

ἀναφέρω in the New, have no such indefiniteness of meaning. They include, indeed, the idea of taking away or removing, which the Socinians regard as the whole of their import; but it can be proved that their proper meaning is to bear or carry, and thus by *bearing* or *carrying*, to remove or take away. As to the statements, that Christ was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, that He was made sin and made a curse for us, and others of similar import, there is really nothing adduced, possessed even of plausibility, against their having the meaning which they naturally and properly convey,—namely, that our liability to punishment for sin was transferred to Him, and that He, in consequence, endured in our room and stead what we had deserved and incurred.

Thirdly, The third and last class of passages consists of those which describe the effects or results of Christ's death,—the consequences which have flowed from it to men in their relation to God, and to His law, which they had broken. These may be said to be, chiefly, so far as our present subject is concerned, reconciliation to God,—the expiation of sin,—and the redemption of sinners,—*καταλλαγή, ἵλασμός, λύτρωσις*. These are all ascribed in Scripture to the death of Christ; and there are two questions that naturally arise to be discussed in regard to them, though, in the very brief remarks we can make upon them, the two questions may be answered together: First, What do they mean? or what is the nature of the changes effected upon men's condition which they express? Secondly, What light is cast by the nature of these changes or effects, when once ascertained, upon the true character of the death of Christ,—and more especially upon the great question, whether or not it was endured in our room and stead, and thus made satisfaction for our sins?

Reconciliation naturally and ordinarily implies that two parties, who were formerly at variance and enmity with each other, have been brought into a state of harmony and friendship; and if this reconciliation between God and man was effected, as Scripture assures us it was, by the death of Christ, then the fair inference would seem to be, that His death had removed obstacles which previously stood in the way of the existence or the manifestation of friendship between them,—had made it, in some way or other, fully accordant with the principles, the interests, or the inclinations of both parties to return to a state of friendly intercourse. We

need not repeat, in order to guard against misconstruction, what was formerly explained,—in considering objections to the doctrine of the atonement founded on misrepresentations about the eternal and unchangeable love of God to men,—about the atonement being the consequence and not the cause of God's love, and about its introducing no feeling into the divine mind which did not exist there before. If this be true, as it certainly is, and if it be also true that the death of Christ is represented as propitiating God to men,—as turning away His wrath from them,—and as effecting their restoration to His favour,—then it follows plainly that it must have removed obstacles to the manifestation of His love, and opened up a channel for His actual bestowing upon them tokens of His kindness; and if these obstacles consisted in the necessity of exercising and manifesting His justice, and maintaining unimpaired the honour of His law, which men had broken, then the way or manner in which the death of Christ operated in effecting a reconciliation between God and man, *must have been* by its satisfying God's justice, and answering the demands of His law. Socinians, indeed, allege that it is not said in Scripture that God was reconciled to men by the death of Christ, but only that men were reconciled to God, or that God in this way reconciled men to Himself; and that the only way in which the death of Christ operated in effecting this reconciliation, was by its affording motives and encouragements to men to repent and turn to Him. It is admitted that it is not expressly said in Scripture that the death of Christ reconciled God to men; but then it is contended, and can be easily proved, that statements of equivalent import to this occur; and more especially, that it is in accordance with Scripture usage, in the application of the word *reconcile*, that those who are said to be reconciled, are represented, not as laying aside their enmity against the other party, but as aiming at and succeeding in getting Him to lay aside His righteous enmity against them; and this general use of the word, applied to the case under consideration, leaves the argument for a real atonement, deduced from the asserted effect of Christ's death upon the reconciliation of God and man untouched, in all its strength and cogency.

The next leading effect ascribed to the death of Christ is that it expiates sin, as expressed by the word *ἱλάσκειν*, and its derivatives. The statements in which these words occur, bring out somewhat more explicitly the effect of Christ's sufferings and

death upon men's relation to God and to His law, and thus at once confirm and illustrate what is said about its bearing upon reconciliation. It can be fully established, that the true and proper meaning of these words is, to propitiate, or to make propitious one who had been righteously offended by transgression, so that the transgression is no longer regarded as a reason for manifesting displeasure or inflicting punishment. Christ is repeatedly * described in Scripture as being a propitiation for sins, *ἰλασμός περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν*; and we are also told that His humiliation and His execution of the priestly office were directed to the object of making propitiation for, or expiating the sins of, the people,—*εἰς τὸ ἰλάσκεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας*.† This is translated in our version, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; but it would be more correctly rendered, to propitiate by expiating their sins. And in another passage,‡ where He is also described as a propitiation,—*ἰλαστήριον*,—this is expressly connected with His blood as an object of faith, and with the result of the remission of sins; it being a great principle regulating God's dealings with sinners, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission. If Christ was thus a propitiation, or propitiated God to men who had sinned against Him, and if He effected this through His humiliation and blood-shedding, it could be only by its being an atonement for their sins, or expiatory of their sins,—that is, by its presenting or affording some adequate cause or reason why the punishment of their sins should not be inflicted upon them; and *this*, according to every idea suggested in Scripture concerning expiation or atonement, or expiatory sacrifices,—sacrifices which, as is often said in the Old Testament, make atonement,—could be only by its being the endurance in their room and stead of the punishment they had incurred.

The general ideas expressed by some of these leading words, as descriptive of the effect of Christ's death upon men's condition and relation to God, are well stated by Dr John Pye Smith in this way: In enumerating the glorious effects of Christ's sacrifice, he specifies as one, "The legal *reconciliation* of God and all sinners who cordially receive the gospel method of salvation;" and then he adds, "This all-important idea is presented under two aspects: First, *Expiation* or *atonement*. This denotes the doing of some-

* 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10.

† Heb. ii. 17.

‡ Rom. iii. 25.

thing which shall furnish a *just ground* or *reason* in a system of judicial administration, for *pardoning* a convicted offender. Secondly, *Propitiation*: anything which shall have the property of disposing, inclining, or causing the judicial authority to *admit* the expiation; that is, to assent to it as a valid reason for pardoning the offender." *

The third leading result ascribed to Christ's death, in its bearing upon the condition of sinners in relation to God and His law, is redemption,—*λύτρωσις*, or *ἀπολύτρωσις*. As we are assured in Scripture, both that Christ died *for* sins and that He died *for* sinners, so we are told, both that sins and sinners were redeemed by Him, by His blood, by His giving Himself for them; though the idea most frequently indicated is, that, by dying for sinners, He redeemed or purchased *them*. He is described as giving His life,—which, of course, is the same thing as His submitting to death,—as a *λύτρον*, and as giving Himself as an *ἀντίλυτρον* for men. Now, there is no doubt about the true, proper, ordinary meaning of these words: *λύτρον* means a ransom price,—a price paid in order to secure the deliverance of a debtor or a captive; and *ἀντίλυτρον* means the same thing, with a more explicit indication,—the effect of the prefixed preposition,—of the idea of commutation, compensation, or substitution,—that is, of the price being paid in the room and stead of something else for which it is substituted. Christ's blood or death, then, is frequently and explicitly represented in Scripture as a ransom price paid by Him, in order to effect, and actually effecting, the deliverance of men from sin, and from the injurious effects of sin upon their relation to God and their eternal welfare. And if there be any truth or reality in this representation,—if anything is meant by it at all corresponding to the words in which it is conveyed to us, then it is manifest that, taken in connection with what we know from Scripture as to men's natural state or condition, and the real nature of the difficulties or obstacles that stood in the way of their deliverance, it shuts us up to the conclusion that Christ, in suffering and dying, acted in the room and stead of sinners; and by enduring, as their substitute, the punishment which they had deserved, rendered satisfaction to the justice and law of God in their behalf.

* Four Discourses; Dis. ii., pp. 136-7. Ed. 1828.

These, then, are the leading divisions under which the extensive and varied mass of Scripture evidence for the great doctrine of the atonement may be classed: first, the general character of Christ's sufferings and death, as being the offering up of Himself as a sacrifice; secondly, the true nature and immediate object of His death, as implying that He took the place of sinners, and in all His sufferings endured the punishment which they had merited; and, thirdly and finally, the bearing or effect of His death upon their relation to God and His law,—every feature and aspect of the resulting effect, or of the change produced, affording a strong confirmation of His having acted as their substitute, and rendered satisfaction to divine justice for their sins.

Sec. VI.—Socinian View of the Atonement.

Every position laid down by the defenders of the doctrine has been controverted, and every one of them has been successfully established. It is necessary to know something, not only of the grounds of the leading scriptural positions on which this great doctrine is based, but also of the objections by which they have been assailed, and of the way in which these objections have been answered. There are, however, two or three general observations on the method commonly adopted by the Socinians in dealing with the Scripture evidence in reference to this doctrine, which it may be worth while to bring under notice.

Of course they feel it to be necessary to attempt to explain, in consistency with the denial of the atonement, the special importance ascribed in Scripture to the death of Christ, as distinguished from everything else recorded regarding Him, and the peculiarity and immediateness of the connection plainly indicated between His death and the forgiveness of men's sins. Now, the substance of what they allege upon this point really amounts to this, and to nothing more,—that though, in reality, no such special importance attached to the death of Christ, and no such peculiar and immediate connection subsisted between it and the forgiveness of sin, as the doctrine of an atonement supposes, yet that reasons can be assigned why the sacred writers might naturally enough have been led to speak of it in a way that is fitted, at first sight, to convey these impressions. This is no misrepresentation of their doctrine, but a fair statement of what it involves, as could very easily

be established. Of course they are fond of enlarging upon the advantages resulting from Christ's death as an example of excellence in Him, and of love to men, and as confirming the divinity of His mission and the truth of His doctrines; while they usually come at last, in discussing this point, to the admission, that the main ground why such special importance is assigned to it in Scripture is, because it was necessary as a step to His resurrection, which was intended to be the great proof of the divinity of His mission, and thus the main ground of our faith or reliance upon what He has made known to us,—a train of thought which assumes throughout, what may be regarded as the fundamental principle of Socinianism,—namely, that the sole object of Christ's mission was to reveal and establish the will of God.

