its origin.—*Infidelity* forged it. Christians have received it at her hands.

But the author may say, as in fact he has said, "Be it so, that mercy to redeemed man is the same; but by whom is this mercy exercised. Surely not by God the Father.

It is a vital principle of that scheme against which we contend, to represent the Father as rigidly insisting upon the infliction of the whole penalty of the law, before he consents to the offer of salvation to a rebellious world. Every particle of the curse must be inflicted. Every jot and tittle of the law must be executed."

"Now, if when the penalty of the law was about to fall on sinners, the Son of God came forward and endured the exact amount of suffering due, on legal principles, to these sinners, be the number great or small, then *the whole mercy involved in their redemption is expressed by Christ alone.* The Father, as one of the persons of the Trinity, is inflexibly just, *without any inclination to the exercise of mercy*; while the Son is so merciful, that he has suffered the most rigid demands of the law, in order to obtain the consent of the Father to the salvation of his people. This representation appears to us derogatory to the character of God. It annihilates the attribute of mercy, and represents the Son as a kind of milder Deity who

has interposed and answered the stern demands of the Father, in behalf of his people, and in this way literally purchased them from perdition.”\*

*The Father is without any inclination to the exercise of mercy!!! The whole mercy involved in redemption is expressed by Christ alone!!!*” And is this a fair representation of the views of those who cordially believe what is stated in the Confession of Faith? “*Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father’s justice in their behalf. Yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for any thing in them, their justification is only of free grace; that both the exact justice, and rich grace of GOD, might be glorified in the justification of sinners.*” chap. ii. sec. 3. Had the author, who has *subscribed* the Con-

\* Beman, p. 37.

fession of Faith, attended to this and other articles of that admirable summary of Christian doctrine, it might have kept him from making such unjust misrepresentations of his brethren's views and statements.

But does he not know that all intelligent advocates of the scheme he opposes, have uniformly represented the plan of redemption as originating in the *unmerited mercy and boundless love of GOD THE FATHER*? Does he not know that they believe the attributes of Jehovah to be *immutable*; and that they teach that the death of Christ was not the *cause*, but the *fruit*, of mercy, as an attribute of the Father? Does he not know that, while they believe the satisfaction of Christ to have been necessary to a consistent and honourable exercise of mercy, they regard the gift of Christ as the *highest demonstration* of the FATHER'S UNBOUNDED MERCY! Does he not know that they can, with as much emphasis as he, repeat the delightful encomium passed on the *Father's love* by the Redeemer? "God so loved the world that he gave his *only-begotten*

*Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” Does he not know that they constantly teach that “the love of God was the *cause*, and not the *effect* of the atonement?” These facts he ought to have known, before he assailed an important doctrine in the *Confession of Faith* and of the BIBLE; but if he did know them, he must account for misrepresenting so greatly the views of his brethren, as well as he can.

But I have not done with the quotations from this writer. If his remarks have any force they apply to his own scheme. He maintains the *necessity* of an atonement, to open the way for the exercise of divine mercy, and he has spent a whole sermon on that point, and in showing the love which God bears to his holy law. He contends that unless satisfaction had been made to *public justice*, salvation would have been impossible. Now, he believes that the *Son* and not the Father, became incarnate; that the *Son*, and not the Father, humbled him-

self; that the *Son*, and not the Father, suffered; that the *Son*, and not the Father, bled and died on a cross; that the *Son*, and not the Father, made an atonement; that the *Son*, and not the Father, intercedes for sinners. He expressly says, "In the case of all believers, and such and such only will be saved, *the misery which Christ endured, is the real and only ground of their release; because without these sufferings, or the atonement, there could have been NO PARDON OR GRACE FOR SINNERS.*"\* What follows from all this? Why, if his remarks be just, then it will follow, that according to his own scheme, we are indebted to *Christ alone* for salvation. How happens it that some writers, while objecting to the principles of others, do not perceive that they are fighting against themselves. The reasoning of this author, if fairly and fully carried out, would sweep away *two of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel*, the ATONEMENT and the TRINITY.

\* Beman, p. 50.

In my next, I propose to compare the two theories in regard to the *nature* of the atonement, in order to discover which accords best with scriptural truth. In the mean time,

I remain affectionately yours.

## LETTER V.

*Nature of the Atonement.*

DEAR BROTHER,

The doctrines of the two schools in relation to the atonement, have now been compared in three particulars. It has been shown, I trust, that in regard to its extent, in regard to a free and unfettered preaching of the gospel, and in regard to the riches of Divine grace displayed in our salvation, the views of the new school have no superiority over those of the old; and that the latter present the riches of Divine grace in by far the strongest light.

Let us now proceed to institute a contrast between these conflicting views, in several other particulars; in which, I think, it will clearly appear that ours have a most decided advantage.

1. Let us compare the *nature* of the atonement as explained and advocated by the two

schools respectively, and see whose views and representations accord best with *scriptural truth*. The nature of the atonement is not a subject on which human philosophy should speculate. It is matter of pure revelation; and nothing farther can be known of it than God has been pleased to reveal. The Bible is our teacher; and those views which accord with the instructions of inspired writers must be true, while those which disagree or depart from them must be false.

The advocates of the *indefinite* scheme, differ in their views of the nature of the atonement. Some say, it consists in making a display of the evil of sin, and an exhibition of Divine justice. Others represent it as consisting in a satisfaction to public justice for sin in general; but they deny that a proper, real satisfaction for the sins of believers was made to Divine justice, so that they can, on *legal principles*, be set free from the curse of the law. They admit that Christ's sufferings are a *substitute* for our punishment; but they deny that HE was the *substitute* of his people, and that, charg-

ed with their sins, he endured the *penalty* of the law, and thus made a real satisfaction for them, and paid a real *price for their* redemption. They all speak of the atonement as merely opening the door, and removing the obstacle in the way of the exercise of mercy. Let me cite a few quotations from a recent publication—"The atonement consists, not in cancelling the demands of the law for *one* or *all* men, but in *opening the door of hope*, in rendering the pardon of sinners consistent with the character, law and universe of God."\* Again: "This atonement *MERELY opened the door of mercy*; it prepared the way for the offer and the exercise of pardon."† Again: "The atonement does not of itself save a single soul. It *BARELY opens the door* for the accomplishment of this object by free and sovereign grace."‡

Now, these views are, in my opinion, repugnant to plain and decided testimonies of holy scripture, and tend to destroy the very nature of the atonement.

\* Beman.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

The sacred writers speak of the death and righteousness of Christ, in more exalted terms than our brethren bestow on them. They teach us to attribute to his divine sacrifice, much more than the bare honour of opening a door of hope and mercy to sinners.

They tell us that the Saviour, by his *sufferings*, became the “*author of eternal redemption* to all that obey him.” Heb. v. 9. They tell us that on the ground of his *sacrifice* and intercession, Christ “is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him.” Heb. vii. 24—27. They assure us that his BLOOD *cleanseth from all sin*; and that it *purges* the “conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” And it has been shown, in a former letter, that *forgiveness, reconciliation, justification, sanctification, adoption, and eternal life*, are all attributed to the sacrifice and righteousness of our divine Redeemer, as their meritorious and procuring cause; and consequently that, while grace reigns in our salvation, it reigns through *righteousness* unto eternal life. We therefore deem it dis-

honouring to the invaluable atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, which the holy scripture represents as being the spring of every blessing of salvation, to speak of it as MERELY *opening a door of hope and mercy*. The Bible speaks of his sacrifice in sublimer strains of praise—"Unto him that loved us, and *washed us from our sins in his OWN BLOOD*, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; unto him be glory and dominion for ever and ever—Amen." Rev. i. 5, 6. "Thou wast slain, and *hast redeemed us to God by THY BLOOD* out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." Rev. v. 9, 10.

If the atonement consisted, as our brethren affirm, in a display of the evil of sin and of Divine justice, it might reasonably be expected, that the inspired writers would have stated the fact. But in what passage is it stated? Frequently indeed the death of Christ is called an *expiation* or *purging away of sin*, a *propitiation*, a *ransom*, a

*price, a reconciliation*; but no where do they denominate it a display of the evil of sin and of Divine justice. That there was such a display, and that in the highest degree, is readily admitted. This, however, we are not expressly taught; we are left to infer it from the mysterious transaction on the cross, viewed in connexion with its causes and its effects. In no passage of scripture that I can recollect, is the death of Christ spoken of as exhibiting the evil of sin and the justice of God. I am not ignorant that our opponents will immediately refer to a passage in Rom. iii. 25, 26, as furnishing a proof that we are taught to regard the Redeemer's death as an illustrious display of Divine justice. But, I apprehend, the righteousness there mentioned means, not an *attribute* of the Godhead, but that *glorious righteousness* of Christ, of which the sacred writer had spoken in the preceding verses; and of which he treats throughout this epistle, as the ground of a sinner's justification; and through the medium of which Jehovah can, consistently with his own glory, bestow

salvation on every one who believes in Christ; and thus appear a just God, while he assumes the character of a Saviour.

Now, this profound silence of scripture on the point, furnishes conclusive proof that the atonement does not consist in a display of the evil of sin and of Divine justice. The fact is, this display is the *result* of the atonement and not the atonement itself; just as the glorious sight or appearances which our eyes behold, when the sun pours his beams upon heaven and earth, are the *effect* of his light, and not the light itself.

Besides, if a display of the evil of sin and of Divine justice were all that was required to constitute an atonement, it might be asked, where was the necessity for the sufferings of the great Immanuel? Has not such a display been made in the sufferings and death both of rational and of irrational creatures? Is not such a display made, and will it not be eternally made, in the torments of the damned? Was all this insufficient? Was a more awful spectacle required, a sacrifice of greater value, in order to produce

a stronger impression on the minds of the intelligent universe? Should this be admitted, it would furnish no reason why the sufferings of the present and the future world should not be regarded as forming constituent parts of the atonement. But how opposite would this be to the language of holy scripture, which every where attributes the great work of propitiating an offended Sovereign to Christ alone, exclusively of the agency of any creature either in heaven or on earth!

In a subsequent letter it will be shown, that, on the principles adopted by our opponents, there is really no display of the evil of sin and of Divine justice. I now proceed to explain and vindicate the views which the advocates of a *definite* atonement entertain of its nature.

They believe that Jesus Christ, in accomplishing the salvation of his people, acted as their *legal substitute*; that he was *charged with their sins*; that he bare the *penalty* of the law, or endured the punishment due to them; and thus made a com-

plete satisfaction for their guilt to Divine justice, and paid the price of their redemption. Such are their views of this mysterious transaction, exhibited in the life and death of the Son of God. If these views can be shown to be *scriptural*, then it will follow, as a necessary consequence, that the opposite views of our brethren must be *unscriptural*. Let us examine the subject carefully.

1. *Christ acted as the SUBSTITUTE of his people.*

Substitution is evidently conveyed in the meaning of the preposition *ὑπέρ*, *for*, when it is applied to the death of Christ. That this is its import in Rom. v. 6—8, can hardly be denied. When Paul says, “ Scarcely *for* a righteous man would one die, yet peradventure *for* a good man some would even dare to die,” he clearly means dying in the *room* and *stead* of a good man, in order to save his life; and consequently when he speaks of the superior love of Christ, in dying *for* us, he must mean his dying, as *our substitute*, in our room and stead.

“*Raphelius.*” (Not. ex Xen. in v. 8.) says Doddridge, “has abundantly demonstrated, that ‘*υπερ ημων απεθανε*’ signifies, *he died in our room and stead*; nor can I find, that *αποθανειν υπερ τινος* has ever any other signification than that of *rescuing the life of another at the expense of our own*: and the very next verse shows, independent of any other authority, how evidently it bears that sense here; as one can hardly imagine any one would die for a good man, unless it were to redeem his life by giving up his own.”

The Redeemer is expressly called a *surety*; that is, one who stands engaged to become the substitute of another, to fulfil his obligations, and pay his debts. “By so much,” says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, “was Jesus made a *surety* of a better testament.”—Ch. vii. 22. With this writer accords Peter, in exhibiting the Saviour as a substitute for sinners: “For Christ,” says he, “hath suffered for sins; the just *for* (‘*υπερ*’) the unjust”—the just *person* in the room and stead of unjust *per-*

sons, "that he might bring us to God." The Redeemer himself teaches the same doctrine; for he tells us, "The Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for" (*αυτι*) in the room and stead of "many." Now in these texts we are taught, not merely that the sufferings of Christ come in place of our sufferings, but that HE took *our* place, and endured the punishment that we should have endured, and laid down his life to save our lives.

This was no new doctrine in the church of Christ. By the institutions of Moses, the Jews had become familiar with the idea of substitution. Through a long course of ages they had seen, by Divine appointment, an animal substituted in the place of a human offender, and the life of the animal destroyed to save his life. And why this appointment of heaven? Could the life of a dumb animal save a rational creature from deserved vengeance? "It was not possible," says the apostle, "that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins."

Heb. x. 4. Why then did the altar at Jerusalem continually stream with blood? Doubtless to typify HIM who was the LAMB slain from the foundation of the world; the LAMB of God that taketh away the sin of the world; to typify "the offering of the body of Jesus once for all;" that "one offering" by which "he hath perfected for ever them that were sanctified." Animal sacrifices did in *type*, what Christ did in *reality*. They were *typical* substitutes; he was a *real true* substitute. "Christ *our passover* is sacrificed (*υπεριε*) for us." 1 Cor. v. 7. The blood of bulls and of goats sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; but the blood of Christ purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. He offered up *himself*, his *person* for us. Heb. ix. 14. "He needed not daily, as those high priests, to offer up *sacrifice*, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up HIMSELF." Heb. vii. 27. *He himself* was our substitute.

