

to accept, in the room or stead of the endurance of it by sinners who had incurred it,—the law was in no sense executed or enforced, but was virtually abrogated or set aside; whereas orthodox divines contend that the law was executed or enforced, the penalty which it denounced having been endured. It is of great importance, in order to our right understanding of the whole scheme of divine truth, that we should have correct conceptions and impressions of the perfection and unchangeableness of the law which God originally gave to man; as this doctrine, when rightly applied, tends equally to exclude the opposite extremes of Neonomianism, which is a necessary constituent element of Arminianism, and of Antinomianism, which is only an abuse or perversion of Calvinism, and for which Calvinism is in no way responsible. It is very easy to prove, as a general doctrine, that the moral law, as originally given by God to man, was, and must have been, perfect in its nature and requirements, and unchangeable in its obligations; and that God could never thereafter, without denying Himself, do anything which fairly implied, or was fitted to convey, the impression, that this law was defective in any respect,—was too rigid in its requirements, or too severe in its sanctions, or could stand in need either of derogation or abrogation. And yet the denial or disregard of this important principle,—which indeed is, and can be, fully admitted and applied only by Calvinists,—is at the root of much of the error that prevails in some important departments of theology.

If the penalty of the law, which men had incurred, was not endured, while yet sinners were pardoned and saved, then the law was not honoured, but trampled on, in their salvation, and is thus proved to have been defective and mutable. Calvinists, of course, admit, that in the pardon of sinners there does take place what may be called, in a wide and improper sense, a relaxation of the law; since the penalty is not, in fact, inflicted upon those who had transgressed, but upon another; that is, they admit a relaxation in regard to the persons suffering, but not in regard to the penalty threatened and suffered. This is, indeed, the grand peculiarity,—the mysterious, but most glorious peculiarity, of the Christian scheme,—that which may be said to constitute the doctrine of the atonement or satisfaction of Christ, that a substitute was provided, and that His substitution was accepted. But there is nothing in this which casts any dishonour upon the law, or appears to convict

it of imperfection and mutability. On the contrary, it is in every way fitted to impress upon us its absolute perfection and unchangeable obligation. In no proper sense does it involve a relaxation or abrogation of the law. The relaxation or abrogation of a law is opposed to, and precludes, compliance or fulfilment; whereas here there is compliance or fulfilment, as to the essence or substance of the matter,—namely, the infliction and endurance of the penalty, or, what is virtually the same thing, a full equivalent, an adequate compensation for it, and a relaxation only in regard to a circumstance or adjunct, namely, the particular person or persons who suffer it.

If an atonement or satisfaction be denied, then the law is wholly abrogated or set aside, and, of course, is dishonoured, by being convicted of imperfection and mutability in the salvation of sinners. And even when the idea of atonement or satisfaction is in some sense admitted, there is no real respect or honour shown to the law, because no compliance, in any fair and honest sense, with its demands,—no fulfilment of its exactions,—nothing to give us any impression of its perfection and unchangeableness in its general character, tendency, and object, *unless* this atonement or satisfaction was really the endurance of the penalty which the law denounced, or a full equivalent for it,—something which could serve the same purposes, with reference to the great ends of law and moral government, by impressing the same views of God's character, of His law, of sin, and of the principles that regulate His dealings with His creatures, as the actual punishment of all who had offended. Many of the human race perish, and are subjected to everlasting misery; and in them, of course, the law which denounced death as the punishment of sin, is enforced and executed. The rest are pardoned, and saved. But in their case, too, the law is not abrogated, but executed; because the penalty which they had incurred is inflicted and suffered,—is borne, not indeed by them, in their own persons, but by another, acting as their substitute, and suffering in their room and stead. The provision of a substitute, who should endure the penalty due by those who were to be pardoned and saved, is a great, glorious, and mysterious act of extra-legal mercy and compassion; it is that marvellous provision, by which sinners are saved, in consistency with the perfections of God and the principles of His moral government. But in every other step in the process, the law is enforced, and its provisions are fully complied with; for the work of the

Substitute is accepted as an adequate ground for pardoning and saving those for whom He acted, just because it was the endurance of what they had deserved,—of all that the law did or could demand of them. And in this way we see, and should ever contemplate with adoring and grateful wonder, not an abrogation or relaxation, but an execution and enforcement of the law, even in the forgiveness and salvation of those who had broken its requirements, and became subject to its curse.\*

