

THE DEATH OF DEATH IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST

JOHN OWEN



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ABOUT THIS BOOK



A rigorous defense of **definite atonement**, arguing that Christ's death was specifically intended for the elect and effectually secures their salvation. Structured across four books, Owen dismantles Arminian and universalist positions by examining the **ends of Christ's death**, the nature of God's redemptive will, the covenant of grace, and scripture proofs marshaled by opponents. A landmark of **Reformed soteriology** and the most thorough treatment of particular redemption in the Puritan tradition.



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DEDICATORY EPISTLE TO ROBERT, EARL OF WARWICK



My Lord,

I am not writing to seek protection for the treatise that follows — let it stand or fall on its own merits before the judgment of readers. Nor do I write to praise the personal worth and honor that have so genuinely ennobled your Lordship and secured your family's legacy for future generations, adding real distinction to the line of your worthy forebears. Even if I wished to do so, my own inadequacy would only make the attempt embarrassing. Nor do I have any desire to press further into your Lordship's favor — I have already received far more than I deserve, and I am fully resolved to seek no reputation among men beyond what is rightly owed, whatever that may be, to faithful service of my Master Jesus Christ, to whom I would wholly belong. None of these — not one, nor all combined, nor any of the usual motives behind dedications, real or pretended — moved me to the boldness of placing your honored name at the front of this treatise (which, for the substance it contains, I do not think unworthy of any Christian reader). My only reason was to take this opportunity to declare to all the world — as I do here — the gratitude of my heart

for the obligation your Lordship was pleased to place upon me. Through an undeserved and unsought act of kindness, you opened the door entrusted to you, granting me entry to the place where Providence directed me to preach the Gospel, and where your people sought me out. From that place, I can say by the grace of God that a store of prayers and heartfelt thanks — not the kind your heart, having learned to value the least of Christ's work in any person, would despise — is offered for and to your Lordship, on behalf of one who is less than the least of all God's saints, and unworthy of the name he nonetheless boldly signs below.

Your Honor's most obliged servant in the service of Jesus Christ, John Owen.

CHAPTER 1



By the end of the death of Christ, we mean in general both first what His Father and He Himself intended by it, and second what was effectively accomplished through it. Regarding both, we can take a brief look at the expressions the Holy Spirit uses in Scripture.

For the first: do you want to know the purpose and intention with which Christ came into the world? Ask Christ Himself — He knew His own mind, as well as all the secrets of His Father's heart — and He will tell us that the Son of Man came to save what was lost (Matthew 18:11), to seek and save poor, lost sinners. That was His intent and design, as is again stated in Luke 19:10. Ask His apostles, who know His mind, and they will tell you the same. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 1:15: "This is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." If you then ask who these sinners are — toward whom He has this gracious intent — He tells you in Matthew 20:28 that He came to give His life as a ransom for many. In other passages these are called "us" and "believers," distinguished from the world. For He gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father (Galatians 1:4). It was God's will and intention that Christ should

give Himself for us so that we might be saved, set apart from the world. They are His Church (Ephesians 5:25-27). He loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present her to Himself as a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and blameless. These final words also express the very aim of Christ in giving Himself for anyone — that they might be made fit for God and drawn near to Him. The same point is made in Titus 2:14: He gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed and to purify for Himself a people who are His own, eager for good works. The intention and design of Christ and His Father in this great work are therefore clear and plain — what it was, and for whom: to save us, to deliver us from the evil world, to cleanse and purify us, to make us holy, zealous, and fruitful in good works, to make us acceptable to God, and to bring us to Him — for through Christ we have access into this grace in which we stand (Romans 5:2).

The actual effects and outcomes of Christ's death, bloodshedding, and sacrifice are no less clearly shown. They are fully and often even more distinctly expressed in Scripture. First, reconciliation with God, through removing and destroying the enmity between Him and us: when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son (Romans 5:10). God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their sins against them (2 Corinthians 5:19) — yes, He has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ (verse 18). If you ask how this reconciliation was accomplished, the apostle explains that Christ abolished in His flesh the enmity, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one

new man, establishing peace. And He did this to reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, putting the enmity to death by it (Ephesians 2:15-16), so that He Himself is our peace (verse 14). Second, justification — by removing the guilt of sin, securing forgiveness and pardon, redeeming us from sin's power along with the curse and wrath we deserved. Through His own blood He entered the holy place and obtained eternal redemption for us (Hebrews 9:12). He redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us (Galatians 3:13). He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross (1 Peter 2:24). All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, but are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus — whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation through faith in His blood, to demonstrate His righteousness in the forgiveness of sins (Romans 3:23-25). In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14). Third, sanctification — by washing away the uncleanness and pollution of our sins, renewing in us the image of God, and supplying us with the graces of the Spirit of holiness. The blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanses our conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14). Indeed, the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). He purified us from our sins by Himself (Hebrews 1:3). He suffered outside the gate to sanctify the people through His own blood (Hebrews 13:12). He gave Himself up for His Church to sanctify and cleanse her, so that she would be holy and blameless (Ephesians 5:25-26). Among the particular graces of the Spirit, it has been granted to us for Christ's sake to believe in Him (Philippians 1:29), and God has blessed us in Christ with every

spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3). Fourth, adoption — along with the freedom of the Gospel and all the glorious privileges belonging to the sons of God. God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons (Galatians 4:4-5). Fifth, the effects of Christ's death do not stop here — they carry us all the way into heaven, into glory and immortality forever. Our inheritance is a purchased possession (Ephesians 1:14). For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15). To sum up: the death and bloodshedding of Jesus Christ has accomplished and effectively secures for all those it concerns eternal redemption — consisting in grace in this life and glory in the life to come.

The scriptural statements about the purpose and effects of Christ's death are so full, clear, and plain that one would think anyone could read and grasp them immediately. But we must pause here. Of all things in the Christian faith, few are more contested than this seemingly foundational principle. A widespread belief holds that Christ paid a general ransom for all — that He died to redeem every single person, not only the many, His Church, the elect of God, but every descendant of Adam without exception. The teachers of this view clearly see that if the purpose of Christ's death is what Scripture has stated — if the immediate fruits and products of that death are what we have described — then one of two conclusions must follow. Either God and Christ failed to achieve their intended goal, and Christ's death was not an

adequate means for reaching that end (for no other cause of failure can be assigned) — which seems to us a blasphemous insult to God's wisdom, power, and perfection, as well as a belittling of the worth and value of Christ's death. Or else all people — every descendant of Adam — must be saved, purified, sanctified, and glorified, which they surely will not maintain, and which Scripture and the terrible experience of countless souls does not permit. To give their view any plausible defense, they must — and do — deny that God or His Son had any such absolute aim or purpose in the death and bloodshedding of Jesus Christ. They deny that anything of the kind we described was immediately secured and purchased by it. Instead, they say God intended nothing, and Christ accomplished nothing, that brings any immediate benefit to anyone through His death — nothing that is not equally common to every soul, however unbelieving in this life or eternally condemned in the next — until some act on the part of certain individuals, an act not secured for them by Christ (for if it were, why do they not all have it equally?), namely faith, distinguishes them from others. This position seems to me to strip away the virtue, value, fruits, and effects of Christ's satisfaction and death. It also serves as a foundation for a dangerous, troubling, and erroneous conviction. With the Lord's help, I will therefore set out what Scripture teaches on both points — both the assertion to be proved and the evidence brought in support of it — praying that the Lord by His Spirit would lead us into all truth, grant us understanding in all things, and, if anyone thinks differently, reveal that truth to him as well.

CHAPTER 2



The end of any action is what the agent intends to accomplish through the activity proper to its nature — what someone aims at and designs to achieve as something good and desirable given their circumstances. So the end Noah set for himself in building the ark was the preservation of himself and others, according to God's will. He built the ark to save himself and his family from the flood, doing exactly as God commanded him (Genesis 6:22). What the agent does, or the effort he applies toward reaching his intended goal, is called the means. These two together — end and means — make up the complete logic of action for free, rational agents (I am speaking only of those who act by choice). For example, Absalom intended to revolt against his father and seize the crown and kingdom for himself. He prepared horses and chariots and fifty men to run before him (2 Samuel 15:1). Then through flattery and fawning he stole the hearts of the men of Israel (verse 6), then pretended to offer a sacrifice at Hebron, where he organized a powerful conspiracy (verse 12). All of these were the means he used to reach his predetermined goal.

Between the end and the means there is this relationship: though they operate differently, each is in some sense the cause of the other. The end is the first and primary driving cause of the

whole action. It is what the entire work exists for. No agent acts without a purpose — if an agent were not directed toward some definite goal, thing, or way of working, it would have no more reason to do one thing than another. The people of the ancient world, wanting to remain together and perhaps to protect themselves against another catastrophe, declared, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4). They first set down their aim and goal, then devised the means they believed would achieve it. This shows clearly that the whole logic and method of a wise and purposeful agent is drawn from the end he aims at. The end is the beginning in intention — it gives order to everything that follows in execution. The means are all those things used to reach the proposed end — such as food for the preservation of life, sailing a ship for crossing the sea, and laws for the peaceful ordering of human society. The means are the procuring cause of the end in one way or another. They exist for the sake of the end, and the end arises from them — following either as their moral desert or as their natural fruit and product. In the moral sense: when an action and its end must be evaluated in relation to a moral rule or law given to the agent, the means are the deserving or meritorious cause of the end. For instance, if Adam had remained in his innocence and done everything according to the law given to him, the end he would have obtained was a blessed life into eternity. As it stands now, the end of any sinful act is death — the curse of the law. In the natural sense: when the means are considered only in their physical relationship to the result, they are the instrumentally efficient cause of the end. When Joab intended

the death of Abner, he struck him in the stomach with a spear, and Abner died (2 Samuel 3:27). When Benaiah, by Solomon's command, struck down Shimei, the wounds he inflicted were the efficient cause of his death (1 Kings 2:46). In purely physical terms there is no difference between murdering an innocent man and executing a criminal. But when viewed under a moral framework, their ends follow from what they deserve — their conformity to or violation of the rule — and this is what distinguishes them.

The earlier consideration — due to the failure and corruption of some agents (for in a rightly ordered situation these would coincide) — reveals a twofold end in any given action: first, the end of the work itself, and second, the end of the worker. When the means assigned to reach a goal are not properly fitted to it according to the rule the agent is supposed to follow, it is inevitable that the agent aims at one thing while something else actually results in terms of the moral character of the action. So Adam was enticed into desiring to be like God. He made that his aim, and to accomplish it he ate the forbidden fruit — which instead brought upon him a guilt he had not intended. But when an agent acts rightly — when it aims at an end suited to its proper nature and condition, and uses means genuinely fitted to that end — the end of the work and the end of the worker are one and the same. Abel intended to worship the Lord, so he offered a sacrifice that was, through faith, acceptable to Him. Or consider a person who desires salvation through Christ and seeks to be united to Him. The sole reason for this difference is that secondary agents — such as human beings — have an end assigned to their actions by the One who gives them an external rule or law to work by. That end will always follow their actions, whether they intend it or not. Only God — whose will

and good pleasure is the sole rule of all His outward works — can never deviate in His actions, and can never have an end follow His acts that He did not precisely intend.