2. *Being the surety and substitute of*

*his people, the Redeemer was CHARGED WITH THEIR SINS.*

They were imputed to him, and he became responsible for the satisfaction demanded by Divine justice. "It is for ever impossible, in the very nature of things," says a sermon writer, "that Christ should be liable to suffer that punishment which the law denounced against the transgressor."\* And again: "But this idea involves a *literal transfer of character*. On this scheme Christ, and not man, is the sinner. But Christ and man cannot exchange characters, because sin and holiness are *personal*, and cannot be transferred from one moral being to another. The sinful or holy acts of one person, may, in a thousand ways, affect another—exert an influence upon his happiness or misery—but it can never be so transferred as to become his sinful or holy act."† Such are the assertions of a writer, who a little before had said, "We do by no means intend to deny the doctrines of *substitution* and *imputation*:" of consequence, we are to under-

\* Beman, p. 34.

† *Ib.* p. 35.

stand him as affirming that the advocates of a definite atonement teach, by their doctrine of the imputation of sins to Christ, that there is such a transfer of moral character in this divine transaction, that it is no longer true that the sins which were actually committed by the sinner were actually committed by him; but were actually committed by Christ, who actually did not commit them.

That they do not teach an absurdity so extravagant, need not be told to any acquainted with their writings. Nor does it follow as a fair and legitimate consequence of their doctrine. In that admirable Epistle of Paul to Philemon in favour of Onesimus, he says—"If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that to mine account," (ΤΟΥΤΟ ΕΜΟΙ ΕΛΛΟΓΕΙ) *charge this to me, impute this to me.* "I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it." Now here the apostle offers to become responsible for any debt that Onesimus might owe to his master, and requests Philemon to impute, or reckon the debts to him, and

look to him for the payment. But according to the writer to whom we refer, this transaction was impossible; because it would involve such a transfer of character, that Paul would become the original contractor of the debt and not Onesimus. A benevolent man sees a poor debtor forced along the street by an officer of justice to prison; he is touched with compassion; he goes to the unfeeling creditor, and says to him, I will be surety for your debtor; charge the debt to me; I will pay it. But he is met by the writer, who rises up and says—“The thing is impossible. Such a transaction would imply that you, and not the debtor, had contracted the debt. His act is *personal*, and it can never become your *personal* act.”

Now, from the imputation of Onesimus' debts to Paul, and the reckoning of a debt contracted by another man to his surety, these absurd consequences follow, with just as much certainty as they do from the imputation of sin to Christ, as we hold the doctrine; that is, with none at all. Who does

not see that, in the case of Paul, when Onesimus' debt was charged to him, it still remained true that the debt was *originally* contracted by Onesimus, and not by Paul? And who does not see, in relation to a surety, that, after a man has become responsible for the payment of another person's debt, it still remains true that the debt was originally contracted by this person, and not by his generous friend? Why then should any intelligent individual impute such absurdities to our doctrine? or how is it that the minds of some are so affected by prejudice, that they cannot understand a divine transaction, which can be so aptly illustrated by familiar and daily occurring examples in human affairs? When we say that our sins were charged to Christ, our brethren certainly ought to know we do not mean that our sins were taken from us, and *infused* into Christ, so that we become *innocent* and Christ *actually the sinner*: and I may add, our statements are so far from implying any thing of the kind, that it seems difficult to account for such erroneous conceptions,

unless we attribute them to a wish to substitute misrepresentation for argument, which we would not impute to our brethren. By the charging of our sins to the Redeemer, we simply mean, they were so imputed, or reckoned to him, that he became responsible to Divine justice for their penal consequences. Our opponents may affirm this to be impossible: but, if we search the scriptures, we shall find, that, in the judgment of inspired writers, it was not only *possible*, but a *glorious fact*.

This important truth was exhibited in the sacrifices under the ancient economy. Having brought the animal to the appointed place, the worshipper was required to put his hand upon the head of the *burnt-offering*. The victim being then slain, the blood was sprinkled round about upon the altar. Lev. i. 3—5. The imposition of the offerer's hand, it is believed, was generally accompanied with a confession of his sins: at least the act denoted his wish to have his guilt imputed to the animal, that, being slain in his place, he might escape deserved

punishment. Certain it is, that, on the great day of atonement, the imposition of the high priest's hands was accompanied with a confession of the sins of the people; and the whole transaction exhibited, in the clearest manner, the imputation of sin to the animal. "And Aaron shall lay both his hands on 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 into the wilderness." Lev. xvi. 21, 22.

It is not denied by the advocates of *indefinite* atonement, that these types were designed to prefigure the Redeemer and his work. This is plainly taught in Scripture. "Christ our *passover* is sacrificed for us." 1 Cor. v. 7. "Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us, an *offering* and a *sacrifice* to God, for a sweet smelling sa-

your." Ephes. v. 2. In the epistle to the Hebrews, the inspired writer teaches us that the *tabernacle* or *temple* was a figure, and that the *law* and its sacrifices were shadows of good things to come. chap. ix. 9, x. 1. He also assures us of the superior efficacy of the Redeemer's offering, above the efficacy of the Levitical offerings: "For if," says he, "the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered *himself* without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" chap. ix. 13, 14.

Now, the type being the *shadow*, and the antitype the *substance*, what was prefigured by the *former* must be found in the latter. It will follow, then, that as the victims under the law stood *figuratively* charged with the sins of those for whom they were offered, so the great victim, to whom they all pointed, stood *really* charged

with the sins of all for whom he was offered.

With this fact the language of the New Testament plainly and fully accords. "He," says Paul, "hath made him *to be sin* for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the *righteousness* of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 21. *Made him TO BE SIN*—A figurative expression, say our brethren; and we reply, doubtless it is a figurative expression. Christ was not *literally* made *sin*: for sin is an act or quality of a rational creature; and no person can be so absurd as to believe Christ was converted into sin, any more than to believe the paschal lamb was converted into the angel's act of passing over the houses of the Israelites, because it was called the passover. But what is the meaning of the expression? Does the apostle intend to teach us that Christ was stained with sin? Certainly not; for he bears his testimony that "he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." What then is his meaning? The phrase was well chosen and selected, to

convey a very important truth. There is a manifest *antithesis* between the two parts of the text; and it is reasonable to conclude that just as we are *made the righteousness* of God in Christ, so he was *made sin* for us. As we are made the righteousness of God in Christ by the *imputation* of the Redeemer's righteousness—according to the explanation of the author of the text, in other parts of his writings, when speaking on the subject, (Rom. iii. 22.) “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ *unto* all and *upon* all that believe;” and again (ch. iv. 6), “Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God *imputeth* righteousness without works”—so Christ was made sin for us, by having *our sins imputed* to him, that he might justly bear the punishment of them.

But suppose we adopt the construction put on the phrase by some able commentators, that Christ was made a *sin-offering*, because sin-offerings under the law were called *sin*; yet the result will be the same.

For a question arises, Why were sin-offerings denominated *sin*? There certainly was a good and sufficient reason for this denomination, or the Old Testament writers would not have given it to the legal offerings: and no other reason can be assigned than the fact, that sin was imputed to the victim, and the victim was slain in place of the offerer, whose iniquities it bore. In like manner our Redeemer became a *sin-offering*, by having the *sins* of his people *imputed* to him, and dying as their *substitute*. Peter was crucified; Paul was beheaded; thousands of martyrs shed their blood; and all suffered in consequence of *sin*; but neither Peter nor Paul, nor any martyr ever became a sin-offering; nor is it ever in Scripture said of any mere man that he was made *sin* for us. And the reason is that, although the prophets, and apostles, and martyrs suffered much, and in consequence of sin, yet none but Christ was ever charged with our sins, and died as our substitute, to make expiation for them.

◆ In entire harmony with Paul, Peter in-

culcates the same important truth: "Who his OWN SELF *bare* OUR SINS, in his own body on the tree, that we being dead unto sin, might live unto righteousness." 1 Pet. ii. 24. BARE OUR SINS. How? Sins were not a tangible mass that could be taken from us as a burden, and placed on the Saviour. Nor could they be infused into him, so as to render him inherently polluted by them. In what way then could he bear them? In no other than by having them *imputed, charged* to him, so as to be made responsible for their penal consequences. Or will any prefer saying the Redeemer bore the *punishment* of our sins? That this idea is included in the apostle's meaning we shall readily admit: but, if he bore the punishment of our sins, it will follow, that they were previously charged to his account; because this imputation was necessary to render him responsible for them, and make it just to inflict on him the punishment due to them.

"Abigail, when mediating between David and Nabal, when the former was pro-

voked to wrath against the latter, and had determined to destroy him, (1 Sam. xxv. 24,) fell at David's feet and said, 'Upon me let this iniquity be, and let thy handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thy audience, and hear the voice of thy handmaid.' And in verse 28 she calls Nabal's iniquity her iniquity. By this it appears, that a mediator putting himself in the stead of the offender, so that the offended party should *impute* the offence to him, and look on the mediator as having taken it upon him, and looking on him as the debtor for what satisfaction should be required and expected, was, in those days, no strange notion, or considered as a thing in itself absurd and inconsistent with men's natural notion of things." President Edwards, vol. viii. p. 515.

Again, observes this profound theologian in the same page: "The word translated here in Isaiah liii. 4 and 12, is נָשָׂא: the same word and the same phrase of bearing sin and bearing iniquity, is often used concerning things which are the types of

Christ's priesthood and sacrifice, viz. the Levitical priests and sacrifices. It was no uncommon phrase, but usual, and well understood among the Jews; and we find it very often used in other cases and applied to others besides either Christ or the types of him. And when it is so, it is plain, that the general meaning of the phrase is lying under the *guilt* of sin, having it *imputed and charged upon* the person, as obnoxious to the punishment of it, or obliged to answer and make satisfaction for it; or liable to the calamities and miseries to which it exposes. In such a manner it seems always to be used, unless in some few places it signifies to take away sin by forgiveness." Edwards, vol. viii. p. 515.

In my next I shall proceed to show that Christ bore the penalty of the law, or endured the punishment due to our sins.

Affectionately yours.

## LETTER VI.

*Nature of the Atonement.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Agreeably to promise, I am to show, in this letter,

III. That Christ, as our Redeemer, bore the *penalty* of the law, or endured the *punishment* of our sins.

It is admitted by the new school, that one person may *suffer* for another, but not that one can suffer the *punishment* due to another; and accordingly, while they affirm that Christ died and suffered for us, they strenuously deny that he was punished for us. "If," says one, "another person, of his own accord, offers to bear the *suffering*, which was due to me for my offences, he may do so. But it cannot be *punishment* to him. *Punishment* supposes *guilt*. He cannot take my actions upon himself, so that they shall become his own actions, and

cease to be mine. He cannot become guilty without his own personal transgression. If he suffers in my place, therefore, his sufferings are not punishment to him.”\* This reminds me of the manner in which Dr. Fuller attempts to prove that the sufferings of our blessed Redeemer were not the punishment of our sins. It was done by the magic of a *definition*. His definition is this: “Punishment is natural evil inflicted for PERSONAL *guilt*.” Admitting the definition to be correct, his point was gained. But suppose his definition to be altered so as to suit our taste, and to read thus: Punishment is natural evil inflicted for *personal*, or IMPUTED sin: and what then becomes of his argument? To the author of the argument in the above quotation we readily concede that *punishment* supposes sin; but we deny what he maintains, that it always supposes *personal* transgression. Jesus Christ, it has been proved, had the *sins* of his people imputed to him, and thus became

\* Dialogues on Atonement, p. 20.

subject to the punishment of them. By this we do not mean, that he took their actions upon himself so that they became his *own personal* actions, and no longer the actions of his people. The absurdity of such a supposition has already been exposed. He consented to have them so charged to his account, that the punishment of them might be justly required of him. To maintain that punishment, in all cases, supposes *personal* guilt, is as unreasonable as to maintain that a person can never become responsible for any actions but his own personal actions. This, however, the common occurrences of civil life will prove unfounded. It is well known, that when a citizen has incurred the penalty of a violated law, and being unable to pay the fine, is liable to imprisonment, a friend may release him by assuming his obligation and paying his fine. When this is done there is no transfer of moral character; and no one is so absurd as to imagine the transaction implies that the offender's friend committed the trespass.

A man is apprehended as a murderer.

He is tried, convicted, condemned to death, and finally executed. It cannot be denied that this man has suffered the punishment due to murder. Afterwards his innocence is proved beyond dispute; what will result? Will you say he suffered no punishment? No punishment! What greater punishment could he have suffered? He certainly did die under the imputation of murder; and to expiate the guilt of that horrible crime he was condemned. Surely then he suffered punishment. You may affirm, he suffered unrighteously; you may affirm he was unjustly punished: but you cannot in truth say he was not punished; because it will for ever remain a fact that he did suffer death as the punishment of a crime. The language of inspiration confirms this reasoning. (See Acts, xxvi. 11. Prov. xvii. 26.)

The king of the Locrians enacted a law, that an adulterer should suffer, as the punishment of his crime, the loss of both his eyes. His son was the first transgressor. The father felt for his child; and the sove-

reign felt for the honour of his law. How were these conflicting feelings to be reconciled? How could the father spare his son and the sovereign maintain his law? He deprived the adulterer of one of his eyes, and he gave up to vengeance one of his own. Whatever judgment may be formed of the conduct of this ancient monarch, it cannot with propriety be denied, that he actually participated with his son in the *punishment* denounced against his offence; and it must be admitted that by this mode of executing the penalty of his law, as salutary an impression might be made upon the minds of his subjects as could have been made by depriving the culprit of both his eyes. None could afterwards doubt that he was determined to maintain his law, by inflicting its penalty on all offenders.

Having made these remarks on the general question, I offer in support of the truth stated at the beginning of this letter, the following arguments.

1. It follows as a consequence from what has been already established: for if Jesus

Christ suffered as our *substitute*, in our room and stead, and if our sins were imputed to him, then the sufferings he endured were the *penalty* of the law, or the *punishment* due to our sins.

2. During a long course of ages this truth was typically held up to view in the daily sacrifices of the Jewish church; for it can hardly be denied that the animal victims were considered as dying in the place of the offerer, and as *symbolically* bearing his *punishment*. Now, the substance of this shadow was found in the great Antitype; Christ realized the idea that had been pre-figured in the types.

3. The history of our Redeemer's sufferings proves that he endured the penalty of the law. His sufferings began at his birth, extended through his life, and terminated only in his death. He suffered from poverty and hardship, from slander and persecution. He suffered from men and devils, from earth and heaven, from the hands of his enemies and the hands of his Father. He suffered both in body and in soul. In

the garden of Gethsemane such was his amazement, and consternation, and anguish of spirit, that he said to his disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" and to his Father, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." On the cross his sufferings were aggravated by every circumstance of shame and indignity that malice could invent; and to crown all, his Father hid his face from him, so that, in the bitterness of extreme sorrow, he exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" At last, having finished his awful sacrifice, he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.

Such were the Redeemer's sufferings; and it is natural to ask, Why did he suffer? To reply, he suffered *for us*, or he suffered in *consequence of sin*, is saying no more than Socinians will say. The scriptural reply is, Christ, by his sufferings, endured the *penalty* of a violated law, and thus satisfied Divine justice for the sins of men. But our brethren, while they affirm he satisfied *public* justice, by his sufferings,

deny that he bore the penalty of the law. Their very nature, however, we think, evinces the contrary.

For what is the penalty of the law? An inspired apostle shall answer the question: "The *wages* of sin is death." Rom. vi. 23. By death cannot be meant simply the separation of the soul and body. This term is used in Scripture in a variety of senses. It signifies any great calamity. Speaking of the plague of locusts, Pharoah said to Moses and Aaron, "Intreat the Lord your God, that he may take away this *death* only." Exod. x. 17. It signifies circumstances of great danger: "The sorrows of *death* compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid." Ps. xviii. 4. It signifies great vexation or distress of mind: "And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his *soul* was vexed unto *death*, that he told her all his heart." Jud. xvi. 16. Death, by which the apostle expresses what is the wages of sin, is a word of large import. It comprehends all the

pains and sorrows, labours and toils, sufferings and miseries, which wicked men endure, either in this world or in the next; for all these, together with the death of the body, constitute the wages of sin, or the penalty of the Divine law, when inflicted on impenitent offenders. How manifest then is it that Jesus Christ bore this penalty! All the pains and sorrows, all the sufferings and miseries that the law could demand from *him*, as the *Surety* of his people, in order to make expiation for their sins, he actually endured; and at last terminated his humiliation and sufferings by dying on the accursed tree.

4. As the Old Testament exhibited *typically* Messiah's sufferings in this light, so the language of the New expressly ascribes to them this character. It speaks of them in terms so plain and decided, that it seems surprising how any can deny the truth now under investigation. The Son of God, the apostle tells us, "was made *under the law*, that he might *redeem them that were under the law.*" Gal. iv. 4, 5. How

was Christ under the law? Just as they whom he came to redeem were under it. Sinners are under the law, both in respect to its preceptive requirements, and its penal demands; they are bound to obey the one, and to satisfy the other: and so was the Redeemer under the law; he voluntarily obligated himself to obey all the precepts of the moral law, and to satisfy all its penal demands by enduring its curse. Moreover, as the church was under the ceremonial law, when he appeared in the world, he submitted also to this law and all its institutions; and, as a token of his subjection to it was circumcised, although, as a perfectly holy man, he could, on his own account, be under no obligation to observe it.

The correctness of this interpretation may be confirmed by a passage in the 40th Psalm, as explained in the 10th chap. of the epistle to the Hebrews. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo I

come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy *will*, O my God; yea, thy *law* is within my heart." By the *will* of God in the sixth verse, the Saviour doubtless means, as he explains it, in the next member of that verse, the *law* of God. Now, he declares that he delighted to do this will, or to fulfil this law; and as the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews shows that this will or law of God referred especially to the Saviour's *sacrifice* of himself, or, in other words, to his *sufferings*, it will follow, that he considered himself under obligation to obey the Divine law in this respect.—In presenting himself as a sacrifice for sin he took *delight*, because it was *required* by the *law* of his God.

It appears, then, from these texts, that the Redeemer voluntarily subjected himself to the penal demands of the Divine law; and consequently he was legally bound to endure its penalty. That he actually fulfilled his engagements and bore the penalty is plainly and unequivocally asserted by the apostle Paul. "Christ," says he, "hath re-

deemed us from the *curse* of the law, *being made a CURSE for us.*” Gal. iii. 3. Now, this seems so plain as almost to preclude any reasoning on it. The curse of the law was its *penalty*; and to say Christ was made a *curse* for us is equivalent to saying he was made a *punishment*, for what is the penalty of the law, but the punishment it denounces against transgressors? The meaning of the term *curse*, in the first part of the text cannot be disputed; nor can any just reason be assigned for giving to the *same term*, in the second part of it, a different meaning. But when it is said that Christ was *made a curse*, our brethren contend the expression is *figurative*. Granted: but let it be remembered it is used to convey a very important truth. “The carnal mind,” says the same apostle, “is *enmity* against God:” which doubtless is a figurative expression; for no one will believe he intended to teach that the mind of man is *really enmity*, in the *abstract*. Yet, in using this strong expression, he undoubtedly designed to inform us that the carnal mind is in a *state of real*

*enmity* to God, highly and violently opposed to his holy will. And what less can the inspired writer mean, by saying Christ was *made a curse* for us, than that he *actually* endured the *curse* or *penalty* of the law for us? for if Christ did not bear the curse or penalty of the law, but *merely suffered* for us, it could not with any propriety be asserted he was *made a CURSE* for us; an expression than which the whole vocabulary of human language could not furnish one stronger.

Surely this is decisive scriptural testimony to the truth under discussion. But plain as it appears to us, our brethren endeavour by a forced interpretation of it to deprive us of its support. I shall not, however, interrupt the course of my argument, by introducing their construction in this place. It shall be attended to, when I take up their objections to our views of the nature of the atonement.

Beside these texts, many others bear testimony to the important truth, that the divine Saviour endured the penalty of the law, or bore the punishment due to our sins.

The inspired writers no where teach that he suffered for sin *in general*. Sin, in the abstract, is a *mere name*, a *word*; and *if any* should say that Christ died for sin in general, or in the abstract, they would utter a manifest absurdity. The sacred penmen teach a very different doctrine. They teach us that Christ died for the sins of individuals; for sins really committed. "He was wounded for *our* transgressions: he was bruised for *our* iniquities." "He died for *our* sins." "Who was delivered for *our* offences." "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of *many*."

Such is the language of the inspired writers: and all these texts, by fair construction, will prove that the Redeemer submitted to the punishment due to our sins. The evangelical prophet asserts it in plain language: "The *chastisement* of our peace was upon him;" Isaiah, liii. 5; that is, the *punishment* (for this is the meaning of the term chastisement,) the *punishment* of our sins necessary to procure peace for us with God, was laid upon him. President Ed-

wards, treating on this subject, says, "His bearing the burden of our sins may be considered as somewhat diverse from his suffering God's wrath. For his suffering wrath consisted more in the sense he had of the dreadfulness of the punishment of sin, or of God's wrath inflicted for it. Thus Christ was tormented, not only in the *fire of God's wrath*, but in the *fire of our sins*; and our sins were his tormentors: the evil and malignant nature of sin was what Christ endured immediately, as well as more remotely, in bearing the consequences of it."\*

I think, my dear friend, I may now say that, by plain and decisive scriptural testimonies, the following points have, in this and the preceding letter, been proved; namely:

1. *That Jesus Christ was constituted the SUBSTITUTE of sinners;*
2. *That he was charged with the SINS of his people;* and
3. *That he sustained the PENALTY of*

\* Vol. viii. p. 526.

*the law, or bore the PUNISHMENT due to their sins.*

It must then follow, conclusively, that his sufferings were a *real* and *full* SATISFACTION to Divine justice, and that he actually paid the PRICE of our redemption. How remarkable that passage in the epistle to the Romans! “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are passed, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be *just* and the *justifier* of him that believeth in Jesus.” Rom. iii. 25, 26. From this text it is a clear inference that if Christ had not become a propitiation for sin; if his blood had not been shed for the remission of it, and he had not interposed to turn away Divine wrath from believers; if he had not brought in his righteousness; Jehovah could not consistently with the demands of his justice, have pardoned and justified any of our race: but that now, through the satisfaction made by the death of Christ to the demands of his

justice, and that complete righteousness which he has wrought out, he can, in the remission of the sins of believers, and in their justification, display not only his boundless mercy, but his *inflexible justice*.

To you, my friend, and to me, it is matter of surprise, that our brethren do, in the face of such plain testimonies of scripture, assert that the Redeemer did not pay *any real price* for our redemption. I shall not here repeat the texts quoted in my fourth letter, (pp. 81, 82,) to show how frequently and expressly the inspired writers use this *very term*, and other cognate words. I would only ask, what language can be plainer? Is it figurative? Was not the blood of Christ *real*? Was not the church, the object of his purchase, *real*? Was there not a *real exchange*? Did he not *really* give his *life*, his *blood*, for his *people*? Are we not told that “to this end Christ *died* and revived and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living?”

I shall close this letter with two extracts

from the writings of President Edwards, for whom our brethren profess so great a veneration.

Illustrating the nature of the atonement by referring to the Jewish sacrifices, he says, "If there was nothing of true and real atonement and sacrifice in those beasts that were offered, then doubtless they were an evidence, that there was to be some other greater sacrifice, which was to be a *proper* atonement or *satisfaction*, and of which they were only the presage and signs; as those symbolical actions which God sometimes commanded the prophets to perform, were signs and presages of great events which they foretold. This proves that a sacrifice of infinite value was necessary, and that God would accept of no other. For an atonement that bears no proportion to the offence, is no atonement. An atonement carries in it a PAYMENT or SATISFACTION in the *very nature* of it. And if satisfaction was so little necessary, that the Divine Majesty easily admitted one that bears no proportion at all to the

offence, i. e. was wholly equivalent to nothing, when compared with the offence, and so was no payment or satisfaction at all; then he might have forgiven sin without *any* atonement.”\*

Again: “It cannot here be reasonably objected, that God is not capable of properly receiving any satisfaction for an injury; because he is not capable of receiving any benefit; that a price offered to men satisfies for an injury, because it may truly be a price to them, or a thing beneficial; but that God is not capable of receiving a benefit. For God is as capable of receiving *satisfaction* as *injury*. It is true, he cannot properly be profited; so neither can he properly be hurt. But as rebelling against him may be properly looked upon as of the nature of an injury or wrong done to God, and so God is capable of being the object of injuriousness; so he is capable of being the object of that which is the opposite of injuriousness, or the repairing of an injury. If you say, what need is there that God

\* Vol. viii. p. 530, 531.

have any care for repairing the honour of his majesty when it can do him no good, and no addition can be made to his happiness by it? You might as well say, what need is there that God care when he is despised and dishonoured, and his authority and glory trampled on; since it does him no hurt?"\* The president then goes on to prove, from the natural dictates of conscience, and from the light of reason, that Jehovah demands a reparation of the evil of sin, not merely because it is *injurious to the happiness of his creatures*, but chiefly from *regard due to his own insulted Majesty*.

Sincerely and affectionately,

Yours, &c.

\* Vol. viii. p. 532.

## LETTER VII.

*Objections Answered.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

That Jesus Christ actually bore the penalty of the law, was, I hope, clearly evinced in my last. Against this doctrine, however, several objections are urged by our brethren. But objections, how plausible soever they may seem, ought not to outweigh plain scriptural testimony to the contrary. If, therefore, we could not satisfactorily remove every difficulty, still the truth should be believed. It is the duty of Christians to receive with implicit faith whatever they find revealed in holy scripture.

Granted, the pupils of the new school will reply; we admit the paramount authority of inspiration; but we deny the truth for which you contend, to be a part of divine revelation. To us, however, the texts adduced seem clear and decisive; and nothing

that they can offer is sufficient to change our mind.

1. The first objection I shall notice, is urged against the interpretation we give to a particular text. When Paul says, (Gal. iii. 13.) “Christ hath redeemed us from the *curse* of the law, being *made a CURSE for us*; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree;” we think he does, in plain words, teach that Christ bore the *curse* or *penalty* of the divine law. But our brethren think otherwise; and one of them says, “It is in no shape, asserted here, that Christ suffered the penalty of the law. The apostle tells us in what sense he “was made a curse for us.” “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Believers are saved from the curse or penalty of the law by the consideration that Christ “was made a curse” for them in another and a very different sense. He was “made a curse” inasmuch as he suffered, in order to open the door of hope to man, by the pains and ignominy of crucifixion. He hung upon a tree. He died as a malefactor.

He died as one accursed. If this text prove that Christ suffered the penalty of the law, it does, at the same time, and by principles of legitimate exposition, prove, that the penalty of the law was crucifixion, or hanging on a tree. But the penalty of the law was eternal damnation threatened against the transgressor alone, and liable to be executed upon him, and upon no one else.”\* My answer to this objection will appear in the following observations.

First: To assert, as this writer does, that the penalty of the law can be executed on none but the transgressor himself, is certainly no legitimate proof in controversy with Christians who think differently, and assert the contrary to be true. We do not rest our cause on mere assertion; already, it is believed, clear scriptural testimony has been adduced in support of the fact, that Christ suffered the penalty of the law; and to us the text under discussion affords such unequivocal evidence of it, that we are rea-

\* Beman, p. 45, 46.

dy to wonder how he could, in the face of the apostle's declaration, indulge himself in the liberty of making so round and unqualified an assertion.

Secondly : The fact that Christ died a painful and an ignominious death, and that he submitted to such a death for the sins of his people, is no subject of dispute. Our brethren admit it as cordially as we. It is admitted in the quotation above. The point of difference is the *character* of his sufferings. We say that they were an infliction of the *curse* or *penalty* of the law denounced against sin ; this they deny. But death, it has been shown in the preceding letter, is the *wages* of sin, the *curse* or *penalty* of the law ; and consequently as Christ underwent death for the sins of men, he endured the penalty of the law due to them.

Thirdly : The quotation by the apostle of a passage in the Old Testament, was not adduced to prove that our Redeemer was *crucified*. This fact had been fully recorded by the pen of more than one evan-

gelist. It was perfectly well known to the Galatians. Any quotation from the Old Testament in proof of a fact so abundantly attested in the evangelical narrative, would have been entirely superfluous. Yet Mr. B. seems to think this to have been one reason of the quotation, "He hung upon a tree."

Fourthly: Nor was the quotation made to prove that Christ died as a *malefactor* "He died," says Mr. B. "as a malefactor." This fact was fully known to all who were acquainted with the fact of his crucifixion, and the account given of it by the inspired historians and teachers.

Finally: The quotation was brought forward to prove the *character* of the Redeemer's sufferings. It was not crucifixion only that he endured. He had suffered through life from various causes and in various ways. He had endured in Gethsemane unutterable mental agonies. His soul had been sorrowful even unto death. And on the cross the anguish he felt from the hidings of his Father's face, was unspeakably more severe

than the bodily pains he underwent. "It pleased the Lord to *bruise* him." The sword of Jehovah awoke against the Shepherd. His *soul* was made an offering for sin. Whence all these sufferings of the Son of God? What were they? They were, we say, the infliction of the *penalty* of the law: and this, in our apprehension, the apostle declares very plainly, by telling us Christ was "made a *curse* for us." In proof or illustration of this fact, to teach us the *true character* of his sufferings, to mark distinctly the relation they bore to sin, he adduces the quotation, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." It is found on record in Deut. xxi. 22, 23.

But why was it thus written? Was it designed to express the indignation of Jehovah against the crimes of all who were thus put to death? But why, it may be asked, was this written against all who suffered capitally by *hanging*, and not against others who suffered by *decapitation* and by *stoning*; modes of punishment used by the Jews, in relation to crimes of the deepest

dye? There was a peculiar reason for this record; and SCOTT, in his comment on this place, has assigned it: "In the current opinion," says this able writer, "they who were thus suspended were deemed accursed of God: but the Holy Spirit doubtless dictated this expression in reference to HIM, who was made a curse for us." By the providence of God it was so ordered that our Redeemer died that particular kind of death, which, in typical reference to his death, had long before been declared to be *accursed*; and thus he appeared *visibly* and *outwardly*, as in fact he was *really*, dying under the curse of God, or penalty of the law. Such is the apostle's meaning; and this the design of his quotation.

The quotation establishes the fact that the immaculate Saviour was *accursed of God*. But none can be accursed by the righteous Jehovah, but those whom it is right and just to curse. Nor can any be declared by him to be accursed except those against whom his *law* denounces a curse; because he has no curse to inflict but what his law

denounces. It follows, then, that as the spotless Redeemer was accursed, he must have been under the curse of the law; but as he could not be under it in consequence of any *personal* transgression, it remains that, as we have already shown, he was under it by his becoming the voluntary substitute of sinners, and engaging to bear the punishment due to them.

“ I wonder,” says the celebrated Beza, quoted by Scott on this text, “ that Jerome and Erasmus should labour and seek for I know not what figure of speech, to show that Christ was not called accursed. Truly in this is placed all our hope: in this the infinite love of God is manifested; in this is placed our salvation, that our God properly and without any figure, poured out *all his wrath* on his own Son;—caused him to be accursed, that he might receive us into his favour. Finally, without any figure, Christ was made a curse for us, in such a manner that unless he had been truly God, he must have remained under the curse for ever, from which, for our sakes, he emerg-

ed. For, indeed, if the obedience be figurative and imaginary, so must our hope of glory be."

2. The New School urge, as a second objection against the doctrine of Christ enduring the penalty of the law, the impossibility of the fact. "It is," says one, "for ever *impossible in the very nature of things*, that Christ should become liable to suffer the punishment which the law has denounced against the transgressor,—against him alone. The law has no penal demands against Christ—and such demands it can never establish. "The soul that sinneth, IT shall die," is the threatening of the law."\* An objection, in *appearance*, formidable indeed! for if it were in the very nature of things impossible for Christ to suffer the punishment due to sinners, then it would be a hopeless task to endeavour to establish it as a fact that he did bear that punishment. But, I think, notwithstanding this bold assertion, the passages that have been cited

\* Beman, p. 34.

plainly teach us, that, in the judgment of inspired writers, Christ actually did bear the penalty of the law. Let us examine the proofs by which this confident assertion is supported.

The first is, that the penalty of the law is denounced against the *transgressor alone*; meaning that it can be executed on him alone, and not on Christ. But this is merely offering one *assertion* to confirm another.

The second proof is another bare assertion, that “the law has no penal demands against Christ,—and such demands it can never establish.” Neither of these assertions contains any evidence.

But the third, being a quotation from scripture, seems to present some proof: “The soul that sinneth IT shall die.” But how does this prove that Christ could not endure the penalty of the law for his people? The text is recorded in Ezekiel, ch. xviii. v. 4. Examine it, and you will find its meaning to be simply this: That in the next world the son shall not die or be punished in place of his guilty parent; nor shall

the parent die or be punished in place of his guilty son : but every one shall bear the punishment of his own sins. The Jews had impiously impeached the conduct of Jehovah in his treatment of them ; and he was pleased to vindicate himself by making this statement in regard to the principles of his administration. But what has this to do with the case of our Saviour ? It does not declare that the soul of Christ should not die ; for his soul *did die* in agony and pain. Nor does it say the curse of the law could not be inflicted on him as the substitute of sinners ; for an inspired apostle has told us the curse was inflicted on him. Nor does it say the law had no penal demands against him ; for he “ was,” as Paul teaches, “ made under the law ;” and consequently, as has been shown, under its penal demands. To attempt to put upon this text either of these meanings, is only attempting to set one part of scripture against another. Were we to detach it from the context, and separate it from its connexion with other portions of the Bible, and give it the signification which

the words in which it is expressed would, in their full and unqualified meaning, demand, we should shut up our fallen race in hopeless despair; for then it would declare, that *every* soul that sinneth shall die eternally. But this cannot be its import; because we know, that thousands and millions are saved through Christ, and will never be subject to eternal death. Nor can the meaning attempted to be imposed upon this text in the above quotation, be its real meaning; because it would militate against plain scriptural testimonies to the contrary.

Reasoning similar to that of the author I have referred to, has been put upon the threatening denounced against Adam, to prove that the penalty of the law could not be executed on the Redeemer. "Thou," *Adam*, "shalt die." The force of the argument lies in this: the commination was addressed to the first man; and therefore it can have no relation to another individual, much less could it be executed on the spotless Redeemer. But the inference is wholly incorrect. How many passages does the

Bible contain, which have respect to others than the particular individual or individuals, to whom they were addressed? All the apostolical epistles were thus addressed, yet who does not know that they were designed for the whole church? Who does not know that promises, and threatenings, and precepts that were addressed to primitive Christians, had respect to Christians in every subsequent age? Who does not know that many promises given to the apostles, in private conversations of our Lord with them, belong to all his future disciples? The sentence denounced against the *woman*, in Gen. iii. 16, was spoken to EVE; and yet it has been executed on all her female posterity: and the sentence denounced against ADAM in the 17—19 verses, has been inflicted on all his offspring. Indeed almost every thing spoken to our first parents had a reference to their descendants; and as they are born in a state of *mortality*, and many die before they are capable of personal transgression; it is manifest, from incontrovertible facts, that the commination addressed to

Adam had respect to his posterity ; because it has, in every age, been uniformly executed on them. And as our blessed Lord submitted to the stroke of death, so it is, as already shown, apparent, that he endured the *penalty* of a violated law.

3. It is objected that Christ did not suffer *spiritual death*.

That the sacred scriptures represent mankind as being by nature “ dead in trespasses and sins,” will hardly be denied. It is true that sinners love their depravity ; but this is no reason why it should be considered as absurd to suppose that *being delivered up to the dominion of sin*, was comprehended in the sentence of death denounced against a violation of the Divine law ; because to innocent man, delighting in holiness and in communion with God, it presented a terrible idea, an object of the greatest dread. That God does punish one sin by giving up the offender to another, is clearly taught in the volume of inspiration. Speaking of the stupid idolatry of the ancient heathen, the apostle says, “ for *this cause* God gave them

*up* unto vile affections.”——“ And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God *gave them over* to a reprobate mind, to do the things which are not convenient.” We, therefore, believe that spiritual death, which ensued upon the withdrawing of the Holy Spirit from the soul of man in consequence of his sin, was included in the original commination of a righteous God against disobedience.

The Saviour was perfectly free from sin. Had the slightest stain of moral pollution marred his obedience, it would have destroyed its saving influence, and indeed made him as helpless as any of our fallen race. In bearing the penalty of the law, it was not necessary that the curse should, in all its *circumstances*, operate on him as on original transgressors. It was sufficient for him to endure what was essential to the curse, and what the law demanded from him as the *surety* of sinful men. Now, this consisted in shame, disgrace, pain, anguish, and misery in the whole of his human nature, in soul and in body. Punishment may, in cir-

circumstances, be very different in different persons. Capital offences are, by human law, punished in various ways; and sometimes one mode of inflicting death is commuted for another. The same diversity of circumstances is seen in the application of punishment under the Divine government. All impenitent sinners are subjected to the same curse of a violated law. Yet how different the sorrows, the pains, the afflictions of life in different men! How differently is natural death inflicted! On one by a sudden stroke of lightning; on another by a lingering disease! This man perishes in the ocean; that man is consumed in the flames of his dwelling. One dies through sheer pain; another gently expires. But in all these cases, thus varying in circumstances, the sentence of the Divine law is inflicted. And for any thing we know to the contrary, the same diversity in regard to punishment may exist in the next world. The *essence* of the curse the Redeemer unquestionably did endure. He suffered in *soul* and in *body*. He was exposed to shame, disgrace, and

ignominy. He endured unnumbered sorrows and miseries. He was deprived of the light of his Father's countenance, so that he had to complain of being forsaken of him. His soul was exceedingly sorrowful, *even unto death*. And he actually underwent a separation of his soul from his body, and remained for some time in the state of the dead. "Thou shalt die," said the law; and the Saviour, the surety of sinners, *did die*, in the very way the law required.

4. It is objected against our doctrine that the Redeemer did not endure *eternal death*.

In the eternity of future punishment all sound theologians agree. They know that sin deserves everlasting torments, and that a righteous God has threatened to inflict them on all impenitent transgressors.

But why is the punishment of sin eternal? Because a *mere creature*, being incapable of sustaining it in any given period, it must be prolonged through everlasting ages. But the divine Redeemer was able to support his human nature under any degree of pain

and misery that the curse due to the sins of his people required to be inflicted on him ; and the *infinite dignity* of his person imparted to his temporary sufferings a value that made them a *fair and full equivalent* for the everlasting sufferings of all who shall be finally saved. By this mode of inflicting the penalty, the justice of God was better satisfied, the honour of his law more effectually maintained, and the universe more impressively warned against the evil of disobedience, than could have been done by the infliction of it on our whole race. So that in the vicarious death of Jesus Christ, as the substitute of his people, all the ends of punishment were completely and gloriously answered. No duration of suffering in a guilty creature can ever satisfy Divine justice ; it must run parallel with his immortal existence : but the sufferings, endured by the immaculate and divine Saviour, in the short term of his earthly life, so entirely exhausted the curse, that law and justice did not, and could not, demand a single pain, a solitary tear, or one groan

more, to render his awful sacrifice of himself complete. 'The eternity of punishment is to be considered rather as a *circumstance* growing out of a case, than as belonging to its *essence*. It depends on the nature of the subject. In a *mere creature* it must be eternal; but not in a *Divine substitute*. To have prolonged the sufferings of Christ beyond the period in which he endured them, would have been unjust.

Finally:

To our views of the atonement, it is objected, that the Redeemer could not, although a divine person, endure the amount of suffering required from him. "If," says a writer frequently quoted, "*one* soul were to be saved by the atonement, Christ must sustain an amount of suffering equal to that involved in the eternal condemnation of that one soul; and if a *thousand* were to be saved, Christ must suffer a thousand times that amount, and in the same proportion for any number who are to be rescued from perdition and exalted to glory."—"Now, as a single sin deserved eter-

nal misery, which certainly implies infinite suffering, we cannot see how every sin of all the redeemed could have been expiated in a few short hours, by the agonies of the human nature of Christ, though this nature was united to the Godhead. We say that Christ himself could not have made an adequate atonement—if this atonement implied, that he must endure sufferings equal to the eternal damnation of all those who will finally be saved.”\* Hence this writer concludes that the penalty of the law was not endured by the great Redeemer.

In reply to this objection, I remark that the author is mistaken in attributing the expiation of sin solely to the sufferings endured by the Redeemer “in a few short hours,” at the close of life. We believe, as the scriptures teach us, that, as he did not feel a single pang on his own account, so all the sorrows and afflictions, persecution and distress, agonies and torments to which he submitted during his abode on earth, were inflicted on him on account of *our*

\* Beman, p. 76.

sins, and constituted the atonement he made for us. How much he suffered it is impossible to tell. None but God can conceive the amount. But we by no means either teach, or believe, that he suffered *so much* for one, and *so much* for another; and that his agonies increased in their intensity just in proportion to the number that will finally be saved. We believe, and therefore teach, that he endured the *curse* or *penalty* of the law; precisely that amount of sufferings which Divine justice, considering the *infinite dignity* of his person, deemed requisite to make a full and complete satisfaction for the sins of his people. But it is erroneous to suppose that this amount of suffering was regulated exactly according to the number that shall be saved; so that, if the number had been less, his sufferings would have been diminished, or if greater, they would have been increased. The intrinsic merit of the atonement of Jesus Christ, is, as we have shown, in its own nature *infinite*, and sufficient for the salvation of any number of sinners of our race to whom it

may be applied. Such was the nature of the *representative principle* on which Adam acted for us, that his first sin, by which the covenant was violated, has conveyed guilt and pollution to all his posterity, and would be equally destructive to all, if the number of his descendants were to be increased beyond that which the Divine decree has determined on. And from the nature of the *same representative principle*, it follows, that if all mankind were to become united to the Redeemer by faith, and the infinite merits of his atonement were to be applied to them, all would be saved.

Every reflecting mind will see, that the divine nature of Christ imparted to the sufferings and obedience of his human nature, to which it was *personally* united, an *infinite* value; and rendered him capable of enduring sufferings that were, in the eye of law and justice, a *full and perfect equivalent* "for the eternal damnation of all those who will be finally saved." A small piece of gold is in *value* equal to a much larger

quantity of silver, and a still greater quantity of baser metal. A diamond will surpass in value silver or gold that would outweigh it a thousand times. The blood of a rational creature is worth more than the blood of dumb animals; and the blood of Christ is infinitely more precious than that of man. From sinful creatures justice demands eternal torments; but from the immaculate Son of God, while acting as the substitute of sinners, it could demand no more than he actually suffered while on earth, by which he exhausted the terrors of the curse. The Father filled the cup that he put into his hands with every bitter ingredient which the penalty of his law required. The human nature of Christ shrunk back for a moment from the deadly draught, and prayed that, if possible, it might pass from him; but knowing it must be taken, or man must perish, he drank the cup to its very dregs. "Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fa-

thers; but with the *precious* blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot and without blemish." 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

Thus I have endeavoured to answer the objections brought by our brethren against the views we entertain of the nature of the atonement. The attempt, I hope, has been a successful one.

Other points of contrast I reserve for subsequent letters. Should Providence permit, I may compare the two theories in reference to the *honour* they reflect on the *perfections* of God, on his *holy law*, and on the *work* of our Redeemer.

In the mean time, I remain,  
Yours, affectionately.

## LETTER VIII.

*The Truth of God.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

In the two preceding letters, I endeavoured to prove, that the *definite* scheme accords with the *scriptural* representations of the *nature* of the atonement, far better than the *indefinite*. Let us now,

II. Look at the two theories in another point of contrast, and inquire which puts the most honour on the Divine perfections; the *truth*, the *justice*, and the *love* of God.

*The TRUTH of God* will first claim attention. Truth is a perfection essential to the Divine nature; an attribute of which the Supreme Being can never be divested. He is celebrated by the inspired writers as “a God of *truth*,” “and plenteous in *truth*.” “All the paths of the Lord are mercy and *truth*, to such as keep his covenant and testimonies.” “He shall judge the world

in righteousness and the people with his *truth*." "The Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting, and his *truth* endureth to all generations." "He keepeth *truth* for ever." "The word of the Lord is right, and all his works are done in *truth*." "All his works are *truth*, and his ways judgment." "God is not man that he should *lie*." "The Strength of Israel *will not lie*." "God that *cannot lie*."

Such are the testimonies of inspired writers to this glorious perfection of the Divine nature. Jehovah is *truth itself*. He always speaks the truth; and he always does according to truth. It is impossible for him to deviate, in one word or action, from the requirements of truth. He is true in his *threatenings* as well as in his promises.

Now, this attribute of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, is honoured by the views we take of the atonement. We represent him as being incapable of departing from his word, by suffering sin to escape the penalty of the law. His *threatenings*,

we believe, are always executed either on the head of the transgressor, or on the head of his surety. Jehovah fulfils his comminations, exactly according to his meaning when he denounced them. Not so our brethren of the New School. They abandon the penalty of the law. It is executed neither on the ransomed of the Lord, nor on their Redeemer. Sin escapes without punishment. "There," says one, "is a secret and perpetual recurrence to the idea that Christ has paid the demand, or suffered the penalty of the law, so that its claims are now quieted, and the sentence of condemnation repealed. But this is a fundamental, and may prove a fatal error. There is nothing in the character of Christ's sufferings which can affect or modify the penalty of the law. These sufferings were not *legal*. They constituted no part of that *curse* which was threatened against the transgressor."\* Again: "The atonement paid no debt—it involved the *infliction of no penalty*."†

\* Beman, p. 68.

† Ibid. p. 72.

If these assertions be true; if the penalty of the law has been inflicted neither on the saved sinner, nor on his Redeemer; then his sins go unpunished: no satisfaction is made to Divine justice; and the truth of God is prostrated in the dust. He threatens; but he does not execute his threatenings. He declares that sin shall be punished; but he pardons it, and suffers it to escape without punishment.

How will our brethren get over this difficulty? How can they save the honour of the Divine veracity? Will they say, that God is not bound to fulfil his *threatenings*, while they admit that he is bound to fulfil his promises? I am not ignorant of the distinction made between a promise and a threatening. I know it has been said that, as by the former a right is passed over to him to whom the promise is given, justice requires the promiser to act according to his engagement; but in respect to the latter, the matter is very different: no right being conveyed to another, no obligation of justice demands the fulfilment of the threaten-

ing. This distinction, however, will not suffice to evince, that the *truth* of God does not create an obligation to inflict the penalty of his law, on every sin by which it is violated. Justice, I admit, requires the fulfilment of promises; but does not *truth* require the same? It is to Jehovah's *truth*, and not to his justice, the inspired writer refers us, when he proves the immutability of the Divine counsel. The *promise* and the *oath* of God are the two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to *lie*. (See Heb. vi. 17, 18.) If, then, it is impossible for the God of truth to lie by breaking his promise, it is manifest that he is bound by his *truth*, as well as by his justice, to fulfil his promises; and if he pays such a sacred regard to truth involved in his promises, is it not evident he must pay an equal regard to truth involved in his threatenings? The claims of truth are the same in both cases; and if the violation of truth would be *lying* in the one, it surely would be so in the other. The conclusion is, that every threatening of Je-

hovah must be fulfilled, according to its true import.

But it will be said, the non-execution of the penalty of the law involves no breach of truth, because the penalty denotes only the real demerit of sin. That the penalty expresses the judgment of our divine Lawgiver on the demerit of sin, is readily conceded; but to maintain that it involves nothing more, and gives no pledge that it shall be inflicted, is to maintain, in our apprehension, a manifest absurdity. Who ever heard of a human law promulged with such a sanction; a law declaring simply what punishment a violation of it would deserve, but giving no assurance that the crime would be punished? Such a law would disgrace the wisdom of an earthly legislature; and shall we dishonour infinite wisdom and supreme authority, by imputing such a law to HIM by whom kings rule and princes decree justice? The penalty annexed to his law, while it declares the demerit of sin, denounces wo against the transgressor. It assures us that sin shall

not go unpunished. It is written, "the wages of sin is death;" but it is also written, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." "The soul that sinneth it shall die." "Who will render unto every man according to his deeds:—unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil." "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." "For as many as have sinned without law SHALL perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law SHALL be judged by the law." Do these declarations contain nothing more than the judgment of the Supreme Lawgiver as to the demerit of sin? Who does not see that they solemnly assure us that sin shall be punished, and that the truth of God is pledged to see them fulfilled according to their true meaning?

But, say our brethren, the threatenings of God are conditional. "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." But

the Ninevites repented; “and God repented of the evil that he had said he would do unto them, and he did it not.” Parents often forbear to execute their threatenings; and human governments frequently remit the penalty of the law in favour of unhappy culprits. We grant magistrates are empowered to set aside the execution of sentences denounced against the violators of human laws; and whenever they exercise their dispensing power, in conformity with the design for which they received it, no breach of truth is involved in the transaction; because every law to which this remitting power extends is subjected to this condition, that its penalty may, in certain cases, be set aside. But, at the same time, it is to be observed, that the very necessity of this dispensing power grows out of the *imperfection* of human government, and the impossibility of adapting general laws to every particular case. But no such necessity exists in the divine government; which is infinitely perfect, and can, with

infallible certainty, apportion punishment to the demerit of every transgressor.

The escape of the Ninevites is indeed to be attributed to the well known clemency of God. But it produced no breach of truth; for it is evident, from the circumstances of the case, that the terrifying denunciation of the prophet was designed to awaken them to repentance, and lead them to reformation. The effect was happy. The people did repent. "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way." When, therefore, the Lord determined to spare them, he acted according to an established principle in his government over the nations. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them."\* The threatening was then *conditional*; and consequently the truth of God did not require its execution

\* Jer. 18.

on a repenting people. In sparing them, Jehovah, who is merciful and slow to anger, acted according to his *real intention* in commissioning his servant Jonah to proclaim his wrath against the Ninevites, and the *true import* of his awful denunciation.

But from the conditionality annexed to threatenings of temporal calamities, in respect to nations and individuals, it will by no means follow that the penal sanctions of God's holy and eternal law are, in like manner, conditional. Parents, it is true, do often remit punishment to their children; and duty sometimes requires that their threatenings should not be executed. But Jehovah is above all authority. His conduct is not subject to the rules that govern the conduct of imperfect and erring mortals. When a parent threatens to chastise a child, he may really design to do so; and yet he may afterwards see cause to change his purpose, and lay aside the rod. But when the omniscient God utters a threatening, he knows all possible circumstances. Nothing unforeseen can arise to

induce a departure from his original purpose; and consequently his truth demands the infliction of the penalty of his law on every sin, agreeably to its true import.

Our brethren, however, will insist, that, as the penalty of the law is not inflicted on the saved, it cannot be executed on any other person. They strenuously maintain the Redeemer did not bear the curse of the law. But here zeal for their peculiar views carries them along, in opposition to plain testimonies of inspired writers. Christ did endure, as was shown in my last letter, the curse of the broken law, for all who believe in him: and that this transfer of punishment from the original offenders to their Surety-Redeemer, was consistent with adherence to truth, we are taught to believe by Infinite Wisdom, under whose inspiration the prophets and apostles wrote. The plan of salvation was devised in the Eternal Mind before the creation of the world; the Son of God, in the character of Mediator, was set up from everlasting; believers were chosen in him before the foundation of the

world; and immediately after the fall of man, he, the seed of the woman, was promised, as coming to destroy the works of the devil: and of consequence it will follow, that, when the Lawgiver at first denounced the penalty of death in the hearing of innocent man, he did it in view of all these facts, and of that transfer of the curse from the head of his people to the head of their Divine Surety, which he contemplated, as the way to effect their salvation. In the death of Jesus Christ, as a *satisfaction* for sin, the *truth* of God shines in all its lustre. The penalty of a violated law is diverted from the sinner; and yet it is fully executed, in the bitter agonies of our immaculate Redeemer.

In opposition to our views, an argument has been drawn from the history of Adam. The preacher began with premising, that he believed God always acted according to his *real meaning* in his threatenings; and, then, in order to prove the threatening annexed to the covenant made with Adam was not executed, he observed that it de-

nounced temporal death, to be inflicted on the *very day* of his transgression. But this, said he, was not inflicted; Adam did not die, till he had lived upwards of nine hundred years. Besides, the penalty was *eternal* death; God declared that Adam should die eternally. But Adam was saved; and Jesus Christ did not suffer eternal death: consequently, the penalty was executed neither on Adam, nor on the Redeemer.

Such was his argument. He could not but be aware that it would be objected, that, according to this statement, the devil spake the truth, when, in tempting our first parents, he affirmed, in opposition to their understanding of the meaning of the threatening, "*Ye shall not surely die.*" This he could not deny; and to do away the force of an objection, so revolting to the minds of common Christians, he observed, that, to make temptations successful, there must be a mixture of truth with falsehood.—A feeble answer!

Now, in reply to this curious argument,

it is obvious to remark, that the construction put on the threatening does not accord with the preacher's preliminary observation; for, if God always acts agreeably to the real meaning of his declarations, then it is certain he did not, by his threatening to Adam, mean he should undergo temporal death on the very day of his transgression; because, as Adam's natural life was not destroyed on that day, God did, by his own conduct, show that this was not his meaning. Nor does it appear that our first parent so understood the threatening; for knowing himself to be the constituted head of a numerous progeny who were to descend from him, he had no reason thus to construe it. But he *actually* did, in a different sense, die on the *very day* in which he sinned. He lost the favour of his Maker; he was deprived of spiritual life; the Holy Spirit left his soul; he lost the Divine image, became corrupt in his moral nature, fell under the dominion of sin, and the power of spiritual death: his natural constitution underwent a great change; the seeds

of death were sown in it, and he became a mortal man: he was, moreover, ashamed, fled at the voice of his Maker, and vainly attempted to hide himself from his presence. Besides, sentence of death was pronounced upon him by his offended Sovereign; and he became *LEGALLY dead*. In this sense, he actually died on the *very day* of his transgression; and thus Jehovah himself has, by his treatment of the culprit, interpreted the real meaning of his own threatening.

That eternal death was involved in the penalty annexed to the first covenant, and that it is most unequivocally denounced against all impenitent sinners, we assuredly believe. But it is plain the word *eternal* was not used in the threatening against Adam; and it seems to us, that if it had been as plainly and positively declared that he should *surely* and *personally* die *eternally*, in case of violating the covenant, as it was that he should surely die on the day of his eating the forbidden fruit, his condition would have been hopeless. For we believe that when Jehovah condescends

to speak to us in human language, he is to be understood according to the common use of words, and that he always *means what he says*. His truth is pledged, not only in his *predictions*, as has been taught by some, but in his *threatenings* too. In the latter he as really *means* what he *says*, as in the former: and in fact all threatenings have the nature of predictions. Had, therefore, the original commination been expressed in the terms we have adverted to, the case of Adam would have been remediless. But these awful terms were not employed. The threatening was denounced in such language as to render his salvation consistent with Divine *truth*; in language corresponding to those schemes of mercy which were about to open their treasures of grace and love on this fallen world. Eternal death is now denounced against every sinner; but surely the meaning of the threatening is not that *every* sinner of our race shall certainly die eternally; for then who could be saved? The import obviously is, that every sinner

deserves this tremendous punishment; and that all who refuse to rely on the *satisfaction* for sin made by Jesus Christ, shall most certainly endure eternal misery. The true meaning, then, of the original penalty was, that Adam should surely die on the day of his disobedience in the way explained; but not that he should as certainly die eternally. He became indeed subject to eternal death, just as sinners now are; but his salvation was as consistent with the language of the penalty and its real import, as that of any of his posterity who lie under the same dreadful curse.

From the history of Adam no evidence can be derived, to prove that the penalty of the law has failed in its execution, or that the God of truth has ever acted, in a single instance, contrary to the true meaning of his words. Our first parent actually did die, according to the real import of the threatening; and as he from the first expected to be the progenitor of a numerous posterity, and at the time of his fall had no posterity, we have reason to believe that

he did not himself understand by the threatening, that his mortal life was to terminate on the *very day* of his transgressing the command of his Maker; and both promises and threatenings are obligatory, only in the sense in which they are really understood by the different parties concerned in them, at the time of making them. Jesus Christ, the great Redeemer, did truly, endure, as has been proved, the penalty of the law; and if Adam has been saved, it was through the *vicarious sacrifice* and *satisfaction for sin*, made by the promised seed of the woman.

Sincerely yours.

## LETTER IX.

*The Justice of God.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

WE have seen how much more honour is reflected on the *truth* of God, by the doctrine we teach, than by that taught by our brethren. Let us proceed to inquire in which of the two schools, the *honour* of DIVINE JUSTICE is most exhibited.

Contemplating the cross of Christ in the light in which our theory presents it, we immediately see a glorious display of Divine justice. Is an explanation of that awful spectacle required? Is the reason of the sufferings of the immaculate Redeemer demanded? We reply, it was right that he should suffer, because he assumed the place of sinners. Had he not become their substitute, justice could have had no claim on him, for the payment of their debt. But as, in infinite compassion to them in their

lost and ruined condition, he was pleased to undertake their redemption, and become their substitute: he was “made under the law,”\* subject to all its demands, *penal* as well as preceptive. Having thus assumed the responsibilities of his people and standing charged with their sins, justice could of course require from him a satisfaction for the dishonour which they had done to the law and government of God by their transgressions; and justly inflict on him that awful penalty which they had incurred. The penalty must be executed. The truth of God insists on its execution; his law demands it; and consequently his justice could righteously lay it on the Saviour, who had voluntarily taken the place of sinners, and engaged to satisfy all the demands of law and justice against them.

This is the reason of the dreadful sufferings of the spotless Lamb of God. As “he was made *sin*,” it was right that he should be “made a *curse* for us;”† the punish-

\* Gal. iv. 4.

† 1 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13.

ment due to our sins could justly be inflicted on our *substitute*, to whom they were all imputed. The wrath of the Almighty was poured out upon him; the fires of Divine justice consumed the victim that love had provided; the Father spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. What a glorious display of justice! How inflexible in its righteous demands! It will not abate them in the smallest degree, even in favour of the Son of God. He must drink the bitter cup of wrath to its very dregs. In the cross of our Redeemer, the universe will forever see the brightest exhibition of Divine justice.

Equally plain does our doctrine make the display of the evil of sin in the death of Christ. Had no sin been imputed to him, he could not have been treated as a sinner. But as all the sins of his people were charged to his account and he made responsible for them, it was right that the penalty of the law should be inflicted on him. "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the *chas-*

*tisement* of our peace was upon him.” “He bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” In the curse denounced against a fallen world, in the sufferings, agonies and death of mankind, and in the torments of hell, the dreadful evil of sin is seen; but in the sufferings and death of Christ, it is seen in a still stronger light. When an angry God, seizing a bold transgressor, pours out his curse upon his guilty head, banishes his soul from his presence, and overwhelms it in the fiery billows of the burning lake, he discovers his abhorrence of sin. But when, seizing his only begotten Son as the surety of guilty man, he poured out his curse on *his* head, withdrew from *him* the light of his countenance, and overwhelmed *him* with shame, anguish and horror of mind, he proclaimed to the universe, in tones of thunder, his utter detestation of sin, and gave the plainest and most convincing demonstration that he would not, and could not, suffer it to go unpunished. In the cross of Christ, sin appears to be that evil and bitter thing, which God hates with utter hatred.

Thus, according to the old theory, all appears plain and intelligible. But when we turn our eye to the new scheme, we see obscurity and darkness; we find ourselves surrounded with difficulties and perplexities. Our brethren, I know, think otherwise. They imagine that, by an application of an old distribution of the justice of God into three kinds, *commutative, distributive, and public*, they can not only expose the error in our views of this great subject, but remove all objections to the doctrine of the atonement. I do not controvert this distinction; but I shall object to the use they make of it, as being very unhappy and productive of real difficulties. In their hands it is a source of darkness, not a spring of light. For

First, *They set the justice of God AT VARIANCE with itself.* In a former letter this opposition was noticed in regard to believers. Here I shall consider it in reference to the Mediator. In man, justice, how diversified soever in its operations, is *one and the same* principle. It presides

over his whole conduct, and governs him, whether he act as a private individual, as a merchant, or as a ruler. Equally plain is it, that the justice of God, however diversified in its operations and distinguished by different names, on account of its modes of exercise, must be *one* and the *same* attribute of his nature. It is impossible for any collision to arise between his perfections, much less in the same perfection. Yet such a collision is represented as occurring between the demands of Divine justice, according to the views of our brethren. "Distributive justice," says the author of *Dialogues on Atonement*, "demands that every person should be treated according to his moral character. It demands that the guilty should be punished, and the innocent set free."\* Consequently, as Christ was, in their opinion, perfectly free from sin in every sense, either imputed or personal, distributive justice required that he should be saved from death, the *wages* of

\* P. 19.

sin, and enjoy life, the reward of obedience; and not be treated as sinners deserve to be treated, by being subjected to those very sufferings by which a righteous God punishes them, and expresses his displeasure against their disobedience. But, says this same writer, speaking of Christ's death, "it was a *satisfaction* to public justice, by which the ends of punishment are answered."\* Now, if his death was a satisfaction to public justice, then public justice demanded his death; demanded that he should pay the wages of sin, and be treated as a sinner, by being subject to the very sufferings that sinners deserve. Here then is a complete opposition, in the demands of one and the same Divine attribute. It demands that Christ should die; and it demands that he should not die.

Secondly: *They use this distinction so as to set aside DISTRIBUTIVE justice, in relation to the atonement.* It had no demand on Christ, they say; and of course

\* P. 23.

his sufferings were no satisfaction to its demands. But this representation is incompatible with scriptural testimony. It is true distributive justice had no demands against Christ on his own account; but on account of his representative character it had just demands. Having undertaken the redemption of sinners, he assumed their place and responsibilities; he was made under the law, subject to its penal requisitions, and bound to suffer and do all that their salvation required. It was therefore right that he should be made a *curse* for them, by enduring the penalty of the law; and Jehovah, by inflicting punishment on him, the *surety* of his people, dealt with him on the principles of distributive justice. He was viewed, not in the character of a holy man, who had always been obedient to the Divine law; but in his character of *Mediator* between an offended Sovereign and his rebellious creatures, who had engaged to pay the dreadful debt of penal sufferings which they had contracted. Justice therefore demanded his death; and

by dying he satisfied the claims of *distributive* justice. It was, strictly speaking, *distributive* justice that treated Christ as a sinner, and exacted from him the sufferings necessary to be endured in making an atonement for sin.

Thirdly: *On the plan of the new school, JUSTICE HAS NOT BEEN SATISFIED, nor can there be ANY DISPLAY of this attribute in the death of Christ.* They assert indeed that public justice was displayed in that ever memorable event; and consequently it must have demanded his death. But on what grounds can this be maintained? Was Christ a sinner? No; he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Was sin imputed to him? No; they reply, the imputation of sin is an absurdity. Had the law any demands on him? By no means; “the law,” says one of the new school, “has no penal demand against Christ—such a demand it can never establish.” “The law,”<sup>2</sup> says another, “did not demand the death of Christ.”\*

\* Beman, p. 34. Dial. on Atonement, p. 23.

If, then, on neither of these accounts the Supreme Ruler of the universe had any demands on the sufferings of Christ, on what possible grounds could justice, public justice, if you please, require, that he, the immaculate Son of God, should undergo that death which constitutes the *wages* of sin, and which law and justice denounce against sin, and against *sin only*? To subject such a glorious and Divine personage, free from sin both personal and imputed; one on whom the law had no penal demands; one whose character merited the highest honours; to the greatest ignominy, to unutterable pain, and to an accursed death, would have been a display, not of *public justice*, but of *public injustice*. It would have dishonoured the government of the Most High, and filled the universe with terror.

But to prove that on this scheme no injustice was done to Christ, it is said: "His sufferings were perfectly voluntary. He took them upon himself. If those sufferings had been inflicted upon him, without

his consent, he would have been treated with great injustice.”\* But, if we admit that his consent to suffer would have done away the charge of injustice, it will not follow that justice had any demands against him; and if it had no demands against him, there could be no *display* of justice, in subjecting him to a treatment so opposite to the claims of his moral character. “But distributive justice,” says the same writer, in immediate connexion with the above quotation, “was not exercised in the infliction of these sufferings upon him.” No indeed; because, on the principles of our brethren, great distributive *injustice* was done to him; for those sufferings were inflicted, not in accordance with, but in *opposition* to, the claims of distributive justice, which demanded a very different treatment of one so perfectly holy, and so free from sin in every sense. Consent, however, will not always authorize the infliction of evil on another. A man might wish to die,

\* Dial. on Atonement, p. 23.

and even request to be put to death; but this would not justify a magistrate in destroying his life, nor legalize his murder.

Finally: *On the principles advocated by our brethren*, NO INTELLIGIBLE END is answered by the Saviour's death. They indeed think otherwise; and one of them has said, "The atonement was a scheme devised by Infinite Wisdom, by which the ends of punishment can be completely satisfied, and yet the sinner spared." On our scheme this appears to be perfectly true; but on that of the new school, it will be found unable to stand the test of a rigid examination. View the death of Christ in the light of their principles, and it will be seen to answer no one legitimate end of punishment.

The principal end of punishment is the satisfaction due to Divine justice for the breach of God's holy law and the insult offered to his infinite majesty. But according to the theory of our brethren this is not answered by the Saviour's death; for they deny that distributive justice had any thing

to do with that awful transaction, and it has just been shown that public justice could not be satisfied by it; because it had no demands against him. Vindicating the honour of the Divine law, is another end of punishment. Admit, as we do, that Christ placed himself under the penal demands of the law, and suffered the penalty denounced against disobedience, and we see clearly how the law was honoured by his atonement; but deny, as the new school do, that the law had any penal demands against him and that he did suffer its penalty, and surely it will be absurd to say that the law in its penal demands was honoured by sufferings which they did not require, and which of consequence afforded them no satisfaction. A display of the evil of sin, and of the hatred which a holy God bears to it, is another end of punishment. If Jesus Christ was charged with the sins of his people and really bore the punishment which they deserved, then the infinite evil of sin and the Divine hatred against it appear in a strong, convincing and glaring light, in those

dreadful sufferings which Jehovah required of his own and well beloved Son, in making an atonement; and without which he would not, and could not, forgive his offending creatures. But if Jesus Christ was not only perfectly holy in himself, but, as our brethren affirm, not at all charged with the sins of men, and not at all responsible for them, we cannot see how the evil of sin and the Divine hatred of it, appear in sufferings which were not designed as a punishment of sin. Finally: another end of punishment is to warn the creatures of God against the evil of disobedience. Such a warning was indeed, on our principles, given to the universe in the shameful death of Immanuel: but, if, according to the new doctrine, Jehovah seized this glorious person, and put him to a death which his violated law did not demand and which could be no satisfaction to its penalty; if he subjected him to the most dreadful sufferings, neither on account of any *personal* sin, nor on account of any *imputed* sin, it is not conceivable how such a procedure could

convey to rational creatures a warning against the danger of disobedience. It was rather calculated to alarm the obedient for their safety, and shake their confidence that they should continue to enjoy happiness, so long as they persevered in their allegiance and duty to their almighty sovereign.

Thus it appears, on the principles of the new school, that no end of punishment is answered by the death of Christ. It seems to be an unintelligible transaction. We do not see how our brethren can avoid, in their march of *fancied* improvement, coming to the conclusion to which the new discoveries of Dr. Murdock has led him; that the death of Christ is a *mere symbol*, or arbitrary appointment of heaven, to signify the divine mind in relation to a certain thing.

Affectionately yours.

## LETTER X.

*The Love of God.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

The theories of the two schools in relation to Divine love, will be examined in this letter. I shall endeavour to prove that the doctrine of the Old School puts a HIGHER HONOUR *on the LOVE of God manifested in the gift of his only Son, as our atoning sacrifice, than that of the New.*

In holy scripture this love is celebrated as the highest and most glorious display of love that was ever made. Accordingly, we contemplate it as that special love, which Jehovah was pleased to entertain for all whom he designed to bring to the enjoyment of everlasting happiness. We believe that, for the consistent and honourable exercise of this amazing and eternal love, and that it might flow out to them in its rich and exuberant blessings, he sent his

own Son to be a propitiation for their sins. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John, iv. 10. We believe that, if Jehovah had not conceived this love for his chosen, which prompted him to effect their salvation, he certainly would not have exposed his co-equal Son to shame and suffering, nor permitted his precious blood to be shed by impious men.

But as the New School believe that the death of Christ merely opened the door of mercy for all men, they can attribute the atonement to no higher source than the general benevolence and good will of God. "It is," says the writer of Dialogues on Atonement, "the love of benevolence or good will. This has for its object all creatures capable of enjoyment or suffering; and regards the happiness of each one according to its real worth. Now the happiness of an individual is not, in itself, any more valuable, if he is elected, than if he is not elected. But God regards things according

to their real worth. His regard for the happiness of the *non-elect*, therefore, is the same as for that of the elect." "When this kind of love is exercised towards the guilty it is called compassion."—"Finally, it is this compassion for sinners, which is expressed by the Father in giving his Son to die; and by the Son, in laying down his life. And this is the plain import of the text before mentioned, "God so loved the *world*, that he sent his only begotten Son." Again: "It is evident, therefore, that God felt *no special love* for the elect, no love of a *different kind*, from that which he felt for the non-elect. He loved one as much as he did the other: and in the exercise of that love for all he gave his Son to die for all." Now here it is asserted that Jehovah loved the non-elect, as *much* as he loved the elect; and that the compassion which he feels for the guilty of every description, is the spring of that astonishing gift which fills heaven and earth with holy wonder and delight; and, consequently, it follows that the compassion which the Divine bosom

feels for the wretch on whom sentence of eternal perdition is pronounced, or the compassion felt for the damned, who are "creatures capable of suffering," gave birth to that stupendous gift, which we are constantly taught by inspired writers to regard as a demonstration of God's ineffable love to his church.

These are new views for men professing to belong to the Calvinistic school. They may be found in the writings of Arminians; but it is only of recent date, that they have been transferred to the pages of the advocates of the doctrines of particular election and limited salvation. Let us see whether they will bear the test of examination.

Israel was a type of God's chosen people; and if this representation be correct, then the descendants of Abraham, considered as an *elect people*, were not distinguished from other nations by any peculiar affection of the Most High toward them. Such, however, were not the views of their inspired lawgiver, who celebrates the special love of God to them as his elect

people: "The Lord thy God hath *chosen* thee to be a special people unto himself, above all the people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not *set his love* upon you, nor *choose you*, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you." Deut. vii. 6—8. "Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, is the Lord's, thy God; the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you, above all people, as it is this day." Deut. x. 14, 15. By these texts we are plainly taught that the children of Israel were the objects of Jehovah's *special* love; that this love was not founded on any *good qualifications* which they possessed, but originated in his *sovereign pleasure*; and that the love which God bare to them he did not bear to nations whom he had not chosen. Equally adverse to the representation of this writer, is the testimony of Paul, who expressly teaches us, that Jacob, as an *elected person*, was distinguished

by a love which was denied to his brother Esau. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the *purpose* of God, according to *election* might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, *Jacob* have I LOVED, but *Esau* have I *hated*." Whatever explanation may be given of the election which the apostle here speaks of, it cannot be denied that he exhibits Jacob as an *elect person*, and Esau as a *non-elect person*; that he represents Jacob as distinguished by a love which was not extended to Esau; and that this love was not grounded on the superior worth of the younger brother, but issued from the sovereign purpose of an infinitely wise God—Here we have an exact type of the love which the Almighty bears to his spiritual church. She was, in the exercise of his sovereign pleasure, chosen out of the common mass of guilt and pollution. She was distinguished from the rest of mankind by a *special* love, not on account of the good

qualifications, or personal righteousness of her members, but because the Lord had a delight to love her; and from this love flowed the astonishing gift of the Son of God to be our Redeemer. In accordance with this representation, the apostle speaks of the love of Christ to his church: “Husbands love your wives, even as *Christ* also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” The love which a man bears to his wife is unquestionably peculiar; such a love as he may not indulge to any other woman. Still more peculiar is that love which the Saviour entertains for his church; a love which he does not bear to others. Now, to this special wonderful love, the apostle traces up the gift which Christ made of himself, and all the blessings of pardon, justification, sanctification, and glorification, which were purchased by his precious blood.

In proof that the death or atonement of Christ took its rise from the general benevolence of God, that common love in which the reprobate share equally with the elect, an appeal is made to the declaration of our Lord to Nicodemus: "God so loved the *world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John, iii. 16. For a moment let us grant—that the term *world*, in this text, means all mankind, and mark the consequences. What is the proof of God's love to the world? The gift of his only begotten Son. For what purpose was he given? "*That whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.*" It was his fixed and unalterable purpose, that all believers should be saved. Now, if in this verse the term *world* means all mankind, it must, in the next verse, be equally extensive in its signification; and then it will follow, that it was the fixed and unalterable purpose of God in sending his Son into the world, that all mankind should be saved;

for the form of the expressions, you will observe, in the two verses, especially in the original, denoting the *Divine intention*, is the SAME; "*that the world might be saved.*" Here is universal salvation! But from such a conclusion our brethren turn away, because they know it to be unscriptural. The conclusion, however, must follow, unless we qualify the expressions in the last verse, and show, that the term *world* cannot there mean all mankind, but only such of them as shall believe. In the context, then, we find a reason for limiting a word, which very rarely in scripture signifies *all and every man*. This term was wisely selected by our Saviour, in preference to the term *elect*. 1. Because the *elect*, until called and converted, form a part of the world that lies in wickedness. 2. Because the Redeemer intended to correct the prejudices of Nicodemus, and enlarge his views of the benefits to be derived from the coming of the Messiah. With the rest of his countrymen, he supposed they were to be confined to his own nation.

But our Saviour teaches him that they were to be far more extensive in their distribution, by informing him that the love of God, which sent his Son to save sinners, embraced the *Gentiles*, as well as the Jews. It was confined not to one nation, but extended to all nations. It was a love which he bore to the world at large, because every where the objects of it were to be found, mingled with every tongue, and people, and nation. John has himself explained the import of the text, in chap. xi. 51, 52. "And this spake he, not of himself: but being high-priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one *the children of God, that were scattered abroad.*"

If God love all mankind alike, and Jesus died alike for all, why does he not intercede for the salvation of all mankind? That he does not intercede for the salvation of all, he himself has assured us: "I pray *not for the world, but for them which thou*

*hast given me.*” Now, can it be doubted that he loves those of our fallen race for whom he intercedes, more than those for whom he does not intercede? Indeed, the special love of God to his elect, will clearly follow from an admission of our brethren, to which I have more than once adverted. “Christ, say they, did not die with an *intention* of saving any but the elect. The Father did not deliver up his Son to death with an intention of saving any other of the human family.” The most, then, that can be said, in conformity with their views, is, that Christ designed by his death to make it consistent to offer salvation to the non-elect, and place them under a dispensation of mercy. Here, then, is a vast difference made between these two classes of our fallen race. For the one Christ dies *with an intention to save them*; for the other, he dies *with no such intention*. The one, Jehovah chooses to salvation in Christ; the other, he does not thus choose. To the one, he not only offers salvation in the preaching of the gospel, but, by working

faith in their hearts, and thus uniting them to the Lord Jesus Christ, he actually puts them in possession of its rich and invaluable blessings. To the other, the offer of salvation is sincerely made, and they are inexcusable in rejecting it; but God does not impart to them the saving grace of his Holy Spirit.

And is it reasonable to conclude, that Jehovah feels for those two classes of men, whom he treats so differently, the same *kind* and the same *degree* of love?

Was it not easily seen, from the peculiar endearments which Jacob showed to his son Joseph, that he loved him more than his brethren? And is it not manifest that Jehovah loves those on whom he bestows peculiar and distinguishing blessings, more than he loves those on whom he does not bestow them? When the Jews saw Jesus weeping at the tomb of Lazarus, they justly remarked, "Behold how he loved him!" They judged of the strength of his love from its effects: and doubtless we are authorized to judge of the love of God, by

the same criterion. When the God of Israel sets forth his peculiar love to his ancient people, he enumerates some of the distinguishing blessings bestowed on them: and if the enjoyment of superior external blessings was a proof of distinguishing regard for the people thus favoured, then surely the enjoyment of superior spiritual blessings, must be a proof of distinguishing love toward that portion of our race whom Jehovah delights thus to favour. "Behold," exclaims the apostle in view of these distinguishing blessings, "behold what *manner of love* the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God!" And again: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

To this *special*, this *distinguishing* love, we attribute the gift of Jesus Christ; and not, as our brethren, to that common love, that general compassion, which, as they say, will be felt even for the damned, when the sentence of everlasting perdition shall be

pronounced on them. This general compassion differs widely from that astonishing love which inspired writers celebrate in such lofty notes of praise;—that wonderful love which constitutes the theme of that everlasting song which will be sung by saints and angels in heaven, through endless ages. With inspired writers, and in unison with the sentiments of saints around the throne in glory, we magnify this love, and set it above all displays of general benevolence, that were ever made in creation or in providence. It has dimensions, a breadth and length and depth and height, which no created intellect will ever be able fully to comprehend. “Unto to him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.” Amen.

Yours, sincerely.

## LETTER XI.

*On the Law.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I must draw my epistles to a close. The importance of the subject discussed, has induced me to spend so much time in the investigation. They are now in a course of publication; and if the great Head of the church shall condescend to honour them as a means for rectifying the error of any reader, or for establishing the minds of the wavering in the doctrine that has hitherto prevailed in the Presbyterian church, I shall deem myself well rewarded for the time and labour bestowed on them.

*It only remains to contrast the two theories in relation to the HONOUR they reflect on the DIVINE law, and on our BLESSED REDEEMER.*

Both schools concur in pronouncing on

the Law of God the highest encomiums; believing it to be a transcript of his moral perfections, and worthy of the profoundest obedience of every rational creature. They agree in the sentiment, that the penalty which guards the sanctity of the law, involves a degree of misery far greater than is felt by any human being on this side the grave, and that it will run parallel with the eternal existence of the damned; and they strenuously maintain, that the infliction of this fearful penalty on every impenitent and unbelieving sinner, is a righteous procedure on the part of the Supreme Ruler of the universe. But they differ widely in their views of the bearing of the Mediator's work on the law.

You know, sir, that, in the contrast I am drawing, I do not refer to our brethren, who, while they believe in a *general* atonement, hold to its *true nature* as involving a *real satisfaction* to Divine justice, and a *real infliction* of the threatened *penalty* on the sinner's glorious and spotless substitute. In my second letter it was shown,

that between them and the advocates of a *definite* atonement, the difference is merely *verbal*, and that they have no ground for controversy with each other. This I wish to be kept in mind.

The new school believe the perfect obedience which Christ yielded to the precepts of the Divine law to have been necessary to his work as Saviour, and that the least defect in it would have defeated his benevolent design of saving sinners. But this belief is grounded, not on the necessity of the saved having a finished righteousness as the basis of their justification, but on the necessity of perfect holiness in the person of the Redeemer. Accordingly they deny that Christ, as the *legal representative* of his people, obeyed all the precepts of the law FOR *them*, that his righteousness, when received by faith, might be *imputed* to them, and render them righteous before God. They speak indeed of the sufferings of Christ as being a *substitute* for our sufferings; but at the same time deny that HE was *our substitute*, standing in *our law*

*place*, bearing our sins and enduring the penalty due to them. The sufferings of the Saviour were a *consequence* of sin; but they were not an infliction of the curse of the law: because, say they, the law had no demands on him. The result is, that according to the new theory, sinners are saved *without a righteousness*, and *without a satisfaction for sin*: and the death of Christ is made a mere *expedient* for SETTING ASIDE both the *preceptive* and the *penal* demands of the law upon them. Neither the one nor the other has been complied with *by* them, or *for* them, by a surety. In opposition to the righteous demands of a holy law, they appear in heaven in the presence of the great Lawgiver, who has pledged his truth that sin shall not go unpunished, and proclaimed it as part of his name or nature, that he will by *no means clear the guilty*.

Such views are deemed by the old school to be highly unscriptural, and really dangerous in their tendency, and in fact *subversive of the TRUE NATURE* of the atone-

ment. They are unable to see how the law could be *magnified* and made *honourable*, by a transaction and scene of suffering which *it did not require*, and which in fact were intended to *prevent the fulfilment of its just and good demands*.

Very different are their views of the relation which the obedience and death of Immanuel bore to the law of God. In them they behold a complete fulfilment of all its demands on sinners, both *preceptive* and *penal*. Taught by an inspired apostle that "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, *made under the law*, to redeem them that were under the law," (Gal. iv. 4, 5,) they believe that the law had demands on Christ; and that by his holy life and bitter death he fulfilled them all, as the *substitute* and *legal representative* of every true believer. Assured too by the same apostle that "God *imputeth RIGHTEOUSNESS without words;*" (Rom. iv. 6.) "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, *unto all and upon all them that believe:*" (Rom. iii. 21, 22.)

they hold that the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ even unto death, constitutes that righteousness by which sinners are justified; and that it is imputed for this purpose to every one who believes in Jesus. Thus sinners are saved in a way perfectly consistent with the *honour* of the Divine law; none of its demands are sacrificed; all are fully satisfied, not indeed by fallen man, but by his immaculate Redeemer; sin is pardoned, and yet punished. The saved appear in heaven before God in a complete righteousness; not a personal one, not through their "own righteousness, which is of the law;" but in that perfectly finished and glorious righteousness, in which the great apostle desired to be found, even "that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. iii. 9.

Such a transaction is glorious to the law. By the obedience of Immanuel unto death, its precepts and its penalty have been declared to be just and reasonable and good. More honour has been done to the one than

would have been rendered, if all mankind had persevered in sinless obedience; and higher honour put on the other, than if it had been inflicted on our whole race.

Let it not be objected, that the character of a substitute and representative is unknown to the law. Not so. The principle of representation was connected with it in its first operation on man; for, in the first covenant, Adam was constituted *the federal head and representative* of all his natural posterity: and if the world was ruined under such a dispensation without any reflection on the justice or goodness of the Almighty Creator, how can it be deemed inconsistent with these attributes of his nature, to establish a new and similar dispensation, for its recovery to holiness and happiness? That there is a striking analogy between the way in which we were ruined and the way in which we are recovered, is plainly taught in holy scripture. Having run a parallel between Christ and Adam, whom he styles "*the FIGURE of him that was to come,*" and the corresponding ef-

fects of the *offence* of the latter, and of the *righteousness* of the former, the apostle adds: "For as by ONE MAN'S *disobedience* many were made sinners, so by the *obedience* of ONE shall many be made righteous." Rom. v. 14—19. And, in 1 Cor. xv. 22, he asserts the same analogy; "for as IN *Adam* all die, so IN *Christ* shall all be made alive:" meaning, not as the Universalists teach, that all men will be ultimately saved by Christ, but that all *who are in Christ*, united to him by faith, and represented by him in his mediatorial work, shall be raised from the dead to the enjoyment of an immortal life of happiness and glory; just as all united to Adam by natural generation, and by the relation established by the original covenant or constitution made with him as their representative, have become subject to death in all its terrible forms.

From this comparison, it is easy to see which of the two theories reflects the highest honour on the Divine law. The one maintains its righteous demands in all their

extent, and exhibits them as gloriously fulfilled in the life and death of the Son of God for all his people; while the other prostrates them, and with them, the truth of God, in the dust.

When I began this letter, I intended to finish the contrast; but as the remaining point is important, I think it best to reserve it as the subject of another letter.

Sincerely, yours.