We have no interest and no inclination to underrate the importance of the death of Christ, either in itself, or as connected with His resurrection, viewed as a testimony to truth,—as a ground of faith or conviction; but we cannot admit that any view of this sort accounts fully for the very special and paramount importance which the Scripture everywhere assigns to it, and still less for the peculiar and immediate connection which it everywhere indicates as subsisting between the suffering, the death, the bloodshedding of Christ, and the forgiveness of men's sins. Dr Lant Carpenter, one of the most respectable, and, upon the whole, most candid and least offensive of modern Unitarians, after enumerating a variety of circumstances in the condition of the apostles, and in the sentiments and associations it tended to produce, which might not unnaturally have led them to represent the connection between the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sin as peculiar and immediate, though it was not so (for that is really the substance of the matter), triumphantly asks, "Can we wonder that the apostles sometimes referred to this event all the blessings of the gospel, and represented it under those figures with which their religious and national peculiarities so abundantly supplied them?"* The Unitarian position, then, upon this point, is this: Though the apostles sometimes represented the connection subsisting between the death of Christ and the blessings of salvation as peculiar and

* "Unitarianism the Doctrine of the Gospel, or a View of the Scriptural Grounds of Unitarianism," second edition (1811), P. iii. c. viii., 306, 307.

immediate, we do not believe that any such peculiar and immediate connection existed; *because* we can imagine some circumstances and influences that might not improbably have led them to speak in this way, without supposing that they really believed or meant to teach the existence of such a connection. *Our* position is this: The apostles speak of the sufferings and death of Christ, and of the blessings of salvation, in such a way as is fitted, and was therefore intended, to teach us that the connection between them was peculiar and immediate, and not indirect and remote, through the intervention of the efficacy of His sufferings and death, in establishing truths and influencing our motives; and therefore we believe this upon their authority. It is surely manifest, that the only honest way of coming to a decision between these two positions, is to take up and settle the previous question,—namely, whether or not the apostles were directly commissioned to reveal the will of God? whether or not the Bible is to be received as our rule of faith?

This leads us to notice the liberal use which the Socinians make,—in distorting and perverting the statements of Scripture upon this subject,—of the allegation, that the language employed by the sacred writers is very figurative, and is not to be literally understood. This is an allegation which they make and apply very largely in their whole system of scriptural interpretation; but in regard to no subject do they make so wide and sweeping a use of it, as in dealing with the doctrine of the atonement, and more especially when they come to assail what they call “the far-fetched analogies and inaccurate reasonings” of the Epistle to the Hebrews. This topic opens up a wide field of general discussion, on which we do not mean to enter. We notice merely the abuse which they make of it, in order to guard against the impression which they labour to convey, though they do not venture formally and openly to maintain it,—namely, that an allegation that a statement is figurative or metaphorical, if admitted or proved to be in any sense or to any extent true, virtually involves in total obscurity or uncertainty the meaning or import it was intended to convey. This is really the substance of what they must maintain, in order to make their favourite allegation of any real service to their cause.

A great portion of ordinary language may be said to be in some sense figurative; and one cause of this is, that most of the words employed to describe mental states or operations are taken

from material objects. But this does not prevent the language, though figurative or metaphorical, from conveying to us precise and definite ideas.* Figures are, for the most part, taken from actual resemblances or analogies; and even when the figurative use of words and phrases has not been fully established, and cannot, in consequence, be directly ascertained by the ordinary *usus loquendi* (though, in most languages, this is not to any considerable extent the case), still the resemblances and analogies on which the figure is founded may usually be traced, and thus the idea intended to be conveyed may be distinctly apprehended,—due care, of course, being taken to apply aright any information we may possess concerning the real nature of the subject and its actual qualities and relations. Christ is described as the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. There is no doubt something figurative here; but there can be no doubt also that it was intended, as it is fitted, to convey to us the ideas that there is some resemblance between Christ and a lamb, and a lamb, moreover, viewed as a sacrificial victim; and that Christ exerted some influence upon the remission of the sins of men analogous to that which the sacrifice of a lamb exerted in regard to the remission of the sins to which such sacrifices had a respect. What this influence or relation in both cases was, must be learned from a fair application of all that we know concerning the nature of the case in both instances, and the specific information we have received regarding them. And the fair result of a careful and impartial examination of all the evidence bearing upon these points is this, that the language of Scripture is fitted to impress upon us the convictions,—that the sacrifice of a lamb under the Mosaic economy was really vicarious, and was really expiatory of the sins to which it had a respect,—and that the sacrifice of Christ, in like manner, was really vicarious; that is, that it was presented in the room and stead of men, and that it really expiated or atoned for their sins,—that it was offered and accepted, as furnishing an adequate ground or reason why their sins should not be punished as they had deserved.

There is a great deal said in Scripture about the sufferings and death of Christ, and their relations,—viewed both in their causes and their consequences,—to men's sins. This language is partly

* Watson's Institutes, P. ii., c. xxi. Works, vol. xi., p. 87.

figurative; but, *first*, there is no proof or evidence that it is wholly so; and, *secondly*, there is no great difficulty in ascertaining, with precision and certainty, what ideas the figures, that are employed in representing and illustrating them, are fitted, and were intended, to convey. And if the statements of Scripture upon this point, viewed in combination and as a whole, were not intended to convey to us the ideas that Christ, by His sufferings and death, offered a true and real sacrifice,—that He presented it in the room and stead of men, and by doing so, suffered the punishment which they had deserved, and thereby expiated their guilt, and saved them from punishment,—then the Bible can be regarded in no other light than as a series of unintelligible riddles, fitted not to instruct, but to perplex and to mock, men.* Here, as in the case of other doctrines, Socinians argue with some plausibility only when they are dealing with single passages, or particular classes of passages, but keeping out of view, or throwing into the background, the general mass of Scripture evidence bearing upon the whole subject. When we take a conjunct view of the whole body of Scripture statements, manifestly intended to make known to us the nature, causes, and consequences of Christ's death, literal and figurative,—view them in combination with each other,—and fairly estimate what they are fitted to teach, there is no good ground for doubt as to the general conclusions which we should feel ourselves constrained to adopt.