Furthermore, the end of every free agent is either what he actually produces or what motivates him to produce it. When a man builds a house to rent out, what he produces is the house; what motivated him to build it was the desire for income. A physician heals a patient but is motivated by his fee. Judas went to the chief priests, bargained with them, led the soldiers to the garden, and kissed Christ — the end he was aiming at was the betrayal of his Master. But the end for whose sake he set the whole plan in motion was the thirty pieces of silver: "What are you willing to give me, and I will deliver Him to you?" The end God accomplished through the death of Christ was the satisfaction of His justice. The end for whose sake He did it was either supreme — His own glory — or subordinate — our good along with His.

The means used to reach an end are of two kinds. First, there are means that have genuine worth in themselves apart from what they accomplish — though we do not regard them that way when using them as means. Strictly speaking, nothing viewed purely as a means is considered good in itself; it is good only insofar as it leads to a further end. It goes against the very nature of a means to be valued for its own sake. Study is in itself the noblest occupation of the mind, yet when we are using it as a means toward wisdom or knowledge, we value it only as far as it serves that end — otherwise it is "a wearisome effort" (Ecclesiastes 12:12). Second, there are means that have no value whatsoever in themselves. Their only goodness — and it is a relative goodness — comes entirely from the end they are suited to achieve. They are not in any way desirable in

themselves: amputating a leg or an arm to preserve life; taking a bitter medicine for the sake of health; throwing cargo and grain into the sea to prevent a shipwreck. The death of Christ is of this nature, as we will explain later.

With these general principles established, our next task is to apply them to the matter at hand. We will do so in order, by identifying the agent who works, the means employed, and the end achieved in the great work of our redemption. These three must be carefully and distinctly considered if we are to understand the whole rightly. We begin with the first.

CHAPTER 3



The agent in and chief author of the great work of our redemption is the entire blessed Trinity. All works that God performs outwardly are undivided, belonging equally to each person, though their distinct manner of existence and order is observed. There were, of course, various human instruments involved in the suffering and sacrifice of Christ. But the work cannot be attributed to them in any meaningful sense. As far as God the Father was concerned, the outcome of what those instruments did was completely contrary to their own intentions. In the end, they did nothing but what the hand and counsel of God had already determined should happen (Acts 4:28). As for Christ Himself, those instruments were never capable of accomplishing what they intended, since He laid down His life of His own accord and no one had the power to take it from Him (John 10:17-18). Therefore, they must be excluded from this consideration. In the several persons of the holy Trinity — the joint author of the whole work — Scripture describes distinct acts or operations that are specifically assigned to each. We must consider these individually and in sequence, according to our limited manner of understanding. We begin with what Scripture attributes to the Father.

In the work of our redemption through the blood of Jesus, two distinct acts can properly be attributed to the person of the Father. First, the sending of His Son into the world for this purpose. Second, the laying of the punishment due to our sin upon Him. The Father loved the world and sent His Son to die. He sent His Son into the world so that the world might be saved through Him (John 3:16-17). He sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us (Romans 8:3). He presented Christ as a propitiation through faith in His blood (Romans 3:25). When the fullness of time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons (Galatians 4:4-5). More than twenty times in the Gospel of John there is mention of this sending. Our Savior describes Himself as the one whom the Father has sent (John 6:39), and He describes the Father as the one who sent Him (John 8:16). This act of sending belongs to the Father, in keeping with His promise to send a great savior to deliver us (Isaiah 19:20) and in keeping with the testimony of our Savior Himself. "I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time it came to be, I was there. And now the Lord God has sent me, and His Spirit" (Isaiah 48:16). Because of this sending, the Father is sometimes called our Savior — as in 1 Timothy 1:1: "according to the commandment of God our Savior." This is essentially the same as the parallel passage in Titus 1:3: "according to the commandment of God our Savior." The same title appears in other places as well, such as Luke 1:47: "my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." Also in 1 Timothy 4:10: "we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially

of believers." In that last passage, however, the title refers not to His redeeming us through Christ but to His saving and preserving all things through His providence (Titus 2:11; 3:4; Deuteronomy 32:15; 1 Samuel 10:19; Psalm 24:5; 25:5; Isaiah 12:2; 11:10; 45:15; Jeremiah 16:8; Micah 7:7; Hebrews 3:17). Most of these passages relate to His sending of Christ. This act of sending can be distinguished into three separate acts, which we will now lay out in order.

The first is an authoritative appointment to the office of Mediator — an appointment Christ accepted voluntarily and willingly took upon Himself. In this arrangement, the Father held and exercised a kind of superiority in the ordering of the work, to which the Son — though in the form of God — humbled Himself (Philippians 2:6-7). This act has two parts.

The first part is the purposeful appointment in God's eternal counsel — His eternal plan to set apart His Son, in His incarnation, to this office. He said to Him, "You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession" (Psalm 2:7-8). He said to Him, "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet" — for the Lord has sworn and will not change His mind: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:1, 4). He appointed Him heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2), ordained Him to be Judge of the living and the dead (Acts 10:42) — for He was foreknown for this before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:20), and declared to be the Son of God with power (Romans 1:4), that He might be the firstborn among many brothers (Romans 8:29). I recognize that this is an act eternally fixed in the mind and will of God, and so it

does not belong in the same category as the others, which are all temporal and had their beginning in the fullness of time. This eternal purpose is the fountain and source of all the rest, as James states in Acts 15:18: "Known to God are all His works from the beginning of the world." However, since it is common usage for the purpose of a thing to be included in descriptions of its fulfillment, and since we are aiming at truth rather than strict precision, we set it down here in this way.

The second part is the actual inauguration — the solemn installation of Christ into His office. This involved committing all judgment to the Son (John 5:22), making Him both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36), and appointing Him over the whole household of God (Hebrews 3:1-3). This is the anointing of the Most Holy spoken of in Daniel 9:24. God anointed Him with the oil of joy above His companions (Psalm 45:7). This formal setting apart of Christ for His office is described as an anointing because all the sacred objects that foreshadowed Him — the ark, the altar, and others — were set apart and consecrated by anointing (Exodus 30:25-27). Connected to this inauguration is the public declaration made by a multitude of angels from heaven at His birth. One of them announced to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). This message was followed by the triumphant praise of the heavenly host: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased" (verse 14). This was confirmed by the voice from the Majestic Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Matthew 3:17; 17:5; 2 Peter 1:17). If these events are to be ar-

ranged in their proper order, they may be seen in three distinct acts. First, the glorious announcement of His birth. The Father prepared a body for Him (Hebrews 10:5), and when He brought His firstborn into the world, He said, "Let all the angels of God worship Him" (Hebrews 1:6), sending them to proclaim the message we just described. Second, the visible descent of the Spirit in the form of a dove at His baptism (Matthew 3:16), when He was filled with the Spirit in fullness for the accomplishment of His work and the discharge of the office He was appointed to — accompanied by the voice from heaven that declared His Son the one He loved. Third, the crowning of Him with glory and honor in His resurrection, ascension, and being seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:3). The Father set Him as King on His holy hill of Zion (Psalm 2:7-8). All authority in heaven and on earth was given to Him (Matthew 28:18), all things were placed under His feet (Hebrews 2:7-8), He was highly exalted and given a name above every name (Philippians 2:9). The Father appointed witnesses of every kind: angels from heaven (Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10), the dead rising from their tombs (Matthew 27:52), the apostles testifying to the living (Acts 2:32), and the more than five hundred brothers to whom He appeared at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6). So He was gloriously inaugurated into His office in its various stages and degrees, with God saying to Him, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6).

Between these two acts, I acknowledge that there are two promises from God. The first is a promise of a Savior for His people — a Mediator in keeping with His prior purpose — as in Genesis 3:15: "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," and "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples" (Genesis 49:10). God also foreshadowed this through many sacrifices and other types, along with prophetic predictions. As Peter writes, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to come searched and inquired carefully, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when He testified in advance to the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but those who would afterward receive these things — the very things now proclaimed through those who preached the Gospel by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which the angels long to look (1 Peter 1:10-12). The second is a promise of applying the benefits purchased by this appointed Savior to those who would believe in Him — benefits to be given in the fullness of time according to the earlier promises. God told Abraham that in his offspring all the nations of the earth would be blessed, and Abraham himself was justified by the same faith (Genesis 15:6). But these matters belong more properly to the application of redemption, which was administered equally both before and after the actual coming of Christ.

The second act of the Father's sending of the Son is the equipping of Him for His mission — supplying Him with the fullness of all gifts and graces needed for the office He was to hold, the work He was to accomplish, and the charge He bore over the household

of God. In Christ there was a twofold fullness and perfection of all spiritual excellence. The first was the natural and all-sufficient perfection of His deity, as one with His Father by virtue of His divine nature. His glory was the glory of the only begotten of the Father (John 1:14). He was in the form of God and did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped (Philippians 2:6). He was the companion of the Lord of Hosts (Zechariah 13:7) — as shown in that glorious vision of Isaiah 6:3, where the seraphim cried to one another, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory." The doorposts shook at the sound of the one calling out, the house was filled with smoke, and the prophet cried, "My eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (verse 4). The apostle says that Isaiah saw Christ's glory and spoke of Him in that vision (John 12:41). Christ, as it were, set that glory aside for a time when He took the form of a servant and humbled Himself to death (Philippians 2:7-8), laying aside the outward splendor that accompanied His deity, appearing to have no stately form or majesty that people would be drawn to Him (Isaiah 53:2). But this fullness is not our subject here, since it was not communicated to Him but belongs essentially to His person — eternally begotten from the person of His Father.

The second fullness present in Christ was a communicated fullness — bestowed on Him by the Father's provision to equip Him for His work and office. This is His fullness as mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5) — not in His role as Lord of Hosts, but as Immanuel, God with us, the Son given to us who was called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace, upon whose shoulders the government was to rest (Isaiah 9:6). This is a fullness of grace — not the essen-

tial, infinite grace that belongs to the nature of the Godhead, but the grace that was habitually instilled into His humanity as it was personally united to His divine nature. Though not absolutely infinite like the other, it extends to every perfection of grace both in kind and degree. There is no grace that is not found in Christ, and every grace is present in Him to the highest degree. Whatever the fullness of grace requires — in all its varieties and levels — is in Him habitually, given by His Father for this very purpose and for the accomplishment of the appointed work. Though this fullness cannot strictly be called infinite, it is boundless and inexhaustible. It is in Him as light in the rays of the sun, or as water in a living spring that never runs dry. He is the lampstand from which the golden pipes pour forth golden oil (Zechariah 4:12) into all who are His. For He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, and in all things He has the preeminence — because it pleased the Father for all fullness to dwell in Him (Colossians 1:18-19). In Him the Father caused all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge to be hidden (Colossians 2:3), and in Him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in bodily, personal form (verse 9) — so that from His fullness we have all received grace upon grace (John 1:16), in a continual supply. So when He set out on the work of redemption, He declared first of all, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn" (Isaiah 61:1-2). This was the anointing with the oil of joy that He had above His companions (Psalm 45). It was poured on His head and ran down His beard and to the edges of His garments

(Psalm 133:2), so that everyone covered with the robe of His righteousness might share in it. The Spirit of the Lord rested on Him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2) — not in partial measures and beginnings as in us, proportioned to our degree of sanctification, but in fullness. He did not receive the Spirit by measure (John 3:34). That is, when He reached the full stature of maturity, it was not with Him as it is with us (Ephesians 4:13). Rather, the Spirit was manifested and given to Him progressively during His earthly life: He increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men (Luke 2:52). To this was added all authority in heaven and on earth, which was given to Him (Matthew 28:18), and authority over all flesh to give eternal life to as many as the Father had given Him (John 17:2). This could be developed into many more specifics, but this is enough to describe the second act of God in the sending of His Son.

The third act of this sending is the Father's entering into a covenant and agreement with His Son concerning the work to be undertaken and its outcome. This covenant has two parts. The first is the Father's promise to protect and assist Christ in the complete and perfect fulfillment of the entire mission he was taking on. The Father committed Himself that, upon His Son's undertaking this great work of redemption, He would not withhold any assistance — help in trials, strength against opposition, encouragement against temptation, and strong comfort in the midst of terror — that might in any way be necessary to carry Christ through every difficulty to the completion of so great a work. And it was upon this commitment that Christ took up this heavy burden, so full of suffering and

anguish. For before receiving this pledge, the Father required nothing less of Him than this: that He become a Savior, sharing in the afflictions of His people (Isaiah 63:8-9); that although He was the companion of the Lord of Hosts, He would endure the sword drawn against Him as the shepherd of the sheep (Zechariah 13:7); that He would tread the winepress alone until His garments were red (Isaiah 61:2-3); that He would be stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted, wounded for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities — crushed and caused grief, making His soul an offering for sin and bearing the iniquity of many (Isaiah 53); that He would be so utterly deprived of comfort as to cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Psalm 22:1). No wonder, then, that upon Christ's undertaking, the Lord promised to make His mouth sharp as a sword, to hide Him in the shadow of His hand, to make Him a polished arrow hidden in His quiver, and to make Him His servant in whom He would be glorified (Isaiah 49:2-3). Though the kings of the earth would rise up and rulers would conspire against Him, the Lord would laugh them to scorn and establish Him as King on His holy hill of Zion (Psalm 2:2, 4-5). Though the builders would reject Him, He would become the cornerstone — to the amazement and astonishment of all the world (Psalm 118:22-23; Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 12:17; John 4:11; 2 Peter 2:4). The Lord would lay Him as a foundation stone — a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation (Isaiah 28:16) — so that whoever fell on Him would be broken, and on whomever He fell, He would crush them to dust. From this pledge arose the confidence of our Savior in His greatest and most severe trials. He was assured, by the Father's commitment in this covenant, that in God's arrangement for the redemption of mankind the Father would never leave

Him nor forsake Him. "I gave My back to those who strike Me," He said, "and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting" (Isaiah 50:6). But with what confidence, blessed Savior, did You endure all this shame and sorrow? "The Lord God helps Me, therefore I am not disgraced; therefore I have set My face like flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed. He who vindicates Me is near; who will contend with Me? Let us stand up to each other; who has a case against Me? Let him draw near to Me. Behold, the Lord God helps Me; who is he who condemns Me? Behold, they will all wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them" (verses 7-9). With this assurance He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, He did not open His mouth (Isaiah 53:7). When they hurled insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats, but entrusted Himself to the One who judges righteously (1 Peter 2:23). The ground of our Savior's confidence and assurance in this great undertaking — and a powerful motivation for exercising the graces He had received in the midst of the most extreme suffering — was this commitment of His Father through this covenant of assistance and protection.

The second part of this covenant concerns the outcome — the promised reward for all His suffering, and the successful accomplishment of the goal He undertook. This is the most important element to examine, since it bears directly on the matter before us. It would not have been as clear without the prior considerations. For whatever God promised His Son would be fulfilled and attained, that was certainly what the Son aimed at in the whole undertaking — it was the designed end of the work committed to Him, the only

thing He could rightfully claim upon completing His Father's will. What this was, and the promises that lay it out at length, can be seen in Isaiah 49: "You are My servant, Israel, in whom I will show My glory. I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth. Kings will see and arise, princes will also bow down, because of the Lord who is faithful." And the Lord will certainly make good on this commitment: "I will preserve You and give You for a covenant of the people, to restore the land and to apportion the desolate inheritances; saying to those who are bound, 'Go forth,' to those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves.' Along the roads they will feed, and their pasture will be on all bare heights. They will not hunger or thirst, nor will the scorching heat or sun strike them down; for He who has compassion on them will lead them and will guide them to springs of water. I will make all My mountains a road, and My highways will be raised up. Behold, these will come from afar; and behold, these will come from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Sinim" (Isaiah 49:6-12). Through all of this, the Lord clearly commits Himself to His Son: that He would gather to Himself a glorious Church of believers from among Jews and Gentiles throughout the whole world, who would be brought to Him, faithfully fed, and refreshed by the springs of living water that flow from God in Christ for their eternal salvation. This, then, is what our Savior certainly aimed at in undertaking the work: the gathering together of the sons of God, their being brought to God, and their passing into eternal salvation. When this is carefully considered, it completely undermines the idea of a general ransom or universal redemption, as will become clear later. In the 53rd chapter of the same prophecy, the Lord speaks even more explicitly and

precisely in His promises to His Son, assuring Him that when He made His soul an offering for sin He would see His offspring and prolong His days, and the will of the Lord would prosper in His hand. He would see the result of His anguish and be satisfied. By His knowledge He would justify many, and He would divide a portion with the great and share in the spoil with the strong (verses 10-12). You see — He was to see His offspring by covenant, and to raise up a spiritual people for God, a faithful people to be sustained and preserved through all generations. I cannot see how this is consistent with the view of those who have flatly stated that the death of Christ could have its full and complete effect and yet none be saved. Nevertheless, some have boldly affirmed exactly this, and all who hold to universal redemption tacitly concede the same when they get around to identifying the proper ends and effects of Christ's death. The will of the Lord was also to prosper in His hand. What that will was, He declares in Hebrews 2:10: the bringing of many sons to glory. For God sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him (1 John 4:9), as we will explain more fully later. But the promises God made to His Son in their agreement — and therefore the Son's own aim and intention — can be seen nowhere more clearly than in the request our Savior makes after completing the work for which He was sent. That request was certainly neither more nor less than what God had pledged to Him. "I have glorified You on the earth," He said, "I have finished the work which You have given Me to do" (John 17:4). And after declaring that eternal glory from which He had for a time emptied Himself (verse 4), what does He now request? He asks for a full outpouring of God's love and the fruits of that love upon all His elect — in faith, sanctification, and glory. The Father

had given them to Him, and He had consecrated Himself as a sacrifice for their sake, praying for their sanctification (verses 17-18), their unity and peace with one another, and their union with God (verses 20-21). "I do not ask on behalf of these alone," — that is, His apostles — "but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us." And lastly, for their glory (verse 24): "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me." All of these specific requests are no doubt grounded in the promises the Father had made to Him. And in all of this, there is not one word about all people without exception — in fact, the prayer explicitly states the contrary (John 17:9). Let this then be carefully noted: the Father's promise to His Son and the Son's request to His Father are both directed toward this particular goal — bringing sons to God. This is the first act of the Father, consisting of these three specifics.

The second act of the Father is the laying of the punishment for sin upon His Son — an act attributed throughout Scripture to the Father. "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man, My Associate," declares the Lord of Hosts. "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered" (Zechariah 13:7). What is stated here as a command — "Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered" — is carried out in Matthew 26:31. He was stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all, and it pleased the Lord to crush Him, putting Him to grief (Isaiah 53:4, 6, 10). God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). In that verse,

the predicate stands in for what is meant, as the contrast between His being made sin and our being made righteousness makes clear. He who knew no sin — that is, who deserved no punishment — God made to be sin, meaning He laid on Him the punishment due to sin. Or perhaps "sin" in that passage refers to a sin offering, an offering for the expiation of sin, corresponding to the Hebrew word that means both sin and the sacrifice offered for it. This was the Lord's doing. As for Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel — when they gathered together they did nothing but what the hand and counsel of God had already determined should happen (Acts 4:27-28). The profound anguish our Savior experienced came from His direct conflict with the Father's wrath — a burden the Father Himself immediately placed on Him, with no outward instrument or person visibly inflicting any suffering or pain. He began to be grieved and deeply distressed even to the point of death (Matthew 26:37-38) — this was while He was in the garden with His three chosen apostles, before the traitor or any of his companions had appeared. He was deeply distressed and troubled (Mark 14:34). This was the time when, in the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death (Hebrews 5:7). Luke describes how He bore it: an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. Yet in His agony He prayed even more earnestly, and His sweat became like drops of blood falling down to the ground (Luke 22:43-44). It was surely an intense and concentrated trial, coming directly from His Father. Consider how calmly and willingly He bore all the cruelty of men and violence against His body — without resistance or inward disturbance — until this conflict was renewed and He cried out, "My

God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" This is worth noting carefully, so that we may understand who our Savior chiefly had to deal with and what He actually endured for sinners — which will also shed light on the central question of who those sinners are for whom He undertook all this. His sufferings were far from consisting merely in bodily persecution and the effects such things have on the soul. What He underwent for us was nothing more and nothing less than the curse of the law of God. He freed us from the curse by becoming a curse for us (Galatians 3:13) — a curse that contained all the punishment due to sin, whether measured by the severity of God's justice or by the demand of the law that required obedience. It is true that the condemnation of the law meant only temporal death when the law is considered as the instrument of the Jewish civil order serving that economy. But to say that is all the law demands — considered as the universal rule of obedience and the bond of the covenant between God and man — is a foolish mistake. In dying for us, Christ did not merely aim at our benefit — He actually died in our place. The punishment due to our sin, and the chastisement that secured our peace, was placed upon Him. Those were the pains of hell in their very nature and weight and pressure — though not in their duration, since it was impossible for Him to be held by death. Who can deny this without doing injury to the justice of God, which will inevitably inflict those pains on sinners forever? It is true that God permitted a substitution with respect to the person suffering — admitting a commutation, as in the old law where the life of the animal was accepted (in the ceremonial dimension of the ordinances) in place of the human life. This is fully revealed and we believe it. But as for any change in the nature of the punishment itself — where is the slightest indi-

cation of any such alteration? We close this second act of God — the laying of punishment on Christ for us — with the words of the prophet: "All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him" (Isaiah 53:6). To this we add one observation: it seems strange to me that Christ should undergo the pains of hell for the sake of those who were already lying in those pains before He underwent them, and who will continue in them forever — for their worm does not die and their fire is not quenched. To this I add a dilemma for those who hold to universal atonement. God imposed His wrath due to sin, and Christ underwent the pains of hell, for either: all sins of all people; or all sins of some people; or some sins of all people. If the last — some sins of all people — then all people still have some sins to answer for, and therefore no one will be saved. If God enters into judgment with us for even one sin, no one will be justified in His sight: "If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?" (Psalm 130:3). We might as well all throw everything we own to the moles and the bats and flee into the clefts of the rocks and the crevices of the cliffs out of terror before the Lord and the splendor of His majesty (Isaiah 2:20-21). If the second — that is what we affirm: that Christ, in the place and stead of His people, suffered for all the sins of all the elect in the world. If the first — why then are not all people freed from the punishment of all their sins? You will say: because of their unbelief; they refuse to believe. But is this unbelief a sin or not? If it is not a sin, why should they be punished for it? If it is a sin, then either Christ bore the punishment due to it or He did not. If He did, then why should unbelief prevent them from receiving the benefits

of His death any more than the other sins He died for? If He did not, then He did not die for all their sins. Let them choose which option they prefer.

CHAPTER 4



The Son was also an agent in this great work, participating through His voluntary acceptance and willing assumption of the office assigned to Him. When God indicated that He took no pleasure in sacrifices, offerings, and burnt offerings for sin, Christ said, "Behold, I have come — in the scroll of the book it is written of Me — to do Your will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7-8). With all other ways rejected or insufficient, Christ took on the task — He in whom alone the Father was well pleased (Matthew 3:17). He openly declared that He came not to do His own will, but the will of the One who sent Him (John 6:38), and that it was His food and drink to do His Father's will and to complete His work (John 4:34). The first words we find recorded of Him in Scripture express the same: "Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?" (Luke 2:49). At the close of His earthly life He said, "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do" (John 17:4). Throughout His ministry He consistently referred to what He did as His Father's work or His Father's will that He came to fulfill — always in reference to the office the Father had appointed Him to. The Son's undertaking can be organized under three headings. The first serves as a common foundation for the other two — it functions as the means toward

them as the end, yet in some sense stands as a distinct act with its own value in relation to the main goal of all three. We treat it separately.

The first is His incarnation. His taking on flesh and dwelling among us (John 1:14), His being born of a woman (Galatians 4:4), is commonly called the incarnation. This was the mystery of godliness: that God was manifest in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16). In doing so He assumed not an individual human person but our human nature itself into personal union with Himself. Since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself also took on the same, so that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death — that is, the devil (Hebrews 2:14). It was the children He had in view — the children the Father gave Him (verse 13). Their sharing in flesh and blood was what moved Him to share in the same. It was not because all the world and all the descendants of Adam were in that condition, but because those children were — and for their sake He consecrated Himself. This emptying of Himself, this humbling, this dwelling among us, was the sole act of the second Person of the Trinity, or rather of the divine nature in the second Person. The Father and the Spirit had no part in it except by approval, agreement, and eternal counsel.

The second act of the Son is His oblation — His offering of Himself to God for us, without blemish, to cleanse our consciences from dead works (Hebrews 9:14). He loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood (Revelation 1:5). He loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her (Ephesians 5:25-26). He took from His Father's hands the cup of wrath that was owed to us and drank it completely — not for His own sake (Daniel 9:26) — for He consecrated Himself for our sake

(John 17:19), that is, to be an offering, a sacrifice for sin. While we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly (Romans 5:6). This is what all the institutions, ordinances, and sacrifices of the old covenant foreshadowed. When they were to come to an end, Christ said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." Although the completion of this offering is presented in Scripture primarily in terms of what Christ suffered rather than what He did — since it is considered mainly as the means these three blessed agents used to achieve a further end — it was His own voluntary self-giving that made it an oblation and sacrifice at all. Without His willing participation it would have had no value. If Christ's own will had not been in it, it could never have cleansed our sins. In that regard, I place it under the category of His actions. He was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29) — the Lamb God Himself had provided as a sacrifice. And how did this Lamb conduct Himself in it? With reluctance and resistance? No. He did not open His mouth. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, He did not open His mouth (Isaiah 53:7). He said Himself, "I lay down My life; no one takes it from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again" (John 10:17-18). God the Father could have had Him crucified, but His death could not have been an offering had His own will not concurred. "He loved me," said the apostle, "and gave Himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20). Only what is given freely and willingly deserves to be called a gift — and Christ's was exactly that, when He loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma (Ephesians 5:2). He did it gladly: "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God" (Hebrews

10:9). And so He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross (1 Peter 2:24). Now I would not confine this oblation of Christ to any single act, action, suffering, performance, or event. Rather, it encompasses the whole work and ministry of God manifest in the flesh — His entire earthly life and all He accomplished during the days of His flesh, including the prayers and supplications He offered with loud crying and tears, until He had by Himself fully purged our sins and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:3), waiting for His enemies to be made His footstool. His entire ministry and coming — until He had given His life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). But His entering the most holy place, sprinkled with His own blood, and appearing there before God on our behalf — which some count as a continuation of His oblation — we may refer to the third act: His intercession. For everyone for whom He gave Himself as an offering, He did not then refuse to intercede. He did not do the greater thing and leave out the lesser. The price of our redemption is too precious in the sight of God and His Son to be, as it were, cast away on perishing souls with no concern for what becomes of them afterward. Indeed, this too is laid upon Christ, with a promise attached. "Ask of Me," said the Lord, "and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession" (Psalm 2:8). Accordingly, Christ told His disciples He had more work to do for them in heaven: "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3). Just as the high priest entered the second room of the tabernacle alone once a year, carrying blood he offered for himself and the mistakes of the people (Hebrews 9:7), so Christ came as a high priest of the good things to come and through His own blood entered the holy place

once for all, having secured eternal redemption for us (Hebrews 9:11-12). What is this holy place He entered, sprinkled with the blood of the covenant, and for what purpose did He enter? He did not enter a holy place made with human hands, which was only a copy of the true. He entered heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us (verse 24). And what does He appear there for? He is our advocate, pleading our cause before God, applying to all those for whom He was an offering the good things His oblation secured. As the apostle says: "If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). Why? How does that follow? He is the propitiation for our sins (verse 2). His being the propitiatory sacrifice for our sins is the foundation and ground of His interceding. Therefore, both His intercession and His propitiation belong to the same persons. We know, furthermore, that Christ refused to pray for the world as opposed to His elect. "I ask on their behalf," He said, "I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me out of the world" (John 17:9). There was therefore no foundation for interceding for those outside the elect, because He was not a propitiation for them. We also know the Father always hears the Son: "I know that You always hear Me" (John 11:42) — that is, God grants His requests, in keeping with the earlier promise of Psalm 2:8. If then Christ were to intercede for all people, all people would undoubtedly be saved. "He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25). This is the basis of the apostle's confidence, grounded in Christ's intercession: "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was

raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us" (Romans 8:33-34). We cannot help but notice here that those for whom He died can be certain He intercedes for them, and that no one will bring a charge against them. This destroys the idea of a general ransom. Under that view, He died for millions who have no share in His intercession, whose sins will be charged against them, and who will perish under them. This is further clarified by the nature of this intercession. It is not a humble, pleading petition — which would be unbecoming of the glorious state of exaltation He now possesses at the right hand of the Majesty on high. It is an authoritative presentation of Himself before His Father's throne, sprinkled with His own blood, to secure for His people all the spiritual blessings procured by His oblation. He declares: "Father, I desire that those also whom You have given Me be with Me where I am" (John 17:24). So for everyone He suffered for, He appears in heaven on their behalf with His satisfaction and merit. We must also recall what the Father promised the Son upon His undertaking of this mission. There is no doubt that what Christ intercedes for, upon completing the whole work, is precisely what was promised — namely, that He would be the captain of salvation to all who believe in Him and would effectively bring many sons to glory. Therefore, having such a high priest over the house of God, we may draw near with full assurance of faith, for by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified (Hebrews 10:14). But more will need to be said on this later.

CHAPTER 5



We can briefly consider the actions of the third agent in the blessed Trinity — the Holy Spirit — who plainly contributes His own distinct operation to each of the major parts of this work. These can be organized under three headings.

First, the incarnation of the Son, along with the Spirit's full assistance throughout the course of Christ's life while He dwelt among us. His mother was found to have conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18). If you ask, with Mary, how this was possible, the angel answers both her and us — as far as we are permitted to understand such mysterious things (Luke 1:35): "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God." It was an overshadowing power of the Spirit — the word "overshadow" drawn from the image of a bird covering its eggs with its warmth so that the young may hatch. By the Spirit's power alone was this conception: He hovered over the child as He had hovered at the beginning of creation. As the child was conceived by the Spirit's power, so He was filled with the Spirit and grew stronger in it (Luke 1:80), until He received a fullness of it — not in any limited measure of gifts and graces — and was completely equipped and prepared for His great undertaking.

Second, the Spirit's role in Christ's oblation and passion — which are two aspects of the same event, one referring to what He suffered and the other to what He did through and under those sufferings. Hebrews 9:14 says He offered Himself without blemish to God through the eternal Spirit — whether this refers to His bloody sacrifice on the cross or His continual presentation of Himself before the Father, it is accomplished through the eternal Spirit. His willing self-offering through that Spirit was the eternal fire beneath this sacrifice, the fire that made it acceptable to God. Some argue that "eternal Spirit" here refers to Christ's own deity. I see little basis for that reading. Some Greek and Latin manuscripts read "eternal Spirit" rather than "Holy Spirit," which removes the ambiguity entirely. In any case, there is no reason why He could not offer Himself through the Holy Spirit just as He is declared to be the Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:4), and just as He was made alive by the Spirit (1 Peter 3:18). The Spirit's working was just as necessary to His oblation as to His resurrection — to His dying as to His being made alive.

Third, the Spirit's role in His resurrection. The apostle writes: "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Romans 8:11). In this way we have identified the blessed agents and undertakers of this work — their distinct actions and their orderly cooperation in the whole. Though these actions can be distinguished, they are not so divided that any one of them does not also belong to the whole divine nature in which each person fully shares. As they begin the work together, so they will jointly carry forward its

application to its final completion. We must give thanks to the Father who has qualified us — that is, by His Spirit — to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:12-14).

CHAPTER 6



Following the order of execution rather than intention, our next task is to identify the means used in this work. The means are nothing other than the various actions already described, but now considered from a different angle — as the means appointed to obtain a proposed end, which we will address afterward. Because the various actions of the Father and the Spirit were all directed toward Christ and completed in Him as God and man, only Christ and His actions are to be considered as the means in this work. The contributions of both other persons described earlier are presupposed as necessarily prior to or accompanying those means.

The means used and appointed by these agents for the proposed end is the entire ministry and work through which our Savior Jesus Christ is called a Mediator. This may be, and commonly is, divided into two parts. The first is His oblation, and the second is His intercession. By His oblation I do not mean only the specific act of offering Himself on the cross as the spotless Lamb of God — bearing our sins and carrying them up in His own body on the tree, which was the summit and completion of His oblation and its most essential element. I also mean His entire humiliation and self-emptying: His voluntary submission to the law, being

made under it so that He might be the fulfillment of the law for all who believe (Romans 10:4); and His subjection to the curse of the law through the preceding suffering and misery of His life, as well as His submission to death — the death of the cross. No act of His as Mediator should be excluded from contributing to the complete means in this work. Likewise, by His intercession I do not mean only His heavenly appearance in the most holy place to apply to us all the good things purchased by His oblation. I also include every act of His exaltation that serves that purpose, from His resurrection through His sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, with angels, principalities, and powers made subject to Him. Of all of these, His resurrection is especially significant — it is as it were the foundation for everything that follows. For if He had not risen, our faith is meaningless (1 Corinthians 15:13-14), we are still in our sins (verse 17), and we are of all people most to be pitied (verse 19). Much of the effect of redemption is regularly attributed to His resurrection, since He died for our sins and was raised for our justification (Romans 4:25). In such passages, His resurrection stands for the entire following ministry and His perpetual intercession for us in heaven, for God raised up His Servant Jesus to bless us by turning each of us from our wicked ways (Acts 3:26).

This entire ministry — with particular attention to the death and bloodshedding of Christ — is the means we are speaking of, consistent with what we said earlier about the nature of means in general. It is not something desirable in itself for its own sake. Christ's death — considered in terms of His suffering, distinct from His obedience — had nothing good about it except insofar as it contributed to a further end: the manifestation of God's glorious grace. What good was there in Herod and Pontius Pilate, together

with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, conspiring with such horrific cruelty against God's holy servant whom He had anointed (Acts 4:27)? What good was there in the Son of God being made sin and a curse, being crushed and afflicted and bearing such wrath that the whole fabric of nature, as it were, trembled at the sight? What beauty or value is there in all this, such that anyone would desire it for its own sake? None whatsoever. It must therefore be seen as a means leading to an end — and the glory of that end must entirely dispel the darkness and confusion that surrounded the thing itself. And so it was intended by the blessed agents who determined it. He was handed over and killed by the deliberate plan and foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:23). What was done to Him was exactly what God's hand and counsel had determined (Acts 4:28). What that was must be declared afterward. For now, several observations about the whole are worth making.

Although the oblation and intercession of Jesus Christ are distinct acts with distinct immediate effects and results often separately attributed to them — which I would address now but must take up elsewhere — they are not in any sense to be divided or separated as though one concerned persons or things that the other did not equally concern in its own way. Between them there is a threefold union.

First, both are equally aimed at obtaining and accomplishing the same complete and entire end: the effective bringing of many sons to glory for the praise of God's grace — of which more will be said later.

Second, whatever persons the oblation benefits by what it obtains, the same persons — all of them and no others — are those the intercession serves in applying what has been obtained. He

died for our sins and rose again for our justification (Romans 4:25). In brief: the persons in view for the one are no more numerous than the persons in view for the other. Christ intercedes for all those for whom He offered Himself, and only for those — according to His own words: "For their sake I consecrate Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth" (John 17:19).

Third, Christ's oblation is the foundation of His intercession, since everything bestowed through His intercession was secured by His oblation — because the sole reason Christ obtained anything through His death was so that it might be applied to those for whom it was obtained. In short, the oblation and intercession of Jesus Christ form one complete means for producing the same effect. The very purpose of the oblation is that all those things bestowed through Christ's intercession — without the application of which the oblation would certainly fail of its intended end — would indeed be applied. It cannot therefore be said that Christ's death and offering concerned any person in securing their good more than His intercession concerns that same person in bestowing it. Christ intercedes for everything purchased, and He prevails in all His intercession — for the Father always hears His Son. It is therefore evident that every person for whom Christ died must actually receive all the good things purchased by His death. Since this clearly undermines the opposing view, we must pause here briefly to confirm it. The main proof lies in what follows — our examination of the proper end intended and accomplished by the death of Christ — so the chief argument must wait until then. For now I will offer only those reasons that can stand on their own.

CHAPTER 7



Our first argument is drawn from the powerful way Scripture joins Christ's oblation and intercession together — almost always linking them, and thereby showing that what are considered their distinct fruits and effects are in fact utterly inseparable. "By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities" (Isaiah 53:11). The actual justification of sinners — the immediate fruit of His intercession — certainly follows His bearing of their iniquities. In the very next verse, the two are so closely joined by God that surely no one should presume to separate them: "He Himself bore the sin of many" — that is His oblation — "and interceded for the transgressors." The intercession is for those same many transgressors whose sin He bore. And one statement in that same chapter (verse 5) makes it clear that the full application of all good things for which He intercedes is the immediate effect of His suffering: "By His scourging we are healed." Our complete healing is the fruit and result of His stripes — the oblation brought to its completion. So also in Romans 4:25: He was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification. For whose transgressions He died, for their justification He rose. Therefore, if He died for all, all must also be justified — or God failed in His aim

and design in both the death and resurrection of His Son. Some have boldly claimed this, but for my part I cannot do anything but recoil from embracing such a blasphemous notion. Let us rather hold to the apostle's argument, which grounds the certainty of our eternal glory and freedom from all accusation on the death of Christ — because His intercession for us inseparably and necessarily follows it. "Who will bring a charge against God's elect?" — it appears that only those for whom Christ died are included here. "God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died" — will then none be condemned for whom Christ died? What becomes then of the general ransom? — "yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us" (Romans 8:33-34). Here the scope of the one is equal to the scope of the other. Every person involved in the one is equally involved in the other. The claim that He died for all but intercedes only for some will hardly fit this text — especially when you consider the foundation of it all in verse 32: the love of God that moved Him to hand Christ over to death for us all, from which the apostle infers that withholding any good thing from us would be almost unthinkable. How this can be reconciled with the view that God gave His Son for millions to whom He will give neither grace nor glory, I cannot see. We rest instead in the words of the same apostle: "While we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly," and "having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him" (Romans 5:6, 9). The same inseparable union between Christ's oblation and intercession — along with their fruits and effects — is suggested in many other passages as well.

To offer and to intercede, to sacrifice and to pray — both are acts of the same priestly office, and both are required of a priest. If he omits either, he cannot be a faithful priest for those he serves. If he fails either to offer for them or to intercede for the application of His oblation on their behalf, He falls short in the discharge of the office He undertook. We find both united in Jesus Christ in 1 John 2:1-2: "If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins." He must be both an advocate who intercedes and one who offers a propitiatory sacrifice, if He is to be the kind of merciful High Priest over God's household who encourages His children to approach God through Him. The apostle makes this especially clear in the letter to the Hebrews, describing the priesthood of Christ in action — offering Himself through the shedding of His blood, and interceding for us to the uttermost. On the basis of both, the apostle urges us to draw near with confidence to the throne of grace. Christ came as a high priest of the good things to come, and through His own blood — not the blood of goats and calves — He entered the holy place once for all, having secured eternal redemption for us (Hebrews 9:11-12). His bloody oblation gave Him entrance into the holy place not made with human hands, where He would complete the remaining part of His office. The apostle compares His entry into heaven for us with the entry of the high priest into the most holy place carrying the blood of bulls and goats (verses 12-13) — which was, beyond doubt, accompanied by prayer for those on whose behalf he had offered (verse 1). In the same way, Christ presents Himself before His Father so that His former oblation might have its full effect. This is why He is said to hold His priesthood permanently, because He lives for-

ever (Hebrews 7:24), and is therefore able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him. Therefore we have confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 10:19-22). It is clear, then, that both are acts of the same priestly office in Christ. If He performs either for anyone, He must necessarily perform the other for them as well. He will not carry out any act or duty of His priestly function for those for whom He is not a priest. For all those for whom He is priest, He must perform both — since He is faithful to the uttermost in discharging His function on behalf of the sinners for whom He intercedes. Oblation and intercession must therefore be equal in their scope and cannot in any way be separated. On this point — the matter being so clear from this argument, in my estimation — I must ask those who oppose us on the death of Christ: do they maintain that He intercedes for all, or not? If not, they make Him only half a priest. If they do maintain it, they are forced to defend either the error that all will be saved, or the blasphemy that Christ is not heard by His Father and cannot prevail in His intercession — when even the saints on earth are assured of being heard when they pray according to the will of God (Romans 8). And of our Savior it is expressly said that the Father always hears Him (John 11:42). If this was true when He was still on His way, in the days of His flesh, and had not yet finished the great work He was sent to accomplish — how much more is it true now, when having done God's will and finished God's work, He is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, asking for the fulfillment of the promises made to Him when He undertook this work, as described earlier.

The very nature of Christ's intercession also confirms what we assert, requiring an inseparable connection between it and His oblation. In its perfected form in heaven, His intercession is not a humble prostration with cries, tears, and pleading. It cannot even be conceived of as something spoken by way of entreaty. Rather it is purely a real presentation — a presentation of Himself, sprinkled with the blood of the covenant, before the throne of grace on our behalf. "Christ has not entered a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24). His intercession there consists in appearing for us before God in heaven — in presenting His sacred body, the body in which He suffered for us. As we noted earlier, the apostle in Hebrews 9 compares Christ's entry into heaven for us with the entry of the high priest into the most holy place, carrying the blood of bulls and goats (verses 12-13). Our Savior enters with His own blood, presenting Himself so that His former oblation might have its perpetual effect until all the many sons given to Him are brought to glory. His intercession consists precisely in this — it is, in essence, nothing but His oblation continued. He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). His intercession before His actual oblation in the fullness of time was nothing but a presentation of the commitment He had taken on, to be fulfilled in due time. Certainly, then, what follows His oblation is nothing but a presentation of what that commitment has now accomplished. His intercession is simply the continuation of His oblation — calling upon the Father, by the remembrance and declaration of what was done, for the things that were purchased by it. How then is it possible for the scope of one to be greater than the scope of the other? Can He be said to

have offered for those for whom He does not intercede, when His intercession is simply a presenting of His oblation on behalf of those for whom He suffered, and for the bestowing of those good things that were purchased by it?

Furthermore, if the oblation and death of Christ secured and obtained that every good thing would be bestowed — things that are actually conferred through His intercession — then both are aimed at the same goal and are both means directed toward the same end. To support this, we need to recall what was said earlier about the agreement between the Father and the Son upon Christ's voluntary undertaking of the work of redemption. At the time of that agreement, the Lord set before His Son as the end of His sufferings, and promised to Him as the reward of His labors, everything that He afterward intercedes for. I gave many particulars earlier and will not repeat them here, but refer the reader to Chapter 3 for the details. I will only ask: what is the foundation of our Savior's intercession? Whether we conceive of it as virtually or formally by way of entreaty — whether real or verbal — must it not rest on some promise made to Him? Is there any good thing bestowed that is not first promised? Is it not plain that Christ's intercession rests on such a promise as Psalm 2:8: "Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance"? And on what basis was this promise and commitment made to our Savior? Was it not because of His undergoing what the kings of the earth set themselves against, and what the rulers plotted together to do to Him (verse 2) — which the apostles interpret as Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the people of the Jews, pursuing Him to death and doing to Him whatever God's hand and counsel had already determined should happen (Acts 4:27-28)? Christ's intercession, there-

fore, is founded on promises made to Him. These promises are simply a commitment to bestow — and to actually bestow — on those for whom He suffered all the good things His death and oblation merited and purchased. It follows necessarily that He intercedes for all for whom He died, that His death secured everything that is bestowed through His intercession, and that until those things are bestowed, His death has not yet produced its full fruits and effects. As for the claim that the death of Christ obtains something that is never actually granted — we will see in due course whether this does not contradict both Scripture and common sense.

Moreover, what Christ has joined together, no one should presume to separate. They may be distinguished, but they must not be divided. These two things — the oblation and intercession of Christ — are joined together by Christ Himself, yes, united (John 17). There, and at that moment, He both offered and interceded. His offering of Himself in that prayer was as complete, in terms of His own will and intention (verse 19), as it was on the cross. And His intercession there was as complete as it is now in heaven. Who then can divide these or put them apart? Especially since Scripture declares that without the other, each one alone would have been of no profit (1 Corinthians 15:17). Complete forgiveness and redemption could not be obtained for us without our high priest entering the most holy place (Hebrews 9:12).

Finally, dividing the death and intercession of Christ in terms of their objects cuts off all the comfort any soul might hope to gain from the assurance that Christ died for them. That the doctrine of the general ransom is an uncomfortable doctrine — draining away all the strength of the strong comfort God is so abundantly willing

for us to receive — will be demonstrated later. For now I will only show how it affects our comfort in this particular. The main foundation of all the confidence and assurance we may have in this life — amounting to joy inexpressible and full of glory — arises from the tight connection between Christ's oblation and intercession. Through the one He secured all good things for us; through the other He ensures they are actually bestowed. He never leaves our sins unaddressed but pursues them through every court until they are fully pardoned and completely expiated (Hebrews 9:26). He will not rest until He has saved to the uttermost those who come to God through Him. His death without His resurrection would have profited us nothing — all our faith would have been meaningless (1 Corinthians 15). So if His death is separated — either in His own intention or in what each one separately secures — from His resurrection and the intercession that follows it, it yields very little comfort. But in their connection, it is a sure foundation for a soul to build on (Hebrews 7:25). What good does it do me to be persuaded that Christ died for my sins, if, in spite of that, my sins may still appear against me for my condemnation? What good, if Christ will not appear for my justification? If you ask with the apostle, "Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died" (Romans 8:34), the answer could come easily: God through His law may still condemn me, in spite of Christ's dying for me! But the apostle continues: He is also risen, He sits at the right hand of God making intercession for us. He does not rest in His death alone — He will certainly intercede for those for whom He died. And this alone gives firm comfort. Our sins dare not appear against us, nor any accuser, where He appears for us. Objections raised against this passage will be addressed later. I hope I have now sufficiently

proved the point proposed at the beginning of this chapter: that the object of Christ's oblation and the object of His intercession are one and the same.

CHAPTER 8



From what was said in the last chapter, it is clear that the oblation and intercession of Christ are equal in scope and extent with respect to their objects — the persons for whom He once offered Himself and for whom He continually intercedes. They are therefore to be understood as one joint means for attaining a certain proposed end. What that end is comes next for consideration. But since I find some objections raised against the point just established, I must clear them away before proceeding — as a man clears away rubbish until it is all gone.

The essence of one of our earlier arguments was that sacrificing and interceding both belong to the same person as high priest. No one can rightly bear that name, and no one has truly fulfilled that office, unless he has performed both. Our Savior is the most complete and indeed the only true High Priest. In Him all those perfections existed in reality that in others were faintly represented by types. He performs both functions on behalf of those for whose sake He became such a priest.

I find that others have attempted to answer an argument similar to this one, stated in these terms: the ransom and mediation of Christ is no broader than His offices of priest, prophet, and king;

but those offices belong to His Church and chosen people; therefore His ransom belongs to them only.

The intent and meaning of this argument is the same as what we proposed — namely, that Christ did not offer for those for whom He is not a priest, and He is priest only for those for whom He also intercedes. If I have occasion to use this argument later, I will by the Lord's help give it more weight and force than it appears to have in the way those who oppose us have stated it. It is in their interest to present it as weakly as possible so they can appear to have neatly set it aside. But let us look at their evasion for what it is.

One opponent called this "a sober objection" — a friendly label that I at first assumed he applied because he found it easy and comfortable to answer. But on reading the reply and finding it so far from providing any genuine response that it only served him as a launching pad for several new weak and false ideas, I concluded there must be some other reason for treating this particular objection more mildly than the others that trouble him equally — objections that receive nothing but "this is horrid," "that is blasphemy," "that is detestable, abominable, and false" — because his position can neither endure them nor escape them. Eventually I concluded that his reason was hinted at in the opening words of his supposed answer: that this objection does not deny the death of Christ for all men, but only his ransom and mediation for all men. Frankly, if that is his interpretation, I cannot share it. Far from thinking this a sober objection, I cannot be persuaded that any sane person would even propose it. That Christ should die for all and yet not be a ransom for all — when He Himself said He came to give His life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28) — seems to me a plain contra-

diction. In its most basic and general sense, the death of Christ is a ransom. Furthermore, do not this opponent and those of his persuasion make the ransom at least as broad as anything in, around, or following the death of Christ? Or do they have yet some further distinction to make — or rather division — regarding the ends of Christ's death? As we have already seen, on their view Christ not only paid a ransom for certain persons but also intercedes for them — while He does not intercede for all for whom He paid a ransom. Now will they go a step further back and say that for some He not only died but also paid a ransom, which He did not do for all for whom He died? Who then are these people He supposedly died for in this additional sense? They must be a group beyond all and every person — since on their view He paid a ransom for those others. But let us see what else he says. In so straightforward a case as this, it is a shame to resort to tricks.

"The answer to this objection," he says, "is easy and plain in Scripture. The mediation of Christ is both more general and more special. More general in that He is the one mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5), and more special as He is the mediator of the new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15). Accordingly it is said that He is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe (1 Timothy 4:10). So in all of Christ's offices — as priest, prophet, and king — there is that which is more general and that which is more special and particular."

This is what he calls a clear and plain answer from Scripture — leaving the application of it to the argument to other people's guesswork. As far as I can make it out, his meaning must be something like this: It is true that Christ paid a ransom for none but

those for whom He is a mediator and priest. But Christ is to be considered in two ways: first, as a general mediator and priest for all; and second, as a special mediator and priest for some. He pays the ransom in His role as general mediator. That, I suppose, is some part of his meaning. In itself, the whole thing is so poorly expressed and so far from common sense, so wildly unchristian in substance, that contempt would suit it better than a response. Frankly, in the case of men who leap from manual trades into preaching and writing, I do not know why anyone should expect clarity or rigor. What can never be sufficiently lamented is that such wildness dressed in such threadbare rags finds a welcome, while sober truth is shut out the door. For what, I ask, is meant by this distinction? Christ is either a general mediator between God and man, or a special mediator of the new covenant. Has it ever been heard before that Christ was in any sense a mediator except as mediator of the new covenant? A mediator is not appointed over a single party — all mediation concerns an agreement between several parties, and every mediator is the mediator of a covenant. If Christ is a mediator in some sense broader than as mediator of the new covenant — of what covenant was that, exactly? The covenant of works? Would not such a claim overturn the entire Gospel? Would it not dishonor Jesus Christ to make Him the mediator of a cancelled covenant? Is it not contrary to Scripture, which declares Him the guarantee — not of the first, but — of a better covenant? (Hebrews 7:22). Are not people who make such bold assertions more in need of basic instruction than in any position to preach? But we must not simply let it pass. The man is echoing something he has heard from some Arminian teacher, though he has had the misfortune of expressing the idea so poorly. Being somewhat fa-

miliar with the passages of Scripture they use to color this argument, I will briefly clear away this poor dodge so that our earlier argument may stand unshaken.

The inadequacy of the answer as stated above has already been sufficiently exposed. Some have distinguished the fruits of Christ's mediation into those that are more general and those that are more particular — and that distinction, in some sense, may be tolerable. But to say that the offices of Christ are either general or particular, and to consider Christ Himself in relation to them in that way, is a crude and misshapen notion. My answer to what is actually intended is this: we deny any such general mediation or general function of office in Christ that would extend beyond His Church or chosen people. It was His Church that He redeemed with His own blood (Acts 20:28). It was His Church that He loved and gave Himself for, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water and the word, and present it to Himself as a glorious church (Ephesians 5:25-27). It was His sheep He laid down His life for (John 10), and He appears in heaven for us (Hebrews 9:24). Not one word in Scripture about mediating for any others. Consider His incarnation: it was because the children shared in flesh and blood (Hebrews 2:14) — not because all the world did. Consider His oblation: "For their sake," He said — those whom the Father gave Him — "I consecrate Myself" (John 17:19) — that is, to be an offering, which was the work He had in hand at that moment. Consider His resurrection: He died for our sins and rose for our justification (Romans 4:25). Consider His ascension: "I go to My Father and your Father" — and to prepare a place for you (John 14). Consider His continuing intercession: is it not to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him?

(Hebrews 7:25). Not one word about this general mediation for all. In fact, if you listen to Christ Himself, He explicitly refuses to mediate for all: "I do not ask on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me" (John 17:9).

But let us look at the texts brought to support this distinction. 1 Timothy 2:5 is cited: "For there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." What then? What is the conclusion to be drawn from this? Cannot Christ be a mediator between God and man without being a mediator for all men? Are not the elect human beings? Do not the children share in flesh and blood? Does not His Church consist of people? What logic is there in drawing a universal conclusion from an indefinite proposition? Because Christ was a mediator for men — which would be true even if He were so only for His apostles — must we conclude He was therefore so for all men? Away with such nonsense. But let us look at the other proof, which perhaps may give more support to the awkward distinction we are opposing — 1 Timothy 4:10: "who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe." Had it read, "who is the mediator of all men, especially of those who believe," it would have been a better fit. But the audacity of these men! Is there any word here about Christ as mediator? Is not the living God, in whom we trust, the one called Savior here, as the words immediately preceding in that same verse make clear? And is Christ described here in terms of His mediation? I showed earlier that God the Father is frequently called Savior. That He is the one intended here is agreed by all sound interpreters, and it is also clear from the subject under discussion: the protective providence of God — general toward all people, special and particular toward

His Church. This is how He is said to save both man and beast (Psalm 36:6), where the Hebrew reads "You preserve." It is God, then, who is here called the Savior of all — through His deliverance and protection in times of danger, which is what the apostle is discussing — and this providential saving is extended in a peculiar way toward believers. What this has to do with a universal mediation I cannot see.

The very context of this passage will not allow any other interpretation. The words give a reason why, despite all the injury and reproaches that continually assault God's people, they should press on with joy in the race set before them. The reason is this: just as God preserves all people — for in Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17; Psalm 145:14-16), and He will not allow anyone to be wronged without consequence (Genesis 9:5) — so He is especially the preserver of those who believe. They are the apple of His eye (Zechariah 2:8; Deuteronomy 32:10). So even if He permits them to be pressed for a season, they should not let go of their hope and confidence or grow weary of doing good, but continue to rest and trust in Him. Given that this is the encouragement the apostle intended to provide, what motivation would it be to tell believers that God desires the salvation of those who neither do nor ever will believe? That is to say nothing of how strange it seems that Christ should be called the Savior of those who are never saved — those to whom He never gives grace to believe, and for whom He refuses to intercede (John 17:9) — which is no small part of His mediation through which He saves sinners. Neither the subject nor the predicate of the statement — "He is the Savior of all men" — is correctly understood by those who try to twist it to support universal redemption. The subject, "He," refers to God the

Father, not Christ the Mediator. The predicate describes a providential preservation, not a purchased salvation. That is, it speaks of God's providence protecting and governing all, while watching over His own in a special way to ensure they are not perpetually and unjustly slandered and reviled — along with the other pressures the apostle addresses here. He also shows that this was his own consistent experience (2 Corinthians 1:9-10): "We had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope — for He is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe." If someone thinks those words — "because we hope in the living God who is" — are not giving the grounds for Paul's confidence in pressing through his labors and afflictions, but are instead a summary statement of the doctrine for which he suffered, I will not strongly object. In that reading too, the passage contains nothing but an affirmation of the true God and trust in Him, in contrast to all the idols of the Gentiles and other vain notions by which people exalted themselves to the throne of the Most High. But that Christ should be called a Savior of — first, those who are never saved from their sins, as He saves His people (Matthew 1:21); second, those who never hear a single word about salvation or a savior; third, that He should be a savior in a twofold sense, first for all and then specially for believers; fourth, that faith should be the condition by which Christ becomes a savior in a special sense to any person, and that condition not secured or purchased by Him — that all this is the meaning of this passage, let those believe who can. To me nothing is more certain than this: to whomever Christ is in any sense a savior in the work of redemp-

tion, He saves them to the uttermost from all their sins — including unbelief and disobedience — with saving grace in this life and glory in the next.

Further attempts are also made to reinforce this evasion and thereby to undermine our earlier argument, and I must clear those away as well.

They say: Christ in some sense intercedes and pleads for transgressors — even the unregenerate among humanity, those still in and of the world — that the Spirit might continue to unite and bless those who believe in Him, and that as they live out their faith and proclaim the Gospel through His servants, those among whom they dwell might be convinced and come to believe the message of the Gospel (Isaiah 53:12). Just as Christ once prayed (Luke 23:34), and as He left an example for us (John 17:21, 23), so the people of the world might be convinced, and those who convince them drawn to Christ and to God in Him (Matthew 5:14-16). He even, in some measure, enlightens every person who comes into the world (John 1:9). But He intercedes in a more special way for His own, and so on.

Here is a twofold intercession of Christ as mediator: first, for all sinners — that they might believe (which is what is intended by the many cloudy phrases wrapped around it); and second, for believers — that they might be saved. It is the first part of this distinction that we oppose, and we must press on it a little.

First, our author says it is interceding "in some sort." I ask: in what sort? Is it directly or indirectly? Is it by virtue of His blood shed for them, or by some other means? Is it with an intention and desire to obtain for them the good things interceded for — or with

the expectation that they will go without them? Is it for every person without exception, or only for those within the outward bounds of the church? Is faith what He is asking for on their behalf, or something else? Is that request absolute, or conditional? All of these questions must be clearly answered before this supposed general intercession can be made intelligible.

First, consider whether this intercession "in some sort" is direct or only indirect and incidental. For the thing supposedly interceded for is not presented as the immediate aim of Christ's prayer, but as a side benefit arising from a blessing obtained for others. The prayer described is that God would so bless believers that those among whom they live might come to believe the Gospel message. Believers are the direct object of this intercession; others are only reached through them as a secondary consequence. The good hoped for on behalf of those others is viewed either as something that might incidentally result from believers flourishing, or as a goal the prayer intentionally aims at. If the first — their good is aimed at no more than their harm. If the second — why is it not achieved? Why is the Savior's intention not accomplished? Is it for lack of wisdom to choose means suited to the end He proposes, or for lack of power to accomplish what He intends?

Second, is this intercession grounded on His blood shed for them, or on something else? If it is, then Christ intercedes for them to receive those things His oblation purchased for them — for this is what it means to make His death and bloodshedding the foundation of His intercession. It would then follow that Christ by His death purchased faith for all, since He intercedes for all to believe and grounds that intercession on the merit of His death. But first, this is more than the proponents of universal redemption are will-

ing to maintain. Among all the ends they assign to Christ's death, the effectual and certain bestowal of faith on those for whom He died is not one of them. Second, if by His death He purchased faith for all, and by His intercession He asks for it to be given to all — why is it not actually given to them? Is the combination of both not sufficient to secure that one spiritual blessing? And second, if this intercession is not grounded on His death and bloodshedding, we invite them to describe for us what this intercession of Christ is, if it is something other than His appearing in heaven for us sprinkled with His own blood.

Third, does He intercede for all to believe with genuine intention and desire that they should believe — or not? If not, then it is a sham intercession — an appeal for something He does not actually want granted. If so, why is it not accomplished? Why do not all believe? Indeed, if He died for all and prayed for all to believe, why are not all saved? For Christ is always heard by His Father (John 11:42).

Fourth, is this intercession for every person in the world, or only for those within the visible bounds of the church? If only for the latter, then this does not establish a truly general intercession for all — it only establishes one broader than the intercession for believers. For if even one person in the world is left out, the whole claim falls apart. If it is for all, how can it consist in the prayer that the Spirit would lead, guide, and bless believers — and that through the ministry of the Gospel by His servants others might be convinced and brought to believe? How, I ask, can this apply to the millions of souls who never encounter a believer, who never hear a word of the Gospel?

Fifth, if His intercession is for faith, then either Christ intercedes for it absolutely — meaning they will certainly receive it — or conditionally. And if conditionally, the condition is either on God's side or on the human side. If absolutely, then all actually do believe — or else it is not true that the Father always hears Him (John 11:42). If the condition is on God's side, it can only mean: "if God is willing." Adding this condition may indicate one of two things in our Savior. First, an ignorance of His Father's will in the matter — which cannot stand, both because it contradicts the unity of His person in His present state of glory, and because He has the assurance of a promise to be heard in whatever He asks (Psalm 2:8). Or second, a submission to the Father's will as the primary cause of the good to be bestowed — which is fully compatible with an absolute intercession, one by which all must believe. Second, is the condition on the side of those He intercedes for? What condition is that? Where is it assigned in Scripture? Where does it say that Christ intercedes for people to have faith if they do this or that? What condition can rationally be assigned to such a request? Some commonly suggest: if they allow the Spirit to work upon their hearts and obey the grace of God. But what is it to obey the grace of God? Is it not to believe? So it seems Christ intercedes for people to believe — on condition that they believe. Others more carefully propose the proper use of the means of grace as the condition on which the benefit of this intercession depends. But again: first, what is properly using the means of grace but submitting to them — that is, believing? So we are back to the same problem as before. Second, not everyone has access to the means of grace to use well or poorly. Third, Christ either prays for them to use the means of grace well or He does not. If He does not, then how can

He pray for them to believe — when using the means of grace properly, by yielding to them in obedience, simply is believing? If He does pray for it, then He does so either absolutely or conditionally — and the argument starts over again from the beginning. Many more arguments could easily be given to show the absurdity of this claim, but these may suffice. We must now look at the proofs offered in its support.

First, the words of the prophet are cited: "He interceded for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12). Answer: the transgressors for whom our Savior is said to intercede are either all the transgressors for whom He suffered — which is the most natural reading, given the description of them in verse 6 — or only the transgressors through whom He suffered, that is, those who acted against Him in His suffering, as some suggest. If the first, then this passage proves that Christ intercedes for all those for whom He suffered — which is exactly what we maintain, and no different from our position. If the second, then we may understand this as what He accomplished then and there. It is foretold in Isaiah that He should do this, and the event is recorded in the next text cited: "Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing'" (Luke 23:34).

Answer: the conclusion drawn from these words — that there is therefore a general intercession for all that they might believe — is one I could leave to the silent judgment of readers, without any further demonstration of its weakness and invalidity. But since the ablest defenders of that position have made much of this passage to support the idea of a general, unsuccessful intercession, I will briefly examine the inference and whether it has any real force. To that end, we must observe:

This prayer was not for all people but only for that small group of Jews by whom He was crucified. To infer from a prayer for them a prayer for every person who ever has, does, or will exist is a wild leap of logic.

It does not even appear that He prayed for every one of His crucifiers, but only for those who acted out of ignorance — as the reason He gave in His prayer makes clear: "for they do not know what they are doing." Though in Acts 3:17 it is said that even the rulers did it in ignorance, it is not clear that all of them did so. That some did is certain from that passage, and it is also true that some of them were later converted. Indefinite statements in such matters must not be expanded into universal claims. Does it follow, then, that because Christ prayed for the forgiveness of those who crucified Him out of ignorance — as some of them did — He therefore intercedes for all people throughout history that they might believe? People who crucified him and never once heard of His crucifixion?

Third, in those words Christ does not even pray that those men would believe, but only that the sin of crucifying Him might be forgiven them — not charged against them. To conclude from this that He therefore intercedes for all people that they might believe is a remarkable stretch of logic.

Fourth, there is another clear limitation in the scope of this prayer: among His crucifiers, He prays only for those present at His death. Among that crowd, many doubtless came out of curiosity to watch, as is common in such situations, rather than out of malice and spite. The objection some raise — that despite this

prayer the chief priests continued in unbelief — misses the point, since it cannot even be shown that the chief priests were present at the crucifixion.

Fifth, it cannot reasonably be claimed that our Savior prayed for every one of them if some were finally impenitent — for He knew full well what was in the hearts of people (John 2:25), and He knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe (John 6:64). To pray for those we know to be finally impenitent — those who sin unto death — would contradict the rule given to us in 1 John 5:16.

Sixth, it seems to me that this prayer was effectual and answered — that the Son was heard in this request as well, with faith and forgiveness granted to those for whom He prayed. This therefore supports neither a general nor an unsuccessful intercession, but one that was both specific and effective. In Acts 3, Peter addresses people who had denied the Holy One and asked for a murderer to be released (verse 14), and had killed the Prince of life (verse 15). Of these same people, five thousand believed (Acts 4:4): "Many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand." And if others were among those Christ prayed for at the cross, they may have been converted afterward. Even the rulers were not entirely outside the reach of this prayer's fruit, for a great number of the priests became obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7). Nothing in this passage, therefore, can be cited in support of the conclusion being drawn.

We may — indeed we must — acknowledge a twofold praying in our Savior: one by virtue of His office as Mediator, and the other in fulfillment of His duty as one subject to the law and as a private individual. It is true that the one who was Mediator was also made

subject to the law. But the things He did in obedience to the law as a private person were not acts of mediation — not works of Him as Mediator, even though they were performed by the One who was Mediator. As one subject to the law, our Savior was bound to forgive offenses and wrongs done to Him and to pray for His enemies, just as He had taught us to do and of which He here gave us an example (Matthew 5:44): "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." This He drew from the law in Leviticus 19:18 — "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" — in direct contrast to the wicked twist the Pharisees had put on it. In this sense, our Savior here — as a private person to whom vengeance was forbidden, pardon enjoined, and prayer commended — prays for His very enemies and crucifiers. This has nothing to do with His interceding for us as Mediator, in which He was always heard. It is therefore irrelevant to the matter at hand.

John 17:21 and 23 are also cited in support of this alleged general intercession, where our Savior prays that through the unity, harmony, and flourishing of His servants, the world might believe and know that God had sent Him. Some make a show of force with these words, but the claim is not at all established by them.

First, if Christ truly intended and desired that all people in the world should believe, He would surely also have prayed for more effective means of grace to be given to them than merely the sight of the blessed condition of His people — which in any case only a small portion of the world ever sees. At minimum, He would have prayed for the preaching of the word to all, since that is the ordinary means by which people come to know Him. But we do not find that He ever prayed for this, or that God has granted it. Indeed, He gave thanks to His Father that it was not so, saying, "I

praise You, Father, because You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to infants — yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight" (Matthew 11:25-26).

Second, no interpretation of this passage can be allowed that runs counter to the plain words of our Savior in verse 9: "I do not ask on behalf of the world." For if He here prayed that the world would receive true, holy, saving faith, He was asking for just as great a blessing and privilege for the world as anything He interceded for on behalf of His own.

Third, some say the "world" here means the world of the elect — God's people throughout the world who are to be saved. It is certain that "world" here is not used literally for the world as a container, but figuratively for those who inhabit it. Nor can it be shown that it must be taken universally for every person in the world — which is seldom how it is used in Scripture, as we will demonstrate later. It may be understood indefinitely, referring to people in the world — few or many — as the elect appear in their various generations. That said, even though this interpretation has strong support, I cannot fully commit to it, because throughout this entire chapter the word "world" is used either for the world of the reprobate — in contrast to those given to Christ by His Father — or for the world of unbelievers — the same people under a different description — in contrast to those entrusted to the Father by Christ. Therefore, I answer:

Fourth, the words "believe" (verse 21) and "know" (verse 23) do not mean believing in the full saving sense — a true comprehension and reception of Jesus Christ that makes one a child of God. That has never been fulfilled and never will be fulfilled in every person in the world, nor was it ever prayed for in that sense.

Rather, "believe" and "know" here refer to a conviction and acknowledgment that the Lord Christ was not what His opponents had taken Him to be — a deceiver and false prophet — but truly what He claimed to be: one who came from God, with power to protect and do good for His own. That this kind of conviction is often called "believing" in Scripture is clear enough that it need not be argued, and interpreters across all traditions agree that this is what is meant here. This is not for the benefit of the world but for the vindication of Christ's people and the exaltation of His own glory — and so it proves nothing on the point in question. More will be said on the word "world" later.

The passage from Matthew 5:15-16 — in which our Savior instructs His apostles to make full use of the knowledge and light they had received from Him and were to receive, through the preaching of the word and holy living, so as to be a means of drawing others to glorify God — is clearly brought in only to pad the list of references. The author never considers what it is supposed to prove or what purpose it serves, and without further examination it may simply be set aside as having no bearing whatsoever on the matter at hand.

The passage from John 1:9 is no more carefully or appropriately used, though it is badly twisted. The text is rendered as saying Christ enlightens every person who comes into the world "in some measure" — those are the words Mr. More adds. I ask: in what measure? How much? To what degree? And to what extent is this illumination from Christ? By whom or what — apart from Him and independent of Him — is the rest supplied? Who makes up for Christ's supposed deficiency? I understand the aim: to import the light of nature, and whatever other common helps are imagined,

for those who are entirely without any Gospel means of grace — not only for knowledge of God as Creator, but also of Him as Redeemer in Christ. But whether these idols of your own making should be so worshiped — through distorting and corrupting the word of God and diminishing the grace of Christ — I trust you will one day be convinced. It is sufficient for us that Christ is said to enlighten every person because He is the only true light. Everyone who is enlightened receives that light from Him as the source and fountain. And so the general defense of this general, unsuccessful intercession has evaporated. But there is one more specific reply concerning the priesthood of Christ that must be addressed.

They say: as a priest, with respect to one end, Christ offered a sacrifice — that is, a propitiation for all men (Hebrews 9:26; John 1:29; 1 John 2:2). With respect to all the ends together — propitiation, sealing the new covenant, and testifying to the truth — and with respect to the ultimate end of all, His sacrifice was for His called and chosen ones (Hebrews 9:14-15; Matthew 26:28). (What follows after this has already been repeated from another passage and has already been answered.)

Answer: First, as stated, these words have no intelligible meaning, and it is no easy task to extract the author's intention from them — they are far from being the clear answer to the argument they were presented as. Scripture words are certainly used, but they are twisted and corrupted — not only to lend cover to error, but to play a part in statements that defy sound reasoning. What, I ask, is the meaning of these words: he offered sacrifice in respect of one end, then in respect of all ends, then in respect of the uttermost end in all? Working backward: first, what is this "uttermost end in all"? Does "in all" mean among all the ends proposed and

accomplished? Or among all those for whom He offered the sacrifice? Or is it the ultimate end and purpose of God and Christ in the oblation? If the last — that being the glory of God — there is no such thing even hinted at in the passages cited (Hebrews 9:14-15; Matthew 26:28). Second, do those passages actually set forth the ultimate end of Christ's death, subordinate to God's glory? For one of them speaks of obtaining redemption, and the other of the shedding of His blood for the forgiveness of sins. Now you yourself affirm this to be the first end of Christ's death in the opening of your statement, calling it propitiation — that is, atonement for the forgiveness of sins. The forgiveness of sins and redemption are, in substance, one and the same, and both are the immediate fruit and primary end of Christ's death, as is plain from Ephesians 1:7 and Colossians 1:14. So you have here collapsed the first and the last end of Christ's death into one — undermining the entire framework and structure, which you may freely do since it is your own. That framework rests on the claim that there are several distinct ends of Christ's death directed toward different groups of people, so that some of those ends apply to all and only some of them apply to a few — which is the central thesis of the whole book. Third, you place Christ's offering Himself to put away sin from Hebrews 9:26 as the first end of His death, and His shedding of blood for the forgiveness of sins from Matthew 26:28 as the last. The next time you write, please explain the difference between these two. Fourth, you say He offered sacrifice with respect to one end — namely, propitiation for all men. If you actually understand the meaning of sacrifice and propitiation, you will find this barely coherent on a second reading.

But setting aside your words and taking your meaning: it seems to be this — with respect to one end Christ proposed in His sacrifice, He is a priest for all and aimed to accomplish that end for all. But with respect to the other ends, He is a priest only for His chosen and called. Truly this is a convenient way of answering. If it is allowed to stand, you could easily sidestep all your opponents by simply restating their argument and then asserting that your own view is otherwise. For the very thing being imposed on us as an answer here is the very point in dispute. We flatly deny that the various ends of Christ's death, or the good things purchased by it, are distributed in the way being claimed here. To prove our position and to explain our rejection of this division of the ends of Christ's death by their objects, we produced the argument above regarding the priesthood of Christ — and the only reply given was a bare repetition of the question itself. You will say: but several passages of Scripture are cited in support. But as I said before, these are brought in for show and display — nothing in them actually speaks to the matter at hand. Take Hebrews 9:26 and John 1:29: what logical conclusion follows from the indefinite statement that Christ bore or took away sin, to the conclusion that He is a priest for every person without exception in respect of propitiation? Furthermore, in John 1:29 there is an evident allusion to the Passover lamb, which effected a ceremonial, typical cleansing of sin that was specific to the people of Israel — the type of God's elect — and not to all people without distinction, including the reprobate and the unbelieving. The other two passages — Hebrews 2:9 and 1 John 2:2 — will be examined separately, since they appear to carry some weight for the main issue. But clearly there is no word in them that can be stretched even remotely to give the

slightest plausibility to the clumsy distinction we are opposing. And so our argument from the equal scope of Christ's oblation and intercession is confirmed and vindicated. With it, the means used by the blessed Trinity for the accomplishment of the proposed end have been unfolded. What that end was is now to be considered.

CHAPTER 1



We now come to the central issue on which the entire controversy about the death of Christ turns, and upon which the greatest weight of the debate depends. Everything said so far has been preparation for this. The question is: what is the proper end of the death of Christ? Whoever can rightly define and demonstrate this may well serve as the deciding voice in the whole dispute. For if the end of Christ's death is what most of our opponents claim it to be, we would not deny that Christ died for all and every person. And if the end is what we maintain it to be, they themselves will not extend it beyond the elect, beyond believers. This must therefore be fully clarified and firmly established by anyone hoping to make progress in the argument. We stated at the outset that the end of Christ's death is our drawing near to God — a general expression covering the entire recovery of sinners from the state of alienation, misery, and wrath into grace, peace, and eternal communion with Him. Now there are two ends in any action: the end of the worker and the end of the work produced. We have shown that unless there is either a failure of wisdom or certainty in the agent's choice of means, or a failure of skill and power to make use of appropriate means effectively, these two ends always coincide: the work accomplishes what the worker intends. In

the matter at hand, the agent is the blessed Trinity, as established earlier. The means by which they aimed at the proposed end were the oblation and intercession of Jesus Christ — which are united in targeting the same object, as was also shown. Unless we are willing to blasphemously attribute to the agent a lack of wisdom, power, or sufficiency in working, or to claim that the death and intercession of Christ were not suitable and fitted for achieving the end proposed — we must accept that the end of both is one and the same. Whatever the blessed Trinity intended by them was accomplished. Whatever we find attributed to them in the outcome is what the blessed Trinity intended through them. Therefore we have no reason to consider them separately, except occasionally to argue from one to the other — where something is attributed to the death of Christ as its fruit, we may conclude that God intended to bring it about through Christ's death, and vice versa.

The end of Christ's death is either supreme and ultimate, or intermediate and subordinate to that final end. The first and supreme end is the glory of God — the manifestