

fits which His death procured for men,—the benefits of salvation,—were designed or intended for all mankind.

There is no very material difference between the state of the question with respect to the extent of the atonement,—and to that at present we confine our attention,—according as its universality is maintained by Arminians, or by those who hold Calvinistic doctrines upon other points. The leading distinction is, that the Calvinistic universalists are obliged to practise more caution in their declarations upon some points, and to deal somewhat more in vague and ambiguous generalities than the Arminians, in order to avoid as much as possible the appearance of contradicting or renouncing, by what they say upon this subject, their professed Calvinism upon other topics.

As the controversy with regard to the extent of the atonement *does not* turn,—though many of the universalists would fain have it so,—upon the question of the infinite sufficiency of Christ's sufferings and merits, *it must* turn upon the question of the *purpose, design, or intention* of God in inflicting sufferings and death upon His Son, and of Christ in voluntarily submitting to them. Universal atonement thus indicates and proves the existence, on the part of God and Christ, of a purpose, design, or intention, in some sense or other, to save all men. And for the Calvinistic universalists to assert the existence of such a purpose, design, or intention,—in combination and in consistency with the doctrine that God has from eternity elected some men to everlasting life, and determined to save them,—requires the introduction of a good deal of confusion and ambiguity into their mode of stating and arguing the case. They cannot say, with the Arminians, that Christ died equally for all men; for they cannot dispute that God's special purpose of grace in regard to the elect,—which Arminians deny, but they admit,—must have, in some sense and to some extent, regulated or influenced the whole of the process by which God's purpose was accomplished,—by which His decree of election was executed. They accordingly contend for a general design or purpose of God and Christ—indicated by the alleged universality of the atonement—to save all men; and a special design or purpose—indicated by the specialty of the bestowal of that faith (which they admit—which the Arminians, practically at least, deny—to be God's gift)—to save only the elect. But this, again, belongs rather to the argument of the case than to the state of the question.

The substance of the matter is, that they concur with the Arminians in denying the great truth laid down in our Confession of Faith, that redemption,—that is, pardon and reconciliation,—are actually applied and communicated to all for whom they were procured or purchased; and, to a large extent, they employ the very same arguments in order to defend their position.

It may be worth while briefly to advert to one of the particular forms in which, in our own day, the state of the question has been exhibited by some of the Calvinistic universalists. It is that of asserting what they call *a general and a special reference* of Christ's death,—a general reference which it has to all men, and a special reference which it has to the elect. This is manifestly a very vague and ambiguous distinction, which may mean almost anything or nothing, and is, therefore, very well adapted to a transition state of things, when men are passing from comparative orthodoxy on this subject into deeper and more important error. This general reference of Christ's death,—its reference to all men,—may mean merely, that, in consequence of Christ's death, certain benefits or advantages flow to mankind at large, and in this sense it is admitted by those who hold the doctrine of particular redemption; or it may describe the proper Arminian doctrine of universal or unlimited atonement; or, lastly, it may indicate anything or everything that may be supposed to lie *between* these two views. It cannot, therefore, be accepted as a true and fair account of the state of the question about the extent of the atonement, as discussed between Calvinists, and may not unreasonably be regarded with some jealousy and suspicion, as at least fitted, if not intended, to involve the true state of the question in darkness or ambiguity. The universality of the atonement had been defended before our Confession of Faith was prepared, by abler and more learned men,—both Calvinists and Arminians,—than any who in modern times have undertaken the same cause. The authors of the Confession were thoroughly versant in these discussions; and it will be found, upon full study and investigation, that whatever variety of forms either the state of the question, or the arguments adduced on both sides, may have assumed in more modern discussions, the whole substance and merits of the case are involved in, and can be most fairly and fully discussed by, the examination of their position,—namely, that “to all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, He doth certainly and effectually apply and communi-

cate the same." This position proceeds upon the assumption that He purchased redemption for men. The truth of this assumption is involved in the establishment of the doctrine of the atonement,—of Christ's death being a ransom price,—in opposition to the Socinians, and must be admitted by all, unless, while professedly holding the doctrine of the atonement, they virtually sink down to Socinianism, by explaining it entirely away. And this being assumed, the position asserts, that all for whom redemption was purchased, have it applied or communicated to them; and that, of course, Christ died for the purpose, and with the intention, of procuring or purchasing pardon and reconciliation only for those who ultimately receive them, when they repent and believe.

Sec. IX.—Evidence as to the Extent of the Atonement.

I do not intend to enter here into anything like a full investigation of the scriptural evidence upon the subject of the extent of the atonement. I can only make a few observations upon some of the points involved in it,—suggesting some of the things that ought to be kept in view in the study of the subject; and in doing so, I need not hesitate, from any fear of being misunderstood, after the full explanations I have given about the true state of the question, to use, for the sake of brevity and convenience, the expressions, universal and limited atonement,—universal and particular redemption,—and Christ's dying for all men, or only for the elect.

The advocates of universal atonement confidently aver that this doctrine is clearly and explicitly taught in Scripture,—so clearly and explicitly, that it is to be taken as a first principle, and ought to regulate and control the interpretation and application of other passages which may seem inconsistent with it; and they appeal, in support of this position, to those scriptural statements which speak of Christ's dying or making propitiation for all,—for the world, the whole world,—and even, it is alleged, for some who do, or may, ultimately perish. We contend that these statements do not necessarily, or even naturally, bear the construction which our opponents put upon them; and that there are other scriptural statements which clearly indicate a limitation as to the persons whose spiritual welfare,—whose actual possession and enjoyment of any spiritual blessings,—was contemplated

or intended by the death of Christ, or by Christ in dying. Our opponents, of course, profess to show that *these* statements may be all interpreted in accordance with their doctrine of the universality of the atonement. We profess to be able to assign good reasons why a language of a general, indefinite, or unlimited signification should have been employed in speaking of the objects and effects of Christ's death, while no full and proper universality was intended; and they profess to be able to assign good reasons why, in some cases, some limitation should be indicated, while yet there was no intention of denying that Christ died for all men,—that is, for all the individuals of the human race, *pro omnibus et singulis*. This is a general description of the way in which the controversy is conducted by the opposite parties, in the investigation of the scriptural evidence bearing more directly and immediately upon the subject of the extent of the atonement. It may be said to comprehend three leading departments: First, The investigation of the exact meaning and import of the principal passages adduced in support of the two opposite doctrines, especially with the view of ascertaining whether we can lay hold of any one position upon the subject which is distinct and definite, and does not admit, without great and unwarrantable straining, of being explained away, and which may therefore be regarded as a fixed point,—a regulating principle,—of interpretation. Secondly, The comparative facility and fairness with which the passages adduced on the opposite side may be explained, so as to be consistent with the position maintained; it being, of course, a strong argument in favour of the truth of any doctrine, that the passages adduced against it can be shown to be consistent with it, without its being necessary to have recourse to so much force and straining as are required in order to make the *opposite* doctrine appear to be consistent with the passages that are adduced against it. Thirdly, The investigation of the question, *which* doctrine is most consistent with a combined and harmonious interpretation of *all* the passages bearing upon the subject,—which of them most fully and readily suggests, or admits of, the laying down of general positions, that, when combined together, embrace and exhaust the whole of the information given us in Scripture regarding it.

Now, I believe that under each of these three heads it can be,

and has been, shown, that the doctrine of a definite or limited atonement,—limited, that is, as to its destination and intended objects,—has a decided superiority over the opposite one, and is therefore to be received as the true doctrine of Scripture. It has a clearer and firmer support in particular statements of Scripture, that do not, plausibly or fairly, admit of being explained away. More obvious and satisfactory reasons can be assigned why indefinite and general language should be employed upon the subject, without its being intended to express absolute universality,—to include the whole human race, and all the individuals who compose it,—than can be adduced in explanation of language which indicates a limitation, if Christ died for all men. And, lastly, it is easier to present a combined and harmonious view of the whole information given us in Scripture upon the subject, if the doctrine of a limited or definite atonement be maintained, than if it be denied.

The materials of the first of these divisions consist exclusively of the examination of the meaning and import of particular texts; and this is the basis and foundation of the whole argument. A very admirable and masterly summary of the direct scriptural evidence will be found in the first part of Dr Candlish's recently published book on the atonement. I shall only make a few observations upon the topics comprehended in the other two heads.

No scriptural statements are, or even appear to be, inconsistent with the doctrine of a limited atonement, which merely assert or imply that Christ's sufferings were sufficient, in point of intrinsic worth and value, for the redemption of the whole human race; or that all men do, in fact, derive some benefits or advantages from Christ's death, and that God intended that they should enjoy these. We have already shown, in explaining the state of this question, that the advocates of a limited atonement do not deny, and are under no obligation in point of consistency to deny, these positions. Neither is it inconsistent with our doctrine, that God's sending, or giving, His Son should be represented as resulting from, and indicating, love to the world or to mankind in general,—*φιλανθρωπια*. If God intended that all men should derive some benefits and advantages from Christ's mediation, this may be regarded as indicating, in some sense, love or kindness to the human race in general, though He did not design or intend giving

His Son to save every individual of the human family, or to do anything directed to that object. There is another race of fallen creatures under God's moral government, for whose salvation,—for the salvation of any of whom,—He made no provision. And God may be truly said to have loved the world, or the human race, or the family of man, as distinguished from, or to the exclusion of, the fallen angels; and as the result of this love, to have sent His Son, although He had no purpose of, and made no provision for, saving them all. On the other hand, it should be remembered, that Christ's dying for all men necessarily implies that God loved all men individually, and loved them so as to have, in some sense, desired and intended to save them; and that everything which proves that God did not desire and intend to save all men, equally proves that Christ did not die for them all; and that everything which must be taken in, to limit or modify the position that God desired and intended, or purposed, the salvation of all men, must equally limit or modify the position that Christ died for all. The scriptural evidence of these two positions is usually produced indiscriminately by the advocates of universal atonement, as equally proving their doctrine. And if, on the one hand, they afford each other some mutual countenance and support, so, on the other, they must be burdened with each other's difficulties, and must be both exposed to the explanations or modifications which each or either may suggest or require.

A favourite passage of our opponents is, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth;" and again, "Who gave Himself a ransom for all."* Now, independently altogether of the clear evidence which the context furnishes,—that the "all men" *must* mean men of all sorts, without any distinction of kinds or classes, and not all men, the whole human race, singly and individually,—it is plain that God will have all men to be saved, in the same sense, and with the same limitations and modifications, under which Christ gave Himself a ransom for all, and *vice versa*. And it is further evident, that God will have all men to be saved, in the same sense, and to the same extent only, in which "He will have all men to come to the knowledge of the truth." Now, we know that God does not, in any strict and proper sense, will all men (*omnes et singulos*) to

* 1 Tim. ii. 4, 6.

come to the knowledge of the truth, though He has imposed upon all men who hear the truth an obligation to receive it; and it is proof sufficient that He does not will all men,—that is, understanding thereby all the individuals of the human race,—to come to the knowledge of the truth, that there are, and have always been, very many of the human race from whom He has withheld the means and the opportunity of knowing it. And from all this taken together, it plainly follows, that these statements contain no warrant whatever for the doctrine, that God desired and intended the salvation of all the individuals of our race, or that Christ gave Himself a ransom for them all.

There is one great and manifest advantage which the doctrine of a limited atonement possesses over the opposite doctrine, viewed with reference to the comparative facility with which the language of Scripture can be interpreted, so as to accord with it; and this is, that it is much more easy to understand and explain how, in accordance with the ordinary sentiments and practice of men, general or indefinite language may have been employed, when strict and proper universality was not meant, than to explain why limited or definite language should ever have been employed, if there was really no limitation in the object or destination of the atonement. The fair principle of interpretation is, to make the definite and limited statements the standard for explaining the general and indefinite ones, and not the reverse; especially as Scripture furnishes many examples in which all the unlimited expressions that are applied to the death of Christ, viewed in relation to its objects,—the world, the whole world, all, every, etc.,—are used, when no proper and absolute, but merely a relative or comparative, universality was intended.

In addition, however, to this general consideration, which is evidently of great weight and importance, the defenders of a limited atonement assert, and undertake to prove, not only that there are scriptural statements which cannot, by any fair process of interpretation, be reconciled with the doctrine of universal atonement, but also, that in all the passages in which Christ is spoken of as dying for the world, or for all, there is something in the passage or context which affords sufficient evidence that the *all* is not to be understood literally and absolutely as applicable to each and every individual of the human race, but with some restriction or limitation, according to the nature and relations of the

subject treated of, or the particular object for which the statement is made. This position is thus expressed by Turretin in his chapter on the object of Christ's satisfaction: * "Nuspian Christus dicitur in Scriptura pro omnibus mortuus, quin ibidem addatur limitatio, ex quâ colligitur hoc non universaliter, de omnibus et singulis esse intelligendum, sed restricte pro subjectâ materiâ." And though this position may, at first sight, seem a bold and startling one, I have no doubt it can be established by an examination of ALL the particular passages referred to; and I have always regarded the ease and certainty with which, in most cases, this limitation can be pointed out and proved, and the fair and reasonable evidence that can be adduced of it, in all cases as affording a very strong general corroboration of the truth of our doctrine. In many of these general and unlimited statements, the object is manifestly to indicate *merely* that those for whom Christ died are not confined to any one nation, class, or description of men,—the world, or the whole world, evidently meaning mankind at large, Gentiles as well as Jews,—a truth which it was then peculiarly necessary to enforce, and to bring out in the fullest and strongest terms, in consequence of the abuse made of the selection of the Jews as God's peculiar people. In not a few, a limitation is plainly indicated in the context as implied in the nature, relations, or characteristics of the general subject treated of; and, in several instances, a careful examination of passages which, when superficially considered and judged of merely by the sound, seem to favour the idea of a universal atonement, not only shows that they afford it no real countenance, but furnishes strong presumptions, if not positive proofs, against it. I am persuaded that most men who had not examined the subject with care, and had had pressed upon their attention the collection of texts usually adduced by the defenders of a universal atonement, would be somewhat surprised to find how quickly they evaporated before even a cursory investigation; and how very small was the residuum that really involved any serious difficulty, or required anything like straining to bring out of them a meaning that was perfectly consistent with the doctrine of particular redemption.

The case is widely different with the attempt of our opponents to harmonize with their views the passages on which our doctrine

* Turretin., Loc. xiv., Qu. xiv., sec. xxxvi.

is more immediately founded. The more carefully they are examined, the more clearly will they be seen to carry ineradicably the idea of a limitation in the purpose or destination of the atonement, and of a firmly established and indissoluble connection between Christ's dying for men, and *these* men actually enjoying, in consequence, all spiritual blessings, and attaining ultimately to eternal salvation. And then, on the other hand, the attempts of our opponents to explain them, so as to make them consistent with the doctrine of universal atonement, are wholly unsuccessful. These attempts are commonly based, not on an examination of the particular passages themselves, or anything in their context and general scope, but upon mere indefinite and far-fetched considerations, which are not themselves sufficiently established to afford satisfactory solutions of other difficulties. Arminians commonly consider the passages which seem to indicate a limitation in the object of the atonement, as referring to the application, as distinguished and separated from the impetration or purchase of the blessings of redemption; while Calvinistic universalists usually regard them as referring to God's special design to secure the salvation of the elect, which they hold in combination with an alleged design or purpose to do something by means of a universal atonement, directed to the salvation of all men.

Now, independently of the consideration that these views of the two different classes of universalists are not themselves proved to be true, and cannot therefore be legitimately applied in this way, their application of them in this matter is liable to this fatal objection, that in Scripture it is the very same things which are predicated of men, both with and without a limitation. The state of the case is, not that the indications of limitation are exhibited when it is the application, and the indications of universality when it is the impetration, of spiritual blessings that is spoken of; nor, the one, when something peculiar to the elect, and the other, when something common to mankind in general, is described. It is the same love of God to men, the same death of Christ, and the same ransom price paid for men, that are connected both with the limited and the unlimited phraseology. God *loved* the world, and Christ *loved* His church; Christ *died* for all, and He *died* for His sheep; He *gave Himself a ransom* for all, and He *gave Himself a ransom* for many; and there is no warrant whatever for alleging that, in the one case, the love, and the death, and the ransom are

descriptive of totally different things from what they describe in the other. The very same things are predicated of the two classes, the all and the sheep, the all and the many; and, *therefore*, the fair inference is, that *they are not really two different classes, but one and the same class*, somewhat differently described, and, of course, regarded under somewhat different aspects. The universalists, whether Arminians or Calvinists, do not predicate the same, but different things, of the two classes,—the all and the sheep, the all and the many,—while the Scripture predicates the same, and not different things, of both; and this consideration not only refutes the method of combining and harmonizing the various scriptural statements upon this subject adopted by our opponents, but shows the soundness and sufficiency of that which we propose. We say that Christ died, and gave His life a ransom for some men only,—those whom the Father had given Him; and not for all men,—that is, not for all the individuals of the human race, without exception,—but that those for whom He died are indeed all men, or mankind in general, without distinction of age or country, character or condition,—no class or description of men being excluded,—a sense in which we can prove that “all men” is often used in Scripture. And this combines in harmony the different statements which Scripture contains upon the subject; whereas the universalists are obliged, in order to harmonize scriptural statements, either to reject altogether the fair and natural meaning of those which represent Him as dying for some only, or else to maintain that He died for some men in one sense, and for all men, without exception, in a different sense; while they cannot produce, either from the particular passages, or from any other declarations of Scripture, evidence of the different senses in which they must understand the declarations, that He died for men, and gave Himself a ransom for them.*

Sec. X.—Extent of Atonement and Gospel Offer.

Without dwelling longer upon this topic of the mode of interpreting particular passages of Scripture, I would now advert

* The question turns very much upon this point, Whether the two classes of passages teach two distinct and different truths, or can be, and should be, combined into one. *Vide* Wardlaw on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement, Dis. vi.; and Dr Candlish's Preliminary Dissertation.

briefly to some of the arguments for, and against, the doctrine of universal atonement, which are derived from more general considerations,—that is, from its consistency or inconsistency with other truths taught in Scripture, and with the general scheme of Scripture doctrine, or what is commonly called the analogy of faith.

By far the most important and plausible of the scriptural arguments in support of it, and the only one we mean to notice, is the alleged necessity of a universal atonement, or of Christ's having died for all men, as the only consistent ground or basis on which the offers and invitations of the gospel can be addressed indiscriminately to all men. We fully admit the general fact upon which the argument is based,—namely, that in Scripture, men, without distinction and exception, have salvation, and all that leads to it, offered or tendered to them,—that they are invited to come to Christ and to receive pardon,—and assured that all who accept the offer, and comply with the invitation, shall receive everything necessary for their eternal welfare. We fully admit that God in the Bible does all this, and authorizes and requires us to do the same in dealing with our fellow-men. Very few Calvinists have ever disputed the propriety and the obligation of addressing to men, indiscriminately, without distinction or exception, the offers and invitations of Gospel mercy; and the few who have fallen into error upon this subject,—such as Dr Gill, and some of the ultra-Calvinistic English Baptists of last century,—have usually based their refusal to offer to men indiscriminately pardon and acceptance, and to invite any or all to come to Christ that they might receive these blessings, upon the views they entertained, not about a limitation of the atonement, but about the entire depravity of human nature,—men's inability to repent and believe. This topic of the consistency of a limited atonement with the unlimited offers and invitations of Gospel mercy, or of the alleged necessity of a universal atonement as the only ground or basis on which such offers and invitations can rest, has been very fully discussed. We can only suggest a few hints in regard to it.

There are obviously two questions that may be entertained upon this subject: First, Is an unlimited atonement necessary in order to warrant ministers of the gospel, or any who may be seeking to lead others to the saving knowledge of the truth, to

offer to men, without exception, pardon and acceptance, and to invite them to come to Christ? And, secondly, Is an unlimited atonement necessary in order to warrant God in addressing, and in authorizing and requiring us to address, such universal offers and invitations to our fellow-men? The neglect of keeping these two questions distinct, has sometimes introduced error and confusion into the discussion of this subject. It is the first question with which we have more immediately to do, as it affects a duty which we are called upon to discharge; while the second is evidently, from its very nature, one of those secret things which belong unto the Lord. It is very evident that our conduct, in preaching the gospel, and in addressing our fellow-men with a view to their salvation, should not be regulated by any inferences of our own about the nature, extent, and sufficiency of the provision actually made for saving them, but solely by the directions and instructions which God has given us, by precept or example, to guide us in the matter,—unless, indeed, we venture to act upon the principle of refusing to obey God's commands, until we fully understand all the grounds and reasons of them. God has commanded the gospel to be preached to every creature; He has required us to proclaim to our fellow-men, of whatever character, and in all varieties of circumstances, the glad tidings of great joy,—to hold out to them, in His name, pardon and acceptance through the blood of atonement,—to invite them to come to Christ, and to receive Him,—and to accompany all this with the assurance that “whosoever cometh to Him, He will in no wise cast out.” God's revealed will is the only rule, and ought to be held to be the sufficient warrant for all that we do in this matter,—in deciding what is our duty,—in making known to our fellow-men what are their privileges and obligations,—and in setting before them reasons and motives for improving the one and discharging the other. And though this revelation does not warrant us in telling them that Christ died for all and each of the human race,—a mode of preaching the gospel never adopted by our Lord and His apostles,—yet it does authorize and enable us to lay before men views and considerations, facts and arguments, *which, in right reason*, should warrant and persuade all to whom they are addressed, to lay hold of the hope set before them,—to turn into the stronghold as prisoners of hope.

The second question, as to the conduct of God in this matter,

leads into much greater difficulties,—but difficulties which we are not bound, as we have no ground to expect to be able, to solve. The position of our opponents is, in substance, this,—that it was not possible for God, because not consistent with integrity and uprightness, to address such offers and invitations to men indiscriminately, unless an atonement, which is indispensable to salvation, had been presented and accepted on behalf of all men,—of each individual of the human race. Now, this position bears very manifestly the character of unwarranted presumption, and assumes our capacity of fully comprehending and estimating the eternal purposes of the divine mind,—the inmost grounds and reasons of the divine procedure. It cannot be proved,—because there is really not any clear and certain medium of probation,—that God, by offering to men indiscriminately, without distinction or exception, through Christ, pardon and acceptance, contradicts the doctrine which He has revealed to us in His own word, as to a limitation, not in the intrinsic sufficiency, but in the intended destination of the atonement. And unless this can be clearly and conclusively proved, we are bound to believe that they are consistent with each other, though we may not be able to perceive and develop this consistency, and, of course, to reject the argument of our opponents as untenable. When we carefully analyze all that is really implied in what God says and does, or authorizes and requires us to say and do in this matter, we can find much that is fitted to show positively that God does not, in offering pardon and acceptance to men indiscriminately, act inconsistently or deceptively, though it is not true that the atonement was universal. And it is easy to prove that He does no injustice to any one; since all who believe what He has revealed to them, and who do what He has given them sufficient motives or reasons for doing, will certainly obtain salvation. And although difficulties will still remain in the matter, which cannot be fully solved, it is easy to show that they just resolve into the one grand difficulty of all religion and of every system of theology,—that, namely, of reconciling, or rather of developing, the consistency between the supremacy and sovereignty of God, and the free agency and responsibility of man. In arguing with Calvinistic universalists, there is no great difficulty in showing that the principles on which they defend their Calvinistic views, upon other points, against Arminian objections, are equally available for defending

the doctrine of a limited atonement against the objection we are now considering; and that the distinctions which they attempt to establish between the two cases are either altogether unfounded, or, if they have some truth and reality in them (as, for instance, that founded on the difference between natural and moral inability,—a distinction which seems to have been first fully developed by Cameron, and with a special view to this very point), do not go to the root of the matter,—do not affect the substance of the case,—and leave the grand difficulty, though slightly altered in the position it occupies, and in the particular aspect in which it is presented, as strong and formidable as ever.

Though the advocates of a universal atonement are accustomed to boast much of the support which, they allege, their doctrine derives from the scriptural statements about God's loving the world,—Christ's dying for all; yet many of them are pretty well aware that they really have but little that is formidable to advance, except the alleged inconsistency of the doctrine of a limited atonement with the unlimited or indiscriminate offers of pardon and acceptance,—the unlimited or indiscriminate invitations and commands to come to Christ and to lay hold on Him,—which God addresses to men in His word, and which He has authorized and required us to address to our fellow-men. The distinction between the ground and warrant of men's act, and of God's act, in this matter, not only suggests materials for answering the arguments of opponents, but it also tends to remove a certain measure of confusion, or misconception, sometimes exhibited upon this point by the defenders of the truth. Some of them are accustomed to say, that the ground or warrant for the universal or unlimited offers of pardon, and commands to believe, is the infinite intrinsic sufficiency of Christ's atonement, which they generally hold, though denying its universal intended destination or efficiency; while others profess to rest the universal offers and commands upon the simple authority of God in His word,—making them Himself, and requiring us to proclaim them to others.

Now, it is evident that these two things are not, as the language of some orthodox divines might lead us to suppose, contrasted with, or opposed to, each other. The sole ground or warrant for men's act, in offering pardon and salvation to their fellow-men, is the authority and command of God in His word. We have no other warrant than this; we need no other; and we should seek

or desire none ; but on this ground alone should consider ourselves not only warranted, but bound, to proclaim to our fellow-men, whatever be their country, character, or condition, the good news of the kingdom, and to call upon them to come to Christ that they may be saved,—the Bible affording us sufficient, yea, abundant materials for convincing them that, in right reason, they ought to do this, and for assuring them that all who do, shall obtain eternal life. But this has manifestly nothing to do with the question, as to the ground or warrant of God's act in making unlimited offers, and in authorizing us to make them.

In regard to the allegation often made by orthodox divines, that this act of God is warranted by, and is based upon, the infinite intrinsic sufficiency of Christ's atonement, we would only remark,—for we cannot enter into the discussion,—that we are not aware of any Scripture evidence that these two things,—namely, the universal intrinsic sufficiency and the unlimited offers,—are connected in this way,—that we have never been able to see how the assertion of this connection removed or solved the difficulty, or threw any additional light upon this subject,—and that, therefore, we think it best while unhesitatingly doing ourselves, in our intercourse with our fellow-men, all that God's word authorizes and requires, to be contented with believing the general position,—that God in this, as in everything else, has chosen the best and wisest means of accomplishing all that He really intended to effect ; and to be satisfied,—so far as the objection of opponents is concerned,—with showing, *that it cannot be proved* that there is any inconsistency or insincerity, that there is any injustice or deception, on God's part, in anything which He says or does in this matter, even though the intended destination of the atonement was to effect and secure the forgiveness and salvation of the elect only,—even though He did not design or purpose, by sending His Son into the world, to save any but those who are saved.

Sec. XI.—*Extent of Atonement, and its Object.*

We must now notice the arguments *against* the doctrine of universal atonement derived from doctrines or principles taught in Scripture, as distinguished from particular scriptural statements bearing immediately upon the precise point ; leaving out of view, however, in the meantime, and in the first instance, for reasons

formerly stated, the arguments derived from its inconsistency with the doctrine of election, or any of what are commonly reckoned the peculiarities of Calvinism. The leading scriptural arguments against the doctrine of universal atonement, in the sense and with the limitation just explained, are these : First, that it is inconsistent with the scriptural account of the proper nature, and immediate objects and effects, of the sufferings and death of Christ, as a vicarious atonement ; and, secondly, that it is inconsistent with the scriptural account of the invariable and certain connection between the impetration or purchase, and the application to men individually, of all spiritual blessings. The second general argument admits of being broken down into several different divisions, or distinct positions, each of which can be established by its own appropriate scriptural evidence,—as, first, that “the oblation or sacrifice and intercession of Christ are one entire means respecting the accomplishment of the same proposed end, and have the same personal object,”—a proposition elaborately established by Dr Owen, whose words I have adopted in stating it ;* and secondly, that the operation of the Holy Spirit, in producing faith and regeneration in men individually, and faith and regeneration themselves viewed as the gifts of God, are the fruits of Christ's satisfaction and obedience, and are conferred upon all in whose room He suffered and died. If these doctrines be true, they manifestly preclude the idea of an atonement that was universal, unlimited, or indefinite in its destination or intended objects and effects. But I will not dwell upon any of this class of topics, though they are very important,—and will only make some observations upon the inconsistency of the doctrine of an unlimited atonement, with scriptural views of the proper nature and immediate objects and effects of Christ's death, in further illustration of the important principle, which has been repeatedly adverted to,—namely, that the nature of the atonement settles or determines the question of its extent.

The plan usually adopted by the universalists in discussing this fundamental department of the subject, is to lay down an arbitrary definition of what atonement means in general, or in the abstract, and of what are the kinds of purposes it was intended to serve ; and this definition of theirs usually amounts, in substance,

* Owen, Death of Christ, Book i., chaps. vii. viii.

to something of this sort,—namely, that an atonement is an expedient, or provision,—any expedient or provision,—whereby the great ends of law and government may be promoted and secured, without its being necessary to inflict the penalty of the law upon those who had incurred it by transgression; thus removing obstacles and opening a door to their being pardoned. If this definition really embraced *all* that the Scripture makes known to us concerning the nature and immediate objects of the atonement of Christ, then it might possibly be universal or unlimited; for, according to this view, it was fitted and intended only to make the pardon and salvation of sinners possible,—to leave it free and open to God to pardon any or all of them, as He might choose.