The evidence in support of the expiatory and vicarious character of Christ's death, is not only peculiarly varied and abundant; but we have, in this case, peculiar advantages for ascertaining the truth as to its intended import, in the special means we possess of knowing how the statements of the apostles would be, in point of fact, understood by those to whom they were originally addressed. We must, of course, believe that the apostles used language fitted and intended to be understood by those whom they addressed,—not accommodated to their errors and prejudices, in accordance with what is usually called the theory of accommodation; for this, integrity, not to speak of inspiration, precludes,—but fitted to convey *correct* impressions, if understood in the sense in which they must have known that it would be understood,—for this integrity requires. And it can be easily proved that

* Hodges' Sermon on the Nature of the Atonement; Spruce Street Lectures, pp. 159, 160.

both the Jews and the Gentiles, with the notions they generally entertained about sacrifices,—their nature, object, and effects,—must have understood the apostolic statements about Christ's sacrifice of Himself, just as they have been generally understood ever since by the great body of the Christian church. It is, then, a mere evasion of the argument, to dispose of such a body of proof by the vague allegation of the language being figurative or metaphorical, as if it could be shown that all the scriptural statements upon the subject are figurative; and, further, that the figures employed convey no meaning whatever,—or a meaning which cannot be fully ascertained,—or a meaning different from that assigned to them by the defenders of the atonement. Not only can none of these positions be proved, but all of them can be disproved; and, therefore, the evidence for this great and fundamental doctrine stands untouched and unassailable.*

There is only one of the more specific methods adopted by Socinians to evade and pervert the testimony of Scripture upon this subject to which I shall particularly advert; but it is one of pretty extensive application. It may be described, in general, as consisting in this,—that they labour to show that most of the scriptural statements about the sufferings and death of Christ are descriptive merely of certain *results*, without indicating anything of the *means*, or *intermediate process*, by which the results are effected. This will be best understood by giving two or three examples. With reference to the connection between the sin of man and the death of Christ, in its causes, they usually maintain that sin was only the final cause of Christ's death,—in no proper sense its impulsive, procuring cause, and in no sense whatever its meritorious cause. By sin being the final cause of Christ's death, they mean that it was the *end* or object of His death to save men from sin,—which is certainly true; but then they deny that we have any *further* information given us in Scripture respecting any causal connection between our sin and Christ's death; while we contend that the scriptural representations warrant us in asserting, not only that Christ died in order to save men from sin, but, further, that man's sin was the procuring cause of His death,—that which rendered His death necessary, and really brought it

* Dr Owen on the Trinity and Satisfaction. Works, vol. x., p. 532. (Russell's Edition.)

to pass,—and did so by meriting or deserving that we should die. Christ's dying for sinners, according to the Socinians, means merely His dying for their sakes, on their account,—for their good,—in order to benefit them. This we admit to be true,—to be implied in the scriptural statements upon the subject; but we contend, further, that these statements, in their genuine import, teach that He died in our room and stead, and that by dying in our room and stead as the means, He effected our good as the result. *Bearing sin*, according to the Socinians, means merely taking it away or removing it, and is thus descriptive merely of the result of His interposition,—in that, in consequence, men are not actually subjected to what their sin deserved; whereas we contend that its true and proper meaning is, that He assumed or had laid upon Him the guilt, or legal answerableness, or legal liability to punishment, on account of our sins, and endured this punishment; and that *by thus bearing our sin as a means*, He effected the end or result of bearing it away or removing it, so that it no longer lies upon us, to subject us to punishment. According to our view of the import of the expression, it implies that our sin was *on* Christ,—was laid on Him,—and that thus He bore it, *in order to bear it away*; whereas, on the Socinian interpretation, our sin never was on Him, and He bore it away, or accomplished the result of freeing us from the effects of it, without ever having borne it. Redemption, according to the Socinians, just means deliverance as an end aimed at, and result effected, without indicating anything as to the means by which it was accomplished; and it is not disputed that, in some instances, the word *redeem* is used in this wide and general sense. But we contend that its proper ordinary meaning is to effect deliverance as an *end*, through the *means* of a price or ransom paid; and we undertake to show, not only from the proper ordinary meaning of the word itself,—from which there is no sufficient reason for deviating,—but from the whole connections in which it occurs, and especially the specification of the actual price or ransom paid, that it ought, in its application to the death of Christ, to be understood as descriptive of the means by which the result of deliverance is effected, as well as the actual deliverance itself. Of course, in each case the question as to the true meaning of the statements must be determined by a diligent and impartial application of philological and critical rules and materials; but this

brief statement of these distinctions may perhaps be of some use in explaining the true state of the question upon the Scripture evidence,—in guarding against Socinian sophisms and evasions,—and in indicating what are some of the leading points to be attended to in the investigation of this subject.

Sec. VII.—Arminian View of the Atonement.