## LETTER XII.

*The Redeemer's Glory.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

This will be the last letter on the important subject that has so long occupied our attention. It remains only to show, that as the views of the old school reflect higher honour on the perfections and law of God, than those of the new, so they present a nobler and more scriptural tribute of praise to the great Redeemer.

The atonement, says Mr. Beman, *merely opened the door of mercy* to fallen man. The writer of Dialogues, while he admits that Christ died with an intention to save the elect and not others, and that he satisfied public justice, denies that he made any satisfaction to *distributive justice*, and affirms that the gift of Christ resulted from no *special love* of Jehovah to his chosen, but from that *general benevolence* in which

all share, and that *common compassion* which is not denied even to the damned. Others represent the atonement as consisting in an exhibition of the evil of sin, and in a declaration of God's hatred of it and its desert of punishment ; and affirm that, if not one soul were saved, the proper end of the death of Christ would be answered, and its full effect produced.

With these views of our brethren we cannot accord. They are either *erroneous* or *defective*. They detract from the honour due to the atonement of our blessed Lord ; they remove it from that central and all important point in the scheme of salvation, which inspired writers have assigned to it ; and they detract from it the glory of effects which it really produces. That it opened the door of hope and mercy to this wretched world is certain ; but we regard it also as the *meritorious cause* of our salvation. While we admit a display of the evil of sin, of its desert of punishment, and of God's hatred of it, and of his justice, to be the result of the atonement ; we main-

tain its *true nature* to consist in *making satisfaction* for sin. The idea that the end of the atonement would have been answered, although none of our fallen race had been saved, we reject as entirely derogatory to the wisdom of God and the merits of his Son; contending that, as an atonement carries in its nature the notion of a *satisfaction*, the salvation of all who were given to the Redeemer must certainly follow in the *manner* and *time* agreed upon in the eternal counsels of the Holy Trinity; and that to have left their salvation uncertain as it would have reflected on Infinite Wisdom, so it would have been inconsistent with the infinite value of the price paid for their redemption. We make the atonement of Jesus Christ the procuring cause of every blessing bestowed on the church, both in this and the next world.

In my third letter (pp. 64—67) it was shown, that the inspired writers represent every blessing of salvation as the *fruit* of Christ's death: Such as forgiveness, reconciliation, justification, peace, adoption,

sanctification, and the heavenly inheritance. Now, it is plain such a representation could not be properly made if the death of Christ merely opened the door of hope and mercy. These blessings ought, in that case, to be denominated the *fruit of Divine grace ONLY*, and not of the atonement; but as the atonement did really merit them for sinners, they are justly represented as the fruit at once of the death of Christ, and of Divine grace; because they really are so: and grace is justly celebrated as reigning “through *righteousness* unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. v. 21.

An inspection of the texts cited in the letter just referred to, must convince any reflecting mind, that there is a real established connexion between the death of the Redeemer, and all the blessings of salvation. But what, it will be asked, is that connexion? In reply to this question, it may, I think, be truly affirmed, that it is the connexion which exists between *cause* and *effect*, between a *price* and a *purchase*, between a *service rendered* and a *stipulated reward*.

Let not the investigation of this question be regarded as a mere matter of curious speculation. If the scriptures speak on it we are bound to hear and learn; and it would ill become us to turn away our ears from the voice of heavenly wisdom, contenting ourselves with believing that some *general undefined* connexion subsists, between our salvation and the death of Christ. Will any say that this point belongs merely to the philosophy of Christianity? I would admonish them not to disparage by such a name, a truth which Infinite Wisdom has seen fit to teach the church. It is precisely one of those particulars, in which the knowledge of Christians transcends that of ancient saints; one that involves the glory of the Redeemer and the comfort of his people. We proceed therefore to inquire what the New Testament teaches on this question.

1. It teaches that the connexion between the death of Christ and our salvation is that of *cause and effect*. If it were not of this nature, with what propriety could the

inspired writers attribute the cleansing of the soul from its moral pollutions to his blood? That they do so is incontrovertibly plain: "Unto him that loved us, and hath *washed us from our sins in his own blood.*" But this, it will be said, is figurative language. Admitted: it has, however, a *real* meaning; and what can the meaning be, except this: that, as the body is cleansed from its pollution by the application of water, so the soul is really cleansed from the pollution and guilt of sin, by the application of the Saviour's blood to it by faith. Accordingly we hear the apostle (1 John i. 7,) say, in plain language, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son *cleanseth* us from all sin:" teaching us that his precious blood operates, *as a cause*, in purifying the soul from moral defilement, *as really* as water does in purifying the body from the pollutions of contaminating substances. The same truth is taught by the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. ix. 13, 14, where he shows the superiority of Christ's sacrifice to those typical sacrifices

that were offered under the law: "For, if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, *purge your conscience from dead works* to serve the living God?" The blood of the Levitical sacrifices were the constituted cause of ceremonial purification; and, in like manner, the blood of Christ is a more powerful cause, of real internal purification of the sinner's conscience, from the guilt and pollution of sin.

2. Between the death of Christ and the blessings of salvation, there exists *the connexion found between a price and its purchase*. That his blood is denominated a *price*, and that we are said to be *bought*, is asserted by inspired writers too plainly to be denied by any acquainted with scriptural language; and some of our brethren seem willing to allow that *we* were bought with a price; but deny that any price was

paid for the blessings of salvation. Yet from the admission of the former truth, the latter must follow as a legitimate consequence. For when a person buys a thing, that thing becomes the buyer's property. In what sense then, I ask, were we bought by Jesus Christ? Were we not his property before he paid the price? Were we not his creatures, dependent on him for existence and every thing; and had he not a perfect and sovereign right to dispose of us as he pleased? How then did he buy us? What new right did he acquire over us by his purchase? He bought us out of the hands of Divine justice, and from under the curse of the law, that he might save us; he acquired by his purchase the right of delivering us from the dominion of sin and Satan, and bestowing on us eternal life. "Father," said our Redeemer, as he was finishing the payment of the mighty price of our redemption, "the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast *given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*" John vii. 1, 2.

Besides, as the sacred writers do, as we have proved, connect the blessings of salvation with the death of Christ as their *real meritorious cause*; and as they expressly call his death a *price*: it must follow, that the one is connected with the other, just as a thing purchased is with the price paid. And this is taught still plainer in that remarkable passage in Peter's first epistle: (chap. i. 18, 19) "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, *from your vain conversation* received by tradition from your fathers; but with the *precious blood* of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Now, here deliverance from vain conversation, from a foolish and sinful life, or in other words, *sanc-tification*, is affirmed to have been purchased with the blood of Christ; and if this leading blessing of salvation was, then it will follow, that all others were thus purchased. Accordingly, we find this asserted by the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews: "Neither by the blood of goats

and calves, but *by his own blood* he entered in once into the holy place, *having obtained* ETERNAL REDEMPTION *for us.*" Heb. ix. 12. Eternal redemption will, it is presumed, be admitted in this passage, to comprehend all the blessings of salvation; or if any should wish to object, they ought to be convinced by the 15th verse, where the apostle goes on to say—"And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, *that* BY MEANS OF DEATH, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament; *they which are called might receive the promise of the* ETERNAL INHERITANCE." Here then the blessings of salvation, not excepting the eternal inheritance, are attributed to the death of Christ as their *meritorious cause*, or *price paid* for them. See also Gal. iii. 13, 14.

It is in vain for our brethren to endeavour to explain away this scriptural truth, by alleging the death of Christ was not a *literal* price. For if by this they mean the blood of Christ was not *silver* and *gold*,

they assert what no one can be ignorant of, and guard against an error which none are in danger of adopting. But the blood of Immanuel, though not silver nor gold, yet was a REAL *price*; infinitely more valuable in the sight of God and acceptable to Divine justice, than all the treasures of earthly kingdoms. That the purchase of our salvation by this amazing price is perfectly consistent with the *reign of free and sovereign grace* throughout the whole work, from beginning to end, was, you will remember, shown in my third letter. To the arguments there used to establish the entire harmony of salvation by grace, and salvation by the righteousness of Christ, it is not deemed necessary to offer any thing additional.

3. The connexion between the death of Christ and our salvation, is the same as that which exists *between a service rendered and a stipulated reward*.

A work was assigned to Jesus Christ by his eternal Father. This work consisted

in his active and passive obedience, or, in other words, in his obedience even unto death. So we are taught by holy scripture. He himself says, "sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Ps. xl. 6, 8. "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." John vi. 38. Speaking of laying down his life, the Saviour says, "This commandment have I received from my Father." John x. 18. And at the close of life, just before his crucifixion, he said, "Father, I have glorified thee on the earth; I have *finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*" His exaltation followed, not merely as a *consequent* follows an *antecedent*, but as a *reward* of a *stipulated service*. His reward consisted in his being raised, as man and mediator, to the mediatorial throne, invested with

supreme dominion over the church and the world, over men and angels, for the purpose of saving unnumbered sinners of our race, to the glory of Divine grace. Both prophets and apostles inculcate this delightful truth. "Thy throne, O God," exclaims David, while contemplating the beauty and glory of the promised Messiah, "is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou *lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness:* THEREFORE, God, thy God, *hath anointed thee with the oil of joy above thy fellows.*" Ps. xlv. 6, 7. In his prophetic view of the humiliation and exaltation, the death and resurrection, the obedience and reward of Christ, Isaiah says, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. THEREFORE *will I divide him a portion with*

*the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; BECAUSE HE HATH Poured out his soul unto death.*" Isaiah liii. 10, 12. Having recited the several steps in the humiliation of the Son of God, from his assumption of the form of a servant, to his death on the cross, the apostle Paul declares his reward: "WHEREFORE God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. ii. 9, 11. And the Redeemer himself proclaims the same truth, in his solemn intercessory prayer; in which, immediately after stating the completion of his work, he prefers his claim to the promised reward: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. Father, I *will* that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me

where I am: that they may behold my glory which *thou hast given me*: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." John xvii. 5, 24. To this glorious reward the apostle refers, when, speaking of the Redeemer, he says, "Who, for *the joy that was set before him*, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. xii. 2.

Thus are we taught to conceive of the nature of the connexion subsisting between the death of Christ and our salvation." It is that of *cause and effect*, that of a *price* and its *purchase*, that of a *service rendered* and a *stipulated reward*. To speak then of the atonement as *merely* opening the door of hope and mercy, is ascribing to it not half the praise due to that amazing transaction; and to assert that its end would be accomplished, although not one human soul were saved, is to derogate from the glory of HIM who died that we might live, and hung upon a cross, that we might ascend a throne. The *design*, both of the Father

who gave his Son, and of the Son who gave himself, to be a sacrifice for sin, was, *to secure the salvation* of all believers, and of all who were chosen to salvation in the eternal purposes of heaven. This glorious effect must be produced, or the atonement would fail in accomplishing its grand design. But failure is impossible. "I lay down my life for the *sheep*. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also *must* I bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." John x. 15, 16. "All that the Father giveth me *shall* come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, *that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day*. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and *believeth* on him, may have everlasting life; and *I will raise him up again at the last day*." John vi. 37, 39, 40.

Such is the scriptural connexion between

the death of Christ and the salvation of believers; a connexion clearly pointed out, and strongly marked by inspired teachers. It is one of those glorious truths which we owe to Divine revelation, and which we are bound by Divine authority to believe, and apply to those practical purposes it is intended to subserve. It has an important bearing on a Christian's experience. It is calculated to excite his joy, and awaken his gratitude; while it points out to him the sacred fountain in which he is to wash, that he may be cleansed from all the stains of guilt, and all the pollution of sin.

The atonement we justly honour, when we conceive of it as the *procuring, meritorious cause* of salvation, and as the *infinite price* paid by the Son of God for the redemption of all his chosen people; and when we believe that the free and sovereign grace of God, as it provided, so will not fail to apply this infallible remedy, discovered by Infinite Wisdom, for healing the dreadful diseases produced by sin. By his obedience unto death, Christ was

“made” a “perfect” High Priest; and thus, by *his blood*, “became the AUTHOR of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” See Heb. v. 8, 9, and ii. 10.

Having finished the discussion, permit me now to recapitulate the several points in which the two schemes of atonement have been contrasted. In my first letter it was shown, that, notwithstanding the broad assertions of the New School about its extent, the *indefinite* is not more extensive than the *definite* atonement, either *in regard to the merit of Christ's death*, or *in reference to its application*, or *in respect to the offer of salvation*, or *in relation to the Divine purpose*: and, in fact, that the views of our brethren, in this particular, have no advantage whatever over ours. In the second, third, and fourth letters, the doctrine of the two schools was compared, in respect to the preaching of the gospel, and the display of free and sovereign grace, in the recovery of fallen man; and it was, I trust, proved, that there is nothing in our views of the atonement, to prevent the ge-

neral preaching of the gospel to all nations, and all classes of mankind; nothing to hinder a free and unrestricted offer of salvation to every one who hears us, and to assure him, that if he believe, he will certainly be saved: that there is no inconsistency whatever in representing, as the inspired writers plainly do, the blessings of salvation as being, at once, the *fruits of Christ's death*, and the *fruits of free and sovereign grace*; and that if there were any difficulty in this matter, the attempt of our brethren to remove it, by asserting the Redeemer satisfied *public*, and not *distributive* justice, is futile. We compared the views entertained by the two schools of the nature of the atonement, in the fifth, sixth, and seventh letters; where it appeared, that our doctrine accords with scriptural statements and representations on the subject; and that, as our brethren mistake, so, by denying the *real satisfaction* made by the Son of God in his character of *substitute* of his people, charged with their sins, and sustaining the penalty of the law due to

them, they, in fact, *subvert the TRUE NATURE* of the atonement, and oppose clear and positive testimonies of inspired writers. In the remaining letters I endeavoured to prove, that the doctrine of the Old, is to be preferred to that of the New School; because it puts higher honour on the *truth*, the *justice*, and the *love* of God; because it better guards the *rights* and *demands* of the Divine law; and because it affords a brighter display of the *mediatorial glory* of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Committing these letters to the patronage and blessing of that Almighty Redeemer whose work I have endeavoured to illustrate, and whose glory I have attempted to magnify,

I am, dear Sir,  
Yours affectionately,

THE END.