Now, we do not say that this definition of an atonement, as applied to the death of Christ, is false; though some of the terms in which it is usually embodied—such as an expedient—are not very suitable or becoming. It is, in substance, a true description of the death of Christ, so far as it goes,—just as the Socinian view of it, as a testimony and an example, is true. The definition to which we have referred is really suggested by *some* scriptural views of what the death of Christ was, and of what it was intended to effect. And it accords also with some of the analogies suggested by human government and laws. What we maintain upon this point is, that it does not present a full and complete definition or description of the nature and immediate objects of the death of Christ, as they are represented to us in Scripture; and that therefore it is altogether unwarrantable to lay it down as the definition of an atonement, by which we are to judge—for this is practically the application the universalists make of their definition—of what an atonement must be, and of what views we ought to take of Christ's death. The analogies suggested by the principles of human government, and the applications of human laws,—though they are not without their use in illustrating this matter,—must be very imperfect. The death of One, who was at once a possessor of the divine nature, and at the same time a perfectly holy and innocent man, and whose death was intended to effect the salvation of men who, by transgression, had become subject to the wrath and curse of God, must necessarily be altogether unique and *sui generis*, and must not be estimated or judged of by any antecedent conceptions, or comprehended in any arbitrary definitions of ours. We can comprehend it only by taking in the whole of

the information which Scripture communicates to us regarding it; we can define and describe it aright only by embodying all the elements which have scriptural warrant or sanction. *An atonement is just that, be it what it may, which the death of Christ was;* and the proper definition of an atonement is that which takes in *all*, and not only *some*, of the aspects in which the death of Christ is actually presented to us in Scripture. That it was a great provision for securing the ends of government and law, even while transgressors were pardoned and saved,—that it embodies and exhibits most impressive views of the perfections of God, of the excellence of His law, and of the sinfulness of sin,—that it affords grounds and reasons on which transgressors may be pardoned and saved, while yet the great principles of God's moral government are maintained, and its ends are secured;—all this is true and important, but all this does not exhaust the scriptural views of the death of Christ, and therefore it should not be set forth as constituting *the* definition of an atonement. The Scripture tells us something more than all this, by giving more definite and specific information concerning the true nature of Christ's death, and the way and manner in which, *from its very nature*, it is fitted to effect, and does effect, its immediate intended objects. These considerations may be of some use in leading us to be on our guard against the policy usually pursued by the universalists, in paving the way for the introduction of their views, and providing for themselves a shield against objections, by laying down an arbitrary and defective definition of an atonement.

The two leading ideas, which are admitted to be involved in the doctrine of the atonement by almost all who repudiate Socinian views, are—as we formerly explained at length—substitution and satisfaction. And the substance of what we maintain upon the subject now under consideration is just this,—that these two ideas, when understood in the sense in which Scripture warrants and requires us to understand them, and when clearly and distinctly realized, instead of being diluted and explained away, preclude and disprove the doctrine of a universal atonement. Substitution—or taking the place and acting in the room and stead of others—naturally and obviously suggests the notion, that those others, whose place was taken—in whose room or stead something was done or suffered—*were a distinct and definite class of persons, who were conceived of, and contemplated individually, and not a mere*

indefinite mass indiscriminately considered. Mediation, or interposition in behalf of others, understood in a general and indefinite sense, without any specification of the nature or kind of the mediation or interposition, may respect a mass of men, viewed indiscriminately and in the gross; but mediation or interposition, in the form or by means of substitution in their room, or taking their place, naturally suggests the idea that certain particular men were contemplated, whose condition and circumstances individually were known, and whose benefit individually was aimed at. This idea is thus expressed by Witsius:* “*Neque fieri nobis ullo modo posse videtur, ut quis Christum pro omnibus et singulis hominibus mortuum ex animi sententia contendat, nisi prius enervata phrasi illa pro aliquo mori, quâ substitutionem in locum alterius notari nuper contra Socinianos evicimus.*” Witsius thought that no man could honestly and intelligently contend for the truth of the doctrine, that Christ had died for all men, until he had first enervated or explained away what was implied in the phrase, of dying in the room and stead of another; and there is much in the history of theological discussion to confirm this opinion.

This extract, however, from Witsius, reminds us that the doctrine of the atonement, as maintained against the Socinians, includes the idea, not only of substitution, but also of satisfaction; and the examination of this notion affords clearer and more explicit evidence that Christ did not die for all men, or for any who ultimately perish. If anything be really established in opposition to the Socinians upon this subject, it is this,—that Christ not only took the place, or substituted Himself in the room and stead of sinners, but that He suffered and died in their room and stead,—that is, that He suffered what was due to them, and what, but for His suffering it in their stead, they must have endured. Of course we do not found upon the idea,—for, as we have already explained, we do not believe it to be true,—that Christ’s sufferings, *in point of amount and extent*, were just adequate to satisfy for the sins of a certain number of persons. We have no doubt that He would have endured no more, though many more had been to be saved. Still, His sufferings were the endurance of a penal infliction. And they were the endurance of the penalty which men had incurred,—of that penalty itself, or of a full equivalent for it, in point of

legal worth or value, and not of a mere substitute for it, as the universalists commonly allege. The law, which men had broken, appointed a penalty to each of them individually,—a penalty to the infliction of which each was individually liable. And unless the law was to be wholly relaxed or set aside, there must, for each individual who had transgressed, be the compliance with the law’s demands,—that is, the infliction of this penalty, either upon himself, or on a substitute acting—qualified to act—and accepted as acting, in his room and stead. The transgression was personal, and so must be the infliction of the penalty. If the transgression, and the corresponding infliction of the penalty, were in their nature personal, and had respect to men individually, so, in like manner, must any transactions or arrangements that might be contemplated and adopted with a view *to the transference of the penalty*; so that, it being borne by another, those in whose room He bore it might escape unpunished, the law being satisfied by another suffering the penalty which it prescribed in their stead.

The Scripture, however, not only represents Christ, in suffering and dying, as substituting Himself in our room,—as enduring the penalty which we had incurred, and must otherwise have endured,—and as thus satisfying the divine justice and law in our stead; but also as thereby reconciling men to God, or purchasing for them reconciliation and pardon. This, the direct and immediate effect of the death of Christ, in its bearing upon men’s condition, naturally and necessarily suggests the idea of a distinct and definite number of persons in whose behalf it was effected, and who are at length certainly to receive it. It is not reconciliability, but reconciliation, that the Scripture represents as the immediate object or effect of Christ’s death; and this implies a personal change in the relation of men individually to God. And it is no sufficient reason for explaining this away, as meaning something far short of the natural and obvious import of the words, that men individually were not reconciled when Christ died, but receive reconciliation and pardon individually during their abode upon earth, according as God is pleased effectually to call them. We assume,—as we are fully warranted in doing,—that reconciliation with God and forgiveness of sin, wherever they are possessed and enjoyed, in any age or country, stand in the same relation to the death of Christ, as the reconciliation and

* De Econ. Fœd., Lib. ii., c. ix., s. 1.

pardon which the apostles enjoyed, are represented by them as doing; and that is, that they were immediately procured or purchased by it, and that their application, in due time, to all for whom they were purchased, was effectually secured by it. If this be the relation subsisting between the death of Christ and the reconciliation and pardon of sinners, He must, in dying, have contemplated, and provided for, the actual reconciliation and pardon of men individually,—that is, of all those, and of those only, who ultimately receive these blessings, whatever other steps or processes may intervene before they are actually put in possession of them.

The leading peculiar views generally held by Arminians,—at least those of them who bring out their views most fully and plainly,—are, as we formerly explained, these: first, that they do not regard Christ as suffering the penalty due to sinners, nor even a full equivalent—an adequate compensation—for it, but only a substitute for it; secondly, that there was a relaxation of the law in the forgiveness of sinners, not merely in regard to the person suffering, but also the penalty suffered, since it was not even in substance executed; and, thirdly, that the direct immediate effect of Christ's death was not to procure for men reconciliation and pardon, but merely to remove legal obstacles, and to open a door for God bestowing these blessings on any men, or all men. These views they seem to have been led to adopt by their doctrine about the universality of an atonement; and as the universality of the atonement naturally leads to those methods of explaining, or rather explaining away, its nature,—its relation to the law, and its immediate object and effect,—the establishment and application of the true scriptural views of substitution, satisfaction, and reconciliation, as opposed to the three Arminian doctrines upon these points stated above, exclude or disprove its universality,—or its *intended* destination to any but those who are ultimately pardoned and saved. Substitution, satisfaction, and reconciliation may be so explained,—that is, may be wrapped up in such vague and ambiguous generalities,—as to suggest no direct reference to particular men, considered individually, as the objects contemplated and provided for in the process; but the statements of Scripture, when we carefully investigate their meaning, and realize the ideas which they convey,—and which they *must* convey, unless we are to sink down to Socinianism,—bring these

topics before us in aspects which clearly imply that Christ substituted Himself in the room of some men, and not of all men,—that all for whose sins He made satisfaction to the divine justice and law, certainly receive reconciliation and pardon,—and that, when they do receive them, they are bestowed upon each of them on the ground that Christ suffered in *his* room and stead, expiated *his* sins upon the cross, and thereby effectually secured *his* eternal salvation, and everything that this involves.

It has been very ably and ingeniously argued, in opposition to the doctrine of universal atonement, and especially in favour of the consistency of the unlimited offers of the gospel with a limited atonement, that the thing that is offered to men in the gospel is just that which they actually receive, and become possessed of, when they individually accept the offer; and that this is nothing vague and indefinite,—not a mere possibility and capacity,—but real, actual reconciliation and pardon. This is true, and very important; but the process of thought on which the argument is based, might be carried further back, even into the very heart and essential nature of the atonement, in this way. What men receive when they are individually united to Christ by faith,—that is, actual reconciliation and pardon,—is that which is offered or tendered to them before they believe. But that which is offered to them before they believe, is just that which Christ impetrated or purchased for them; and what it was that Christ impetrated or purchased for them depends upon what was the true nature and character of His death. And if His death was indeed a real satisfaction to the divine justice and law in men's room, by being the endurance in their stead of the penalty due to them,—and *in this way* affording ground or reason for treating them as if they had never broken the law, or as if they had fully borne in their own persons the penalty which it prescribed,—we can thus trace through the whole process by which sinners are admitted into the enjoyment of God's favour, a *necessary reference* to particular men considered individually, a firm and certain provision for the reconciliation and pardon of all for whom, or in whose stead, Christ died, for purchasing redemption only for those who were to be ultimately saved, and, of course, for applying its blessings to all for whom they were designed.

Those more strict and definite views of substitution, satisfaction, and reconciliation, which thus exclude and disprove an unlimited or indefinite atonement, that did not respect particular men,