In introducing the subject of atonement, I proposed to consider, first, the reality and general nature of the vicarious atonement or satisfaction of Christ, as it has been generally held by the Christian church in opposition to the Socinians; secondly, the peculiarities of the doctrine commonly held by Arminians upon this subject, as connected with the other leading features of their scheme of theology; and, thirdly, the peculiar views of those who hold Calvinistic doctrines upon most other points, but upon this concur with, or approximate to, the views of the Arminians. The first of these topics I have already examined; I now proceed to advert to the second,—namely, the peculiarities of the Arminian doctrine upon the subject of the atonement or satisfaction of Christ. I do not mean, however, to dwell at any great length upon this second head, because most of the topics that might be discussed under it recur again, with some modifications, under the third head; and as they are more dangerous *there*, because of the large amount of truth in connection with which they are held, I propose *then* to consider them somewhat more fully.

The leading peculiarity of the doctrine of the Arminians upon this subject is usually regarded as consisting in this,—that they believe in a universal or unlimited atonement, or teach that Christ died and offered up an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of all men,—that is, of all the individuals of the human race, without distinction or exception. This doctrine was the subject of the second of the five articles,—the first being on predestination,—which were discussed and condemned in the Synod of Dort. Their leading tenets upon this subject, as given in to the Synod of Dort, and condemned there, were these,—first, that the price of redemption, which Christ offered to His Father, is not only in and of itself sufficient for redeeming the whole human race, but that, according to the decree, the will, and the grace of God the Father, it was actually paid for all and every man; and, secondly, that Christ,

by the merit of His death, has so far reconciled God His Father to the whole human race, as that the Father, on account of His merit, was able, consistently with His justice and veracity, and actually willed or resolved, to enter into a new covenant of grace with sinful men exposed to condemnation. Now, these statements, it will be observed, direct our thoughts, not only to the extent, but also to the nature, the objects, and the effects of the atonement, or of the payment of the ransom price of men's deliverance and salvation. Their doctrine upon both these points was also comprehended by themselves in one proposition in this way: "Christ died for all and every man, and did so in this sense and to this effect,—that He obtained, or procured (impetravit), for all men by His death reconciliation and the forgiveness of their sins; but upon this condition, that none actually possess and enjoy this forgiveness of sins except believers."* The substance of the doctrine is this,—first, that Christ's death, in the purpose of God and in His own intention in submitting to it, was directed to the benefit of all men, equally and alike; secondly, that its only proper and direct effect was to enable and incline God to enter into a new covenant with them upon more favourable terms than, but for Christ's dying for them, would have been granted; and that this is virtually the same thing as His procuring or obtaining for all men reconciliation with God and the forgiveness of their sins.

Now, this is plainly a scheme of doctrine which is throughout consistent with itself. And more especially it is manifest, that, if the atonement was universal or unlimited,—if it was intended to benefit all men,—its proper nature and immediate object must have been, in substance, just what the Arminians represent it to have been; or, more generally, the doctrine of the universality of the atonement must materially affect men's views of its nature and immediate object. Arminians generally concur with other sections of the Christian church in maintaining the doctrine of a vicarious and expiatory atonement, in opposition to the Socinians; and of course they defend the general ideas of substitution and satisfaction,—that is, of Christ's having put Himself in our place, and

* Acta Synodalia Remonstrantium, P. ii., p. 280. Amesii Coronis ad Collationem Hagensem, p. 90. Nichols' Calvinism and Arminianism Compared, pp. 114, 115. Statement

and Refutation of the Views of Arminius himself upon this subject, in Witsius, De Oeconom. Fœd., Lib. ii., c. vii., sec. ix. Owen's Display of Arminianism, c. ix. and x.

satisfied divine justice in our room and stead; but when they come more minutely and particularly to explain what substitution and satisfaction mean, and in what way the atonement of Christ is connected with, and bears upon, the forgiveness and salvation of men individually, then differences of no small importance come out between them and those who have more scriptural views of the scheme of divine truth in general, and then is manifested a considerable tendency on their part to dilute or explain away what seems to be the natural import of the terms commonly employed in relation to this matter. It may not be easy to determine whether their doctrine of the universality of the atonement produced their modified and indefinite views of its proper nature and immediate object, or whether certain defective and erroneous views upon this latter point led them to assert its universality. But certain it is, that their doctrine with respect to its nature, and their doctrine with respect to its extent, are intimately connected together,—the one naturally leading to and producing the other. As the doctrine of the universality of the atonement professes to be founded upon, and derived from, Scripture statements directly bearing upon the point, and is certainly not destitute of an *appearance* of Scripture support, the probability is, that *this* was the *πρωτον ψεύδος*,—the primary or originating error,—which produced their erroneous views in regard to the nature and immediate object of the atonement. And this is confirmed by the fact, that the ablest Arminian writers, such as Curcellæus and Limborch,* have been accustomed to urge the universality of the atonement as a distinct and independent argument against the Calvinistic doctrine of election,—that is, they undertake to prove directly from Scripture that Christ died for all men; and then, having proved this, they draw from it the inference that it was impossible that there could have been from eternity an election of some men to life, and a reprobation, or preterition, or passing by of others,—an argument which, it appears to me, the Calvinistic defenders of an unlimited atonement are not well able to grapple with.

But whatever may have been the state of this matter historically, it is quite plain that there is, and must be, a very close connection between men's views with regard to the nature and immediate object

* Curcellæi Instit. Relig. Christ., Lib. vi., c. iv., pp. 356, 357. Limborch, Theologia Christiana, Lib. iv., c. iii., p. 318.

and effect, and with regard to the extent, of the atonement. If Christ died and gave Himself for those who, in point of fact, are never pardoned, sanctified, and saved, the object and immediate effects of His submitting to death must be very different from what they at least may be, if His sacrifice was offered and accepted only for those who are ultimately saved. The nature of His sacrifice, and the whole of the relation in which it stands to spiritual blessings and eternal life, must, in the one case, be essentially different from what it *may* be in the other. We think it of some importance to illustrate this position; and therefore,—reserving the consideration of the alleged universality of the atonement, as a distinct and independent topic, till we come to the third head of our proposed division of the whole subject,—we will now attempt to explain some of the peculiar views, usually held more or less explicitly by Arminians, in regard to the nature, object, and immediate effects of the atonement, *as illustrative of the tendency and results of their doctrine of its universality*; remarking, however, that a very considerable difference of sentiment upon this subject,—and, indeed, in regard to some other fundamental doctrines of Christianity, such as original sin and regeneration by the Holy Spirit,—prevails among those who may be classed under the general head of Arminians, *because they all deny what are called the peculiarities of Calvinism*; and that the representations about to be made apply, in their full extent, only to the more Pelagian Arminians.

First, it is very common among Arminians to deny what orthodox divines have generally contended for, as we have explained, under the head of the necessity of an atonement. The reason of this must be sufficiently manifest from what has already been said upon this subject, especially in illustrating the connection between the necessity of an atonement, and its true nature, as implying substitution and satisfaction. If an atonement was not necessary, because God's perfections, moral government, and law required it as a preliminary to pardon or forgiveness, *then any provision*—no matter what might be its proper nature and peculiar character—might serve the purpose, might be sufficient for accomplishing the intended object; and, of course, substitution and satisfaction might not be required, excepting only in some very vague and indefinite sense, that might admit to a large extent of being modified or explained away. Still Arminians commonly admit, in a general sense, what the Socinians deny,—namely,

that the divine perfections, government, and law did interpose obstacles in the way of the forgiveness and acceptance of sinners, and that these obstacles the atonement of Christ has removed or taken out of the way; while some of them maintain the necessity of an atonement upon grounds similar to those laid down by orthodox divines. Secondly, many Arminians deny that Christ's sufferings and death were a properly penal infliction, and that He endured the penalty due to men's sins; or, at least, have great scruples about the propriety of describing it by this language. They admit, of course, that He *suffered something in our room and stead*, and if they did not, they would wholly concur with the Socinians; but they commonly, at least in modern times, deny either, first, that what He suffered was properly punishment, or, secondly, that it was the same as, or equivalent to, the penalty which men had deserved by their transgressions. These notions plainly indicate a disposition to modify and explain away the real import of scriptural statements, and involve a descent to the very borders of Socinianism. If Christ suffered at all as our substitute, —if He suffered in our room and stead,—then it is manifest, that, as He had no sin of His own for which to suffer, His suffering must have been penal; that is, it must have been inflicted judicially, in the execution of the provisions of a law which demanded punishment against men's sins. And, as we formerly explained, it is mere trifling to attempt, as is often done, to settle this question about the penalty of Christ's sufferings, by laying down beforehand a definition of punishment, which includes in it, as a constituent element, personal demerit, or a consciousness of personal demerit, on the part of the individual suffering.

The most important question, however, connected with this department of the subject, is not whether what Christ suffered was a punishment, or properly penal, but whether it was *the penalty* which the law had denounced against sin, and to which sinners, therefore, are justly exposed. Now, upon this point, there are *three* different modes of statement which have been adopted and defended by different classes of divines, who all concur in maintaining the doctrine of the atonement against the Socinians. Some contend that the only accurate and exact way of expressing and embodying the doctrine of Scripture upon the subject, is to say, that Christ suffered the very penalty—the same thing viewed legally and judicially—which the law had denounced against sin,

and which we had incurred by transgression. Others think that the full import of the Scripture doctrine is expressed, and that the general scope and spirit of its statements upon this subject are more accurately conveyed, by maintaining that Christ did not suffer the very penalty,—the same penalty which sinners had incurred,—but that He suffered what was a full equivalent, or an adequate compensation for it,—that His suffering was virtually as much as men deserved, though not the same. While others, again, object to both these statements, and think that the whole of what Scripture teaches upon this point is embodied in the position, that what Christ suffered was a substitute for the penalty which we had incurred.

Dr Owen zealously contends for the first of these positions, and attaches much importance to the distinction between Christ having suffered or paid the same penalty as we had incurred, and His having suffered or paid only an equivalent, or as much as we had deserved; or, as he expresses it, between His suffering or paying the *idem* and the *tantundem*. He lays down the doctrine which he maintained upon this point against Grotius and Baxter in this way: "That the punishment which our Saviour underwent was the same that the law required of us; God relaxing His law as to the persons suffering, but not as to the penalty suffered."* There are, however, divines of the strictest orthodoxy, and of the highest eminence, who have not attached the same importance to the distinction between the *idem* and the *tantundem*, and who have thought that the true import of the Scripture doctrine upon the subject is most correctly brought out by saying, that what Christ suffered was a *full* equivalent, or an adequate compensation, for the penalty men had incurred. Mastricht, for instance, whose system of theology is eminently distinguished for its ability, clearness, and accuracy, formally argues against the death of Christ being *solutio* "proprie sic dicta, quâ id præcisè præstatur, quod est in obligatione;" † and contends that "reatus tollitur satisfactione, quâ non idem præcisè, quod est in obligatione, creditori præstatur; sed tantundem, seu equivalentens." And Turretine ‡ seems, upon the whole, to agree with him, or rather, to conjoin the two

* Works (Russell's edition), vol. v., p. 594. Theologia, Lib. v., c. xviii., pp. 613, 614, 615, 616, 625.
 † Mastricht, Theoretico - Practica ‡ Turretin. de Satisfactione, Pars ix., sec. iii.

ideas together, as being both true, though in somewhat different respects, and as not essentially differing from each other. He has not, indeed, so far as I remember, formally discussed the precise question about the *idem* and the *tantundem*, on which Owen and Mastricht have taken opposite sides; but in discussing the Socinian argument,—that Christ did not make a true and real satisfaction for our sins, because He did not in fact pay what was due to God by us, and especially because He suffered only temporal, while we had incurred eternal, death,—he meets the major proposition by asserting that there might be a true and proper satisfaction, though the same thing was not paid which was due, *provided* it was a full equivalent in weight and value, "etsi non *idem*, modo *tantundem* habeatur, sufficit;" while he meets also the minor proposition of the Socinian argument, by asserting that Christ *did* pay what was due by us; *the same*, not of course in its adjuncts and circumstances, but in its substance,—His suffering, though temporary in duration, being, because of the infinite dignity of His person, properly infinite in weight or value as a penal infliction, and thus substantially identical, in the eye of justice and law, with the eternal punishment which sinners had deserved.

The difference, then, between the *idem* and the *tantundem* in this matter does not seem to be quite so important as Dr Owen believed. The difference between the temporary suffering of one being and the eternal sufferings of millions of other beings, is so great, as to their outward aspects and adjuncts, or accompanying circumstances, as to make it not very unreasonable that men should hesitate about calling them the same thing. And the Scripture doctrine of the substitution and satisfaction of Christ seems to be fully brought out, if His death be represented as a *full* equivalent or an adequate compensation for the sins of men,—as being not only a penal infliction, but an infliction of such weight and value intrinsically, as to be a real and full compliance with the demands of the law denouncing death against sin; and thus to exhaust in substance the position which Scripture plainly teaches,—namely, that He bore our sins,—that is, that He suffered *the* punishment which we had deserved, and must otherwise have borne. The danger of admitting that Christ suffered the *tantundem*, and not the *idem*,—an equivalent or compensation, and not the same thing which we had deserved,—lies here, that men are very apt to dilute or explain away the idea of equivalency or com-

compensation, and to reduce it to anything or nothing; and experience has fully illustrated this tendency. The sounder Arminians have usually admitted that Christ's death was an equivalent or compensation for men's sins; but they have generally scrupled, or refused to call it a *full* equivalent,—an adequate compensation. The reason of this is obvious enough: for this latter idea naturally suggests, that it must be certainly effectual for all its intended objects,—that it must be part of a great scheme, fitted and designed to accomplish certain definite results; whereas, under the more vague and general idea of mere equivalency or compensation, which may be understood in a very wide sense, they can, with some plausibility, retain their notions of its universality, its indefiniteness, and its unsettled and uncertain application. Accordingly, in modern times, they have usually rejected even the idea of equivalency in any proper sense, and adopted the third of the positions formerly mentioned,—namely, that Christ neither suffered the same penalty which we had deserved, nor what was an equivalent for it, but merely what was a substitute for the penalty. This idea leaves them abundant scope for diluting or attenuating, to any extent, the substitution and satisfaction which they still continue, in words, to ascribe to Christ. And, accordingly, it is usually adopted by most of those, in our own day,—whether Arminians or professing Calvinists in other respects,—who hold the doctrine of a universal or unlimited atonement.

The word *equivalent*, when honestly used, naturally suggested the idea, not indeed of precise identity, but still of substantial sameness, at least of adequacy or competency, *when tried by some definite and understood standard*, to serve the same purposes, or to effect the same objects; whereas a substitute for the penalty may be almost anything whatever. A substitute may, indeed, be an equivalent, even a full equivalent, or anything short of, or different from, what is precisely identical; but it may also and equally describe something of which nothing like equivalency or substantial identity can be predicated. And hence the danger, to which I formerly referred, as apprehended by Dr Owen and others, of departing from the idea and the phraseology of strict and precise identity. If it was not the same thing, it must have been a substitute for it; and as even a full equivalent, which implies substantial identity, may be classed under the general name of substitute, men's ideas are thus gradually and imperceptibly

lowered, until at length by the dexterous use of vague and indefinite language, they are cheated out of very distinct and definite conceptions of the real nature of Christ's death, in its relation to the law which they had broken, and which He magnified and made honourable by fulfilling all its demands,—being made a curse, in our room, that He might redeem us from the curse of the law.

This idea of Christ having suffered, not the penalty we had deserved and incurred nor an equivalent for it, but merely a substitute for it,—that is, anything which God might choose to accept instead of it, *without there being any standard by which its adequacy for its professed object could be tried or tested*,—has been much dwelt upon, in the present day, by the advocates of a universal atonement, even among those who disclaim Arminianism in other respects. It is, however, an Arminian notion; nay, it is disclaimed by many of the sounder Arminians, and has been generally and justly regarded by Calvinists as amounting to what is practically little else than a denial of the atonement altogether. Limborch, in explaining the doctrine of the old Arminians upon this subject, which he represents as the golden mean between the Socinian and the Calvinistic views, makes the difference between them to consist chiefly in this, that Calvinists represented Christ as suffering the same penalty which men had deserved, or a full equivalent for it, which, of course, implies substantial sameness; while Arminians regarded Him as merely suffering *something or other for them*, which might serve as a substitute for the penalty, and might stand “*vice pœnæ*,” as he says, in the room or stead of the penalty. He felt, however, that this might very probably be regarded as amounting to a virtual denial that Christ had suffered, or been punished, in our room, and thus as approximating to Socinianism; and, accordingly, he proposes this objection to his own doctrine, and answers it, “*An non ergo nostro loco punitus est?*” And his answer is this, “*Eadem quam nos meriti eramus specie pœnæ non punitum esse jam ostendimus*,”—a statement plainly implying an admission of what indeed is manifestly undeniable,—namely, that the natural, obvious meaning of His suffering punishment in our room is, that He endured, either literally and precisely, or at least substantially and equivalently, the penalty which we had incurred; and that *this* must be held to be its meaning, unless it could be proved, as he professed it had been, to be false. And then he adds, “*Potest tamen certo sensu pro nobis dici punitus, quatenus*

pœnam vicariam, pro beneplacito divino sibi imponendam, hoc est, afflictionem, quæ pœnæ vicem sustinuit, in se suscepit."* This sense of *pœna vicaria*,—as meaning, not a punishment endured in the room and stead of others who had deserved it, but merely suffering endured, *vice pœnæ*, in the room of punishment, or as a substitute for the penalty,—is fully adopted by the modern defenders of universal atonement, Beman, Jenkyn, etc.†

We insist, of course, that the Scripture statements about the connection between our sin and our pardon on the one hand, and the death of Christ on the other, are not fully accounted for,—are not sufficiently explained and exhausted,—by the position that Christ suffered something, which might be called a substitute for the penalty, and which God might choose to accept instead of it; and that they are to be taken in what Limborch, by plain implication, admits, and no one can deny, to be their natural, ordinary meaning, as importing that He had inflicted upon Him, and actually endured, what may be fairly and honestly called the penalty we had deserved and incurred. Limborch rejects this interpretation, because he thinks he has proved that it is not accordant with the facts of the case; that is, that, in fact, Christ did not suffer the penalty which the law had denounced against us. His proofs are these: First, that Christ did not suffer eternal death, which was what we had merited by transgression; and, secondly, that if He had suffered the penalty, or a full equivalent, in our room, there would be no grace or gratuitousness on God's part in forgiving men's sins. The last of these arguments we have already considered and refuted, when we mentioned that it was commonly adduced, not only by Socinians, against satisfaction in any sense, but also by the advocates of universal atonement, in opposition to those more strict and proper views of the nature of substitution and satisfaction, which are plainly inconsistent with their doctrine. And there is no more weight in the other argument, that Christ's sufferings were only temporary, while those we had incurred by sin were eternal. This may be, as we have already intimated, a good reason for adopting the phraseology of full equivalency, instead of precise identity,—the

* Limborch, Theol. Christ., Lib. iii., c. xxii., p. 271. Ed. 1686.

† See Dr Alexander's Treatise on Justification, p. 28; Presbyterian Tracts, vol. ii.

tantundem instead of the *idem*. But it furnishes no disproof of substantial sameness, viewed with reference to the demands of law. The law denounced and demanded death, and Christ died for us. The law denounced eternal suffering against an innumerable multitude, who are, in fact, saved from ruin, and admitted to everlasting blessedness. But the temporary suffering and death, in human nature, of One who was at the same time a possessor of the divine nature, was, in point of weight and value, as a compliance with the provisions of the law, a satisfaction to its demands, a testimony to its infinite excellence and unchangeable obligation, a full equivalent for all.

I have dwelt the longer upon this point, because the views which, as we have seen, were held by the more Pelagian or Socinianizing portion of the Arminians,—as they are often called by the orthodox divines of the seventeenth century,—are the very same in substance as those which, in the present day, are advocated, more or less openly, even by the Calvinistic defenders of a universal atonement. They involve, I think, a most unwarrantable dilution or explaining away of the true meaning of the scriptural statements concerning the nature, causes, and objects of Christ's death; and in place of occupying the golden mean between the Socinian and the true Calvinistic doctrines, make a decided approximation to the former. It may be proper to mention, before leaving this topic, that this Arminian notion of the sufferings and death of Christ being merely a substitute for the penalty which sinners had deserved,—as implying something less than an equivalent or compensation, or at least than a *full* equivalent, an *adequate* compensation,—is commonly discussed by orthodox divines, under the name of *acceptilatio*,—a law term, which is employed to express a nominal, fictitious, or illusory payment.*

A third peculiarity of the opinions commonly held by Arminians on this subject is, that they regard the appointment and acceptance of Christ's satisfaction as involving a relaxation or virtual abrogation of the divine law. This necessarily follows from what has been already explained. As Christ did not suffer the penalty of the law, or a full equivalent for it, but only a substitute for the penalty,—which God, of His good pleasure, agreed

* Turretin. de Satisfact., Pars viii., sec. x.; De Moor, Commentarius in Marckii Compendium, tom. iii., p. 1083.

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