A fourth peculiarity of the views of the Arminians upon the subject of the atonement is this, that they represent its leading, proper, direct effect to be, to enable God, consistently with His justice and veracity, to enter into a new covenant with men, in which more favourable terms are proposed to them than before, and under which pardon and reconciliation are conveyed to all men conditionally,—upon the conditions of faith and repentance,—conditions which they are able to fulfil. This doctrine—which is, in substance, what is commonly called Neonomianism, or the scheme which represents the gospel as a new or modified law, offering pardon and eternal life to all men upon lower or easier terms—rests upon, as its basis, and requires for its full exposition, a more complete view of the Arminian scheme of theology, than merely their doctrine upon the subject of the atonement. It involves, of course, a denial of the scriptural and Calvinistic doctrines of predestination, and of the *entire* depravity of human nature; but we have to do with it at present in a more limited aspect, as a part of their doctrine of the atonement. And *here*, the substance of the charge which we adduce against it is just this,—that, like the doctrine of the Socinians, it explains away the true and fair import of the scriptural statements with respect to the nature of the connection between the sacrificial death of Christ and the forgiveness of men's sins, and represents that connection as much more *remote* and *indirect* than the Scripture does. It is true that the Scripture represents Christ, by His death, as ratifying and sealing a new and better covenant, of which He was the Surety or Sponsor; but then this covenant was not based upon the abrogation or relaxation of the original law, and the introduction of a new one, which offered life upon easier terms,—upon more favourable conditions, as the Arminian scheme repre-

\* Turretin. de Satisfact., Pars viii., sec. x.

sents the matter. On the contrary, as we have seen, it implied that the original law was enforced and executed; Christ, as the Surety or Sponsor of His people, *fulfilling the conditions of this new covenant, just by complying with the demands of the original law*—by enduring, in their room and stead, the penalty which it denounced. The Scripture represents, not only the ultimate object, but the direct and immediate effect, of Christ's sacrifice of Himself, to be to save sinners,—that is, to effect, procure, provide everything which their salvation implies or requires,—everything which is necessary to accomplish it; whereas, upon the Arminian theory, the salvation of sinners, as an actual result, was only the *ultimate* object of His death, its *immediate* effect being *merely*, as they are accustomed to express it, to make men—all men—*salvabiles*, or capable of being saved, and not to save them, or to secure their salvation. His death, upon their system, really *effected* nothing, but only enabled God to do thereafter whatever He pleased, in the way of conferring—upon any conditions which He might now think proper to require—forgiveness, acceptance, and eternal life. Accordingly, they are accustomed to describe its immediate object and effect as being merely this,—that it removed legal obstacles, and opened a door to God's bestowing, and men's receiving, pardon and salvation; and they consider it as effecting this, not *because* it was a compliance with the demands of the law, in the room and stead of those who were to be benefited by it, but merely because it was a great display of hatred to sin and of love to righteousness; after having made which, God could safely, or without any danger of conveying erroneous impressions of His character, bestow pardon and spiritual blessings upon all alike who were willing to accept of them.

This representation is in substance true, so far as it goes; but, like the common Socinian doctrine, it falls short of embodying the whole truth which Scripture teaches upon the subject, and of bringing it out so fully and distinctly as Scripture affords us materials for doing. We are not told in Scripture that Christ's death removed legal obstacles, and opened a door for men's pardon and salvation; but we admit that the statements are true—that the death of Christ did this, because it seems fairly involved in, or deducible from, the scriptural statements which warrant us in believing the more precise and definite doctrine,—that, by dying in our room, Christ satisfied the divine justice and law, and thereby

reconciled us to God. There were obstacles in the way of God's bestowing upon men pardon and salvation, and these required to be removed; the door was shut, and it needed to be opened. From the position which the death of Christ occupied in the scheme of salvation, and from the general effects ascribed to it, we feel that we are fully warranted in representing it as removing the obstacles and opening the door. But we contend that this does not by any means exhaust the Scripture account of its proper objects and effects, which represents it as more directly and immediately efficacious in accomplishing men's redemption from sin, and their enjoyment of God's favour. The Scripture not only indicates a closer and more direct connection as subsisting between the death of Christ and the actual pardon and salvation of men than the Arminian doctrine admits of; but it also, as we have seen, explains the connection between its proper nature and its immediate object and effect, by setting it before us, not merely as a display of the principles of the divine government and law,—although it was this,—but, more distinctly and precisely, as the endurance of the penalty of the law in our room. *It was just because it was the endurance of the penalty,—or, what is virtually the same thing, of a full equivalent for it,—that it was, or could be, a display or manifestation of the principles of the divine government and law;* and it bore upon the pardon and salvation of men, not merely through the intervention of its being such a display or manifestation,—though this consideration is true, and is not to be overlooked,—but still more directly from its own proper nature, as being a penal infliction, in accordance with the provisions of the law, endured in our room and stead, and as *thus* furnishing an adequate ground or reason why those in whose room it was suffered should not suffer, in their own person, the penalty which they had incurred.

The Arminians, holding the universality of the atonement, and rejecting the doctrine of election, regard the death of Christ as equally fitted, and equally intended, to promote the spiritual welfare and eternal salvation of all men; and, of course, cannot but regard it as *very indirectly and remotely* connected with the results to which it was directed. Of those for whom Christ died, for whose salvation His death was intended,—that is, of the whole human race,—some are saved, and some perish. If He died for all equally, for both classes alike, His death cannot be

the proper cause or ground of the salvation of any, and can have no direct or efficacious connection with salvation in any instance; and hence it is quite consistent in Arminians to represent the proper and immediate effect of His death to be merely that of enabling God, safely and honourably, to pardon any man who complied with the conditions He prescribed, or, what is virtually the same thing, that of procuring for Christ Himself the power of bestowing pardon upon any who might choose to accept of it;—that, merely, of removing obstacles, or opening a door, without containing or producing any provision for effecting or securing that any men should enter in at the door, and actually partake of the blessings of salvation provided for them.

This general doctrine of the Arminians, with regard to the immediate object and effect of Christ's death being merely to enable God to pardon any who might be willing to accept the boon,—to remove out of the way legal obstacles to any or all men being pardoned,—to open a door into which any who choose might enter, and, by entering, obtain reconciliation and forgiveness,—is usually brought out more fully and distinctly in the way of maintaining the two following positions: First, that the impetration and the application of reconciliation and pardon, are not only distinct in idea or conception, but separate or disjointed in fact or reality; and, secondly,—what is virtually the same general principle, more distinctly developed, or an immediate consequence of it,—that while a causal or meritorious connection, though not direct and immediate, subsists between the death of Christ and the pardon of men's sins, no causal or meritorious connection exists between the death of Christ and faith and repentance, without which, no man is actually reconciled to God, or forgiven; and to these two positions we would briefly advert.

First, They teach that Christ, by His sufferings and death, impetrated or procured pardon and reconciliation for men—for all men,—meaning thereby nothing more, in substance, than that He removed legal obstacles, and opened a door for God bestowing pardon and reconciliation upon all who would accept of them; while they also teach, that to many for whom these blessings were thus impetrated or procured by Him, even to all who ultimately perish, these blessings are not in fact applied. The reason,—the sole reason,—why these men do not actually partake in the blessings thus procured for them, is, because they refuse to

do what is in their own power, in the way of receiving them, or complying with the prescribed conditions. But this last consideration properly belongs to another branch of the Arminian system,—namely, their denial of man's total depravity, and their assertion of his ability to repent and believe. We have at present to do with their doctrine of the possible, and actual, separation and disjunction of the impetration and the application of pardon or forgiveness. Calvinists admit that the impetration and the application of the blessings of salvation are distinct things, which may be conceived and spoken of apart from each other, which are effected by different agencies and at different periods. The impetration of all these blessings they ascribe to Christ, to what He did and suffered in our room and stead. The application of them, by which men individually become partakers in them, they ascribe to the Holy Spirit. It is the clear and constant doctrine of Scripture, that no man is actually pardoned and reconciled to God until he repent and believe. It is then only that he becomes a partaker of the blessings which Christ purchased. It is admitted, in this way, that the impetration or purchase, and the application or bestowal upon men individually, of pardon and reconciliation, are perfectly distinct from each other; but in opposition to the Arminian doctrine, which represents them as separable, and, in fact, separated and disjoined, as to the persons who are the objects of them, there is an important scriptural truth, held by almost all Calvinists,—that is, by all of them except those who believe in a universal or unlimited atonement,—which is thus stated in our Confession of Faith: \* “To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same.” The word redemption is here evidently used, as it often is in Scripture, as comprehending those blessings which it was the direct object of Christ's death to procure; and it includes, of course, reconciliation with God and the forgiveness of sin. The doctrine of Scripture and of our Confession is, that to all for whom these blessings were purchased or impetrated, they are also applied or communicated; so that *they* all, in fact, receive and partake of them, or are actually pardoned and reconciled.

The doctrine of the Arminians is, that redemption, at least in

\* Confession, c. viii., s. 8.

so far as it includes the blessings of pardon and reconciliation, was procured for all men,—and for all men equally and alike; but that there are many, even all those who ultimately perish, to whom these blessings, though procured for them, are not applied or communicated,—who never, in fact, receive or partake of them. That pardon and reconciliation are not applied or communicated to many, is not a matter of dispute; this is admitted on all hands. The question is, whether they were procured, or impetrated, or purchased, for any to whom they are not applied,—for any but those to whom they are communicated, so that they actually receive, possess, and enjoy them? This, indeed, constitutes the true and correct *status quæstionis* with respect to the extent of the atonement. The settlement of that controversy depends upon the decision of this question,—whether or not Christ impetrated, or procured, or purchased reconciliation and pardon for any men except those to whom these blessings are actually applied,—are ultimately communicated; whether or not they are certainly and effectually applied and communicated to all for whom they were procured or purchased? We do not at present meddle with this question, in so far as it is affected by the materials we have for deciding it, in what we have the means of knowing, concerning the will, the decrees, the design, the purpose of the Father and the Son in the matter, although this is manifestly an essential element in the decision; but only in so far as it is connected with certain views regarding the nature and the immediate objects and effects of Christ's sufferings and death; in other words, regarding the nature and import of the impetration or purchase of the blessings of reconciliation and pardon as set before us in Scripture. And here again, of course, our leading position is, as before, that such a view of the impetration of pardon and reconciliation, as does not also include or imply in it a certain and effectual provision for applying or communicating them to all for whom they were procured, does not come up to the full and fair import of the scriptural statements which unfold or indicate the immediate object and effect of the sufferings and death of Christ, and their bearing upon men's salvation, and upon all that salvation implies and requires,—especially upon their pardon and reconciliation to God. An impetration which may possibly not be followed by application,—which, in many cases, will not be conjoined with the actual communication of what was procured,—which will leave many for whom it

was undertaken and effected, to perish for ever, unpardoned and unreconciled,—does not correspond with, or come up to, the doctrines of substitution and satisfaction taught us in Scripture,—the information given us there concerning Christ's object in dying for men, and the bearing and consequences of His vicarious sufferings upon their relation to God, to His law, and to eternity.

Secondly, the second leading position implied in the defective and erroneous Arminian view, with respect to the immediate object and effect of Christ's death, is this,—that no causal or meritorious connection exists between it and faith and repentance, with which the application of, or actual participation in, the blessings of redemption, is inseparably connected. They teach that Christ procures pardon and reconciliation for all men upon condition of their repenting and believing; but they deny that, by dying, He procured for any man faith and repentance, or made *any* provision whatever for effecting or securing that any man should, in fact, repent or believe. The general principles of the Calvinistic scheme of doctrine, as distinguished from the Arminian, of course imply, that men cannot repent and believe of themselves, and that God in His good time, and in the execution of His own decrees and purposes, gives faith and repentance to all those, and to those only, whom He has chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and whom He has specially watched over, and attended to, in every step of the great process by which the salvation of sinners is ultimately accomplished; but here, again, in accordance with the plan and object we have repeatedly intimated, we advert at present only to the connection between the death of Christ and the production of faith and repentance in all in whom they are produced. Arminians differ among themselves as to the ability of men to repent and believe, and as to the kind and measure of divine agency that may be concerned in inducing or enabling men to repent and believe: the more consistent among them resolving the production of faith and repentance in each case into the powers or capacities of man himself; and the less consistent, but more evangelical, resolving it, with the sacred Scriptures and the Calvinists, into the almighty agency of the Divine Spirit. But they all deny that Christ, by His sufferings and death, procured, or purchased, or merited faith and repentance for those who come at length to believe and repent. They all maintain that, whatever may be the cause or source of faith,

it is not in any case one of the results of Christ's death,—one of the fruits of His purchase; it is not to be traced to the shedding of His precious blood, as if any causal connection existed between them,—as if the one exerted any meritorious or efficacious influence upon the other.

The reason of their unanimous maintenance of these views is very obvious. If Christ, by His sufferings and death, made provision for the production of faith, in order that thereby, in accordance with God's arrangements, men individually might actually partake in the blessings He procured for them,—if the production of faith is indeed one of the objects and results of His death, one of the fruits of His purchase,—then He could not have died for all men; He must have died only for those who ultimately believe; He must have made certain and effectual provision for applying and communicating redemption to all for whom He purchased it. And Calvinists undertake to show that Scripture sanctions the position, that faith, wherever it has been produced in any man, is to be traced to the death of Christ as its source or cause,—is to be regarded as one of the blessings purchased for him, and for all who are ever made partakers of it, by the shedding of Christ's blood, to prove this not only from particular statements of Scripture establishing this precise point, but also from the general representations given us there of the connection between the death of Christ, and not merely a general scheme of salvation for mankind at large, but the actual salvation of each man individually. The doctrine of our Confession upon the subject is this: \* “The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, BUT an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.” Reconciliation was purchased by His sacrifice of Himself, and purchased for certain men. Along with this, and by the same price, was purchased for the same persons, an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven; and, of course, also that faith of theirs, with which both reconciliation and the everlasting inheritance are inseparably connected. The Arminians admit, that by His sacrifice He purchased for men

\* Confession, c. viii., s. 5.



reconciliation; but then they hold that, as it was purchased for all men, and as many men are never reconciled to God, what He purchased for any was not properly reconciliation, but rather what has been called *reconciliability*, or a capacity of being reconciled,—that is, the removing of legal obstacles, that they may all pass over, if they choose; the opening of a door, that they may all enter, if they are so disposed. And thus the substance of what they teach upon this point is this,—that, notwithstanding all that Christ did and suffered in order to save sinners, it was quite possible, so far as anything contemplated by, or involved in, the shedding of His blood was concerned,—so far as any provision was made by His humiliation and sacrifice for averting this result,—that no sinner might have been saved; that all for whom He died might perish for ever; that the everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven might never have been enjoyed by any one of those whom He came to seek and to save, and for whose eternal happiness He poured out His blood.\*

These are the leading peculiarities of the views commonly held by Arminian writers, in regard to this great doctrine of the atonement, though they are certainly not held with equal fulness and explicitness by all who may be fairly ranked under this general designation. Indeed, it will be found that the sounder Arminians, especially when they are engaged in defending the doctrine of the atonement against the Socinians, often bring out the doctrines of the substitution and satisfaction of Christ clearly and fully,—defend them with much learning and ability, and seem to understand them in a sense which, in consistency, ought to exclude all those views of theirs concerning the necessity of the atonement,—its nature,—its relation to the divine law,—and its immediate object and effect, which we have explained. But whenever they proceed to consider its bearing upon the condition and fate of men individually, in relation to God and eternity, *and whenever they begin to unfold the doctrine of its universality*, then we immediately discover the traces, more or less fully developed, of the errors and corruptions which I have stated and exposed.

My principal object in making this detailed statement of the peculiar views generally held by Arminians upon this subject, besides that of explaining one important department of the con-

\* Davenant, *De Morte Christi*, p. 57.

troversies that have been carried on regarding it, was to bring out these two considerations: First, That Arminians have generally manifested a strong tendency to dilute or explain away the Scripture doctrines of the substitution and satisfaction of Christ; that, in their controversies with Calvinists upon this subject, they often greatly attenuate or modify the views which they themselves maintain, when defending the doctrine of the atonement against the Socinians; or at least refuse to follow them out to their legitimate consequences and applications, and thus obscure, and, to some extent, corrupt the great doctrine which most directly and immediately unfolds the foundation of a sinner's hope. Secondly, That this tendency of the Arminians to modify or explain away the Scripture doctrines of the substitution and satisfaction of Christ, and to approximate more or less to Socinian views, or at least to rest in vague and ambiguous generalities,—in loose and indefinite statements,—about the true nature, and the immediate objects and effects, of the sufferings and death of Christ, and the connection subsisting between them, is traceable to, or in some way intimately connected with, their doctrine of the universality of the atonement,—a consideration which strongly confirms the important position, *that the nature of the atonement settles or determines its extent*, and prepares us to expect to find, among all who hold a universal atonement,—Calvinists as well as Arminians,—the prevalence, in a greater or less degree, and with more or less of explicit development, of defective and erroneous views, with respect to the substitution and satisfaction of Christ, His bearing our sins in His own body, and by bearing them, bearing them way.

#### Sec. VIII.—*Extent of the Atonement.*

We proceed now to the third and last division,—namely, the consideration of the peculiar views, in regard to the atonement, of those divines who profess to hold Calvinistic doctrines upon other points, but on this concur with, or approximate to, the views of the Arminians; and this, of course, leads us to examine the subject of the extent of the atonement,—a topic which is much discussed among theologians in the present day, and is, on this account, as well as from its own nature and bearings, possessed of much interest and importance.

There are now, and for more than two centuries,—that is, since the time of Cameron, a Scotchman, who became Professor of Theology in the Protestant Church of France,—there have always been, theologians, and some of them men of well-merited eminence, who have held the Calvinistic doctrines of the entire depravity of human nature, and of God's unconditional election of some men from eternity to everlasting life, but who have also maintained the universality of the atonement,—the doctrine that Christ died for all men, and not for those only who are ultimately saved. As some men have agreed with Arminians in holding the universality of the atonement who were Calvinists in all other respects, and as a considerable appearance of Scripture evidence can be produced for the doctrine that Christ died for all men, it has been generally supposed that the doctrine of particular redemption, as it is often called, or of a limited atonement, forms the weak point of the Calvinistic system,—that which can with most plausibility be assailed, and can with most difficulty be defended. Now, this impression has some foundation. There is none of the Arminian doctrines, in favour of which so much appearance of Scripture evidence can be adduced, as that of the universality of the atonement; and if Arminians could really prove that Christ died for the salvation of all men, then the argument which, as I formerly intimated, they commonly deduce from this doctrine, in opposition to the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, could not, taken by itself, be easily answered. It is evident, however, on the other side, that if the Arminian doctrine of the universality of the atonement can be disproved, when tried upon its own direct and proper grounds and evidences, without founding upon its apparent inconsistency with the other doctrines of the Calvinistic system, then not only is one important principle established, which has been held by most Calvinists,—that, namely, of a limited atonement, that is, of an atonement limited as to its destination or intended objects,—but great additional strength is given to the general body of the evidence in support of Calvinism.

This is the aspect in which the arrangement we have followed leads us to examine it. Looking merely at the advantage of controversial impression, it would not be the most expedient course to enter upon the Arminian controversy, as we are doing, through the discussion of the extent of the atonement, since Arminians can adduce a good deal that is plausible in support of its univer-

sality, and found a strong argument against Calvinistic predestination on the assumption of its universality,—considerations which would suggest the policy of first establishing some of the other doctrines of Calvinism against the Arminians, and then employing these doctrines, already established, to confirm the direct and proper evidence against a universal, and in favour of a limited, atonement. But since we have been led to consider the subject of an atonement in general, in opposition to the Socinians, we have thought it better to continue, without interruption, the investigation of this subject until we finish it, although it does carry us into the Arminian controversy, at the point where Arminianism seems to be strongest. We have thought it better to do this than to return to the subject of the extent of the atonement, *after* discussing some of the other doctrines controverted between the Calvinists and the Arminians. And we have had the less hesitation about following out this order, for these reasons: first, because we are not afraid to encounter the Arminian doctrine of a universal atonement, upon the ground of its own direct and proper evidence, without calling in the assistance that might be derived from the previous proof of the other doctrines of Calvinism; secondly, because the examination of the whole subject of the atonement at once enables us to bring out more fully the principle, which we reckon of fundamental importance upon this whole question,—namely, that the nature of the atonement settles or determines its extent; and, thirdly, because, if it can be really shown, as we have no doubt it can, that the Scripture view of the nature, and immediate object and effect, of the atonement, *disproves its universality*, then we have, in this way, what is commonly reckoned the weakest part of the Calvinistic system conclusively established, on its own direct and proper evidence; and established, moreover, by the force of all the arguments which have been generally employed not only by Calvinists, but by the sounder or un-Socinianized Arminians, in disputing with the Socinians on the truth and reality of an atonement.

In proceeding now to advert to the subject of the extent of the atonement, as a distinct, independent topic, we shall first explain the doctrine which has been generally held upon this subject by Calvinists, commonly called the doctrine of particular redemption, or that of a limited or definite atonement; and then, secondly, advert to the differences between the doctrine

of universal or unlimited atonement or redemption, as held by Arminians, and as held by those who profess Calvinistic doctrines upon other points.

The question as to the extent of the atonement, is commonly and popularly represented as amounting in substance to this: Whether Christ died for all men, or only for the elect,—for those who ultimately believe and are saved? But this state of the question does not bring out the true nature of the point in dispute with sufficient fulness, accuracy, and precision. And, accordingly, we find that neither in the canons of the Synod of Dort, nor in our Confession of Faith,—which are commonly reckoned the most important and authoritative expositions of Calvinism,—is there any formal or explicit deliverance given upon the question *as stated in this way*, and in these terms. Arminians, and other defenders of a universal atonement, are generally partial to this mode of stating it, because it seems most readily and obviously to give to their doctrine the sanction and protection of certain scriptural statements,—which look like a direct assertion,—but are not,—that Christ died for all men; and because there are some ambiguities about the meaning of the expressions, of which they usually avail themselves. I have no doubt that the controversy about the extent of the atonement is substantially decided in our Confession, though no formal deliverance is given upon the precise question, whether Christ died for all men, or only for the elect; and it may tend to bring out clearly the true state of the question, as well as contribute to the subsidiary, but still important, object of assisting to determine what is the doctrine of our Confession upon this subject, if we advert to the statements it contains regarding it, and the manner in which it gives its deliverance upon it. We have already had occasion to quote, incidentally, the principal declarations of the Confession upon this subject, in explaining the peculiar views of the Arminians, with regard to the atonement in general; but it may be proper now to examine them somewhat more fully. They are chiefly the following:\* “They who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by

\* C. iii., s. vi.

Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.”

There are two questions which may be, and, indeed, have been, started with respect to the meaning of these words; attempts having been made to show that they do not contradict or exclude the doctrine of a universal atonement, as it has been sometimes held by Calvinists. The first question is as to the import of the word “redeemed;” and it turns upon this point,—Does the word describe merely the impetration or purchase of pardon and reconciliation for men by the death of Christ? or does it comprehend the application as well as the impetration? If it be understood in the first or more limited sense, as descriptive only of the impetration or purchase, then, of course, the statement of the Confession clearly asserts a definite or limited atonement,—comprehending as its objects those only who, in fact, receive all other spiritual blessings, and are ultimately saved; whereas, if it included the application as well as the impetration, the statement might consist with the universality of the atonement, as it is not contended, even by Arminians, that, in this wide sense, any are redeemed by Christ, except those who ultimately believe and are saved. Indeed, one of the principal uses to which the Arminians commonly apply the distinction between impetration and application, as they explain it, is this,—that they interpret the scriptural statements which seem to speak of all men as comprehended in the objects of Christ’s death, of the impetration of pardon and reconciliation for them; and interpret those passages which seem to indicate some limitation in the objects of His dying, of the application of those blessings to men individually. Now, it seems very manifest that the word “redeemed” is to be taken here in the first, or more limited sense—as descriptive only of the impetration or purchase of pardon and reconciliation; because there is a distinct enumeration of all the leading steps in the great process which, originating in God’s eternal, absolute election of some men, terminates in their complete salvation,—their redemption by Christ being evidently, from the whole structure of the statement, not comprehensive of, but distinguished from, their vocation and justification, which *constitute* the application of the blessings of redemption,—the benefits which Christ purchased.

The second question to which I referred, applies only to the last clause quoted,—namely, “neither are any other redeemed by



Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only." Here it has been made a question, whether the concluding restriction, to "the elect only," applies to each of the preceding predicates, "redeemed," "called," "justified," etc., *singly and separately*, or only to the whole of them taken collectively; that is, whether it be intended to be here asserted that not any one of these things, such as "redeemed," can be predicated of any but the elect only, or merely that the whole of them, taken in conjunction, cannot be predicated of any others. The latter interpretation,—namely, that there are none but the elect of whom the whole collectively can be predicated,—would make the declaration a mere truism, serving no purpose, and really giving no deliverance upon anything, although the repetition of the general statement about the consequences of election, or the execution of God's eternal decree, in a negative form, was manifestly intended to be peculiarly emphatic, and to contain a denial of an error reckoned important. The Confession, therefore, must be regarded as teaching, that it is not true of any but the elect only, that they are redeemed by Christ, any more than it is true that any others are called, justified, or saved. Here I may remark by the way, that though many modern defenders of a universal atonement regard the word *redemption* as including the application as well as the impetration of pardon and reconciliation,—and, in this sense, disclaim the doctrine of universal redemption,—yet a different phraseology was commonly used in theological discussions about the period at which the Confession was prepared, and in the seventeenth century generally. Then the defenders of a universal atonement generally maintained, without any hesitation, the doctrine of universal redemption,—using the word, of course, to describe only the impetration, and not the application, of spiritual and saving blessings; and this holds true, both of those who admitted, and of those who denied, the Calvinistic doctrine of election. Of the first of these cases (the Calvinists) we have an instance in Richard Baxter's work, which he entitled, "Universal Redemption of Mankind by the Lord Jesus Christ;" and of the second (the Arminians) in Dr Isaac Barrow's sermons, entitled, "The Doctrine of Universal Redemption Asserted and Explained."

The other leading statements upon this subject in the Confession, are those which we have already had occasion to quote from the eighth chapter, secs. 5, 8: "The Lord Jesus, by His

perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the Eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him;" and again: "To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption" (that is, pardon and reconciliation), "He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; making intercession for them; and revealing unto them, in and by the word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by His Spirit to believe and obey," etc. Now, *this latter statement*, as I formerly intimated, *contains, and was intended to contain, the true status quaestionis in the controversy about the extent of the atonement.* It is to be explained by a reference to the mode of conducting this controversy, between the Calvinists and Arminians, about the time of the Synod of Dort, and also to the mode of conducting the controversy excited in France by Cameron,\* and afterwards carried on by Amyraldus in France and Holland, and by Baxter in England. The fundamental position of all who had advocated the doctrine of atonement against the Socinians, but had also maintained that it was universal or unlimited, was—that Christ, by His sufferings and death, purchased pardon and reconciliation for all men, without distinction or exception; but that these blessings are applied or communicated to, and, of course, are actually enjoyed by, those only who came, from whatever cause, to repent and believe. This, of course, is the only sense in which the doctrine of universal atonement, or redemption, could be held by any who did not believe in the doctrine of universal salvation. And the assertion or denial of this must, from the nature of the case, form the substance of the controversy about the extent of the atonement, whatever diversity of phraseology may be, at different times, employed in discussing it.

The doctrine of a universal atonement necessarily implies, not only that God desired and intended that all men should be benefited by Christ's death,—for this, in some sense, is universally admitted,—but *that, in its special and peculiar character as an*

\* It is a curious circumstance that the followers of Cameron maintained that the Synod of Dort did not condemn their views, because it did not make any statement precisely similar to this of our Confession. Dallæi Apologia pro duabus Synodis, p. 623.

*atonement*,—that is, as a penal infliction, as a ransom price,—it should effect something bearing favourably upon their spiritual welfare. This could be only by its purchasing for all men the pardon of their sins and reconciliation with God, which the Scripture plainly represents as the proper and direct results or effects of Christ's death. The advocates of this doctrine accordingly say, that He impetrated or purchased these blessings for all men; and as many are never actually pardoned and reconciled, they are under the necessity, as I formerly explained, *because they hold a universal atonement*, both of explaining away pardon and reconciliation as meaning merely the removal of legal obstacles, or the opening up of a door, for God's bestowing these blessings, and of maintaining that these blessings are impetrated for many to whom they are never applied. Now this, of course, is the position which the statement in the Confession was intended to contradict, by asserting that impetration and application, though distinct, are co-extensive, and are never, in fact, separated,—that all for whom these blessings were ever designed or procured, do certainly receive them; or, conversely, that they were not designed, or procured, for any except those who ultimately partake of them. This, then, is the form in which the controversy about the extent of the atonement is stated and decided in our Confession of Faith; and, whatever differences of phraseology may have been introduced into the discussion of this subject in more modern times, it is always useful to recur to this mode of stating the question, as fitted to explain the true nature of the points involved in it, and to suggest clear conceptions of the real import of the different topics adduced upon both sides. Those who are usually represented as holding the doctrine of particular redemption, or limited atonement,—as teaching that Christ did not die for all men, but only for the elect,—contend for nothing more than this, and cannot be shown to be under any obligation, in point of consistency, to contend for more,—namely, that, to all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; and all who take the opposite side, and maintain that Christ died for all men,—that His atonement was universal or unlimited,—can, without difficulty, be proved to maintain, or to be bound in consistency to maintain,—if they really admit an atonement at all, and, at the same time, deny universal salvation,

—that He purchased redemption—that is, pardon and reconciliation—for many to whom they are never applied, who never are put in possession of them.

We would now make two or three observations, suggested by this account of the state of the question. First, the advocates of a limited or definite atonement do not deny, but maintain, the infinite intrinsic sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction and merits. They regard His sufferings and death as possessed of value, or worth, sufficient to have purchased pardon and reconciliation for the whole race of fallen man. The value or worth of His sacrifice of Himself depends upon, and is measured by, the dignity of His person, and is therefore infinite. Though many fewer of the human race had been to be pardoned and saved, an atonement of infinite value would have been necessary, in order to procure for them these blessings; and though many more, yea, all men, had been to be pardoned and saved, the death of Christ, being an atonement of infinite value, would have been amply sufficient, as the ground or basis of their forgiveness or salvation. We know nothing of the amount or extent of Christ's sufferings in themselves. Scripture tells us only of *their relation to the law, in compliance with the provision of which they were inflicted and endured*. This implies their infinity, in respect of intrinsic legal worth or value; and this, again, implies their full intrinsic sufficiency for the redemption of all men, if God had intended to redeem and save them. There have been some Calvinists who have contended that Christ's sufferings were just as much, in amount or extent, as were sufficient for redeeming, or paying the ransom price of, the elect,—of those who are actually saved; so that, if more men had been to be pardoned and saved, Christ must have suffered more than He did, and if fewer, less. But those who have held this view have been very few in number, and of no great weight or influence. The opinion, however, is one which the advocates of universal atonement are fond of adducing and refuting, because it is easy to refute it; and because this is fitted to convey the impression that the advocates of a limited atonement in general hold this, or something like it, and thus to insinuate an unfavourable idea of the doctrine. There is no doubt that all the most eminent Calvinistic divines hold the infinite worth or value of Christ's atonement,—its full sufficiency for expiating all the sins of all men.

A distinction was generally employed by the schoolmen, which has been often adverted to in this discussion, and which it may be proper to explain. They were accustomed to say, that Christ died sufficiently for all men, and efficaciously for the elect,—*sufficienter pro omnibus, efficaciter pro electis*. Some orthodox divines, who wrote before the extent of the atonement had been made the subject of full, formal, and elaborate discussion,—and Calvin himself among the rest,—admitted the truth of this scholastic position. But after controversy had thrown its full light upon the subject, orthodox divines generally refused to adopt this mode of stating the point, because it seemed to ascribe to Christ a *purpose* or *intention* of dying in the room of all, and of benefiting all by the proper effects of His death, as an atonement or propitiation; not that they doubted or denied the intrinsic sufficiency of His death for the redemption of all men, but because the statement—whether originally so intended or not—was so expressed as to suggest the idea, that Christ, in dying, desired and intended that all men should partake in the proper and peculiar effects of the shedding of His blood. Calvinists do not object to say that the death of Christ—viewed objectively, apart from His purpose or design—was sufficient for all, and efficaciously for the elect, because this statement in the first clause merely asserts its infinite intrinsic sufficiency, which they admit; whereas the original scholastic form of the statement,—namely, that He died sufficiently for all,—seems to indicate that, when He died, *He intended* that all should derive some saving and permanent benefit from His death. The attempt made by some defenders of universal atonement to prove, that a denial of the universality of the atonement necessarily implies a denial of its universal intrinsic sufficiency, has nothing to do with the settlement of the state of the question, but only with the arguments by which the opposite side may be defended: and, therefore, I need not advert to it.

Secondly, It is not denied by the advocates of particular redemption, or of a limited atonement, that mankind in general, even those who ultimately perish, do derive some advantages or benefits from Christ's death; and no position they hold requires them to deny this. They believe that important benefits have accrued to the whole human race from the death of Christ, and that in these benefits those who are finally impenitent and unbelieving partake. What they deny is, that Christ intended to

procure, or did procure, for all men those blessings which are the proper and peculiar fruits of His death, in its specific character as an atonement,—that He procured or purchased redemption—that is, pardon and reconciliation—for all men. Many blessings flow to mankind at large from the death of Christ, collaterally and incidentally, in consequence of the relation in which men, viewed collectively, stand to each other. All these benefits were, of course, foreseen by God, when He resolved to send His Son into the world; they were contemplated or designed by Him, as what men should receive and enjoy. They are to be regarded and received as bestowed by Him, and as thus unfolding His glory, indicating His character, and actually accomplishing His purposes; and they are to be viewed as coming to men through the channel of Christ's mediation,—of His sufferings and death.\*

The truth of this position has been considered as affording some warrant for saying, in a vague and indefinite sense, that Christ died for all men; and in this sense, and on this account, some Calvinists have scrupled about meeting the position that Christ died for all men with a direct negative, as if they might thus be understood as denying that there was any sense in which all men derived benefit, and in which God intended that they should derive benefit, from Christ's death. But this position does not at all correspond with the proper import of what Scripture means when it tells us that Christ died for men. This, *as we prove against the Socinians*, implies that He substituted Himself in their room and stead, that He put Himself in their legal position, that He made satisfaction to God's justice for their sins, or that He purchased redemption for them; and this, we contend, does not hold true of any but those who are actually at length pardoned and saved. The advocates of universal atonement, then, have no right to charge us with teaching that none derive any benefit from Christ's death except those who are pardoned and saved; we do not teach this, and we are not bound in consistency to teach it. We teach the opposite of this; and we are not deterred from doing so by the fear lest we should thereby afford to those who are opposed to us a medium for proving that, in the proper scriptural sense, He died for all men, or that the leading and peculiar bene-

\* Witsius, De Econ. Fœd., Lib. | Turretin., Loc. xiv., Qu. xiv., sec. ii., c. ix., sec. iv. | xi.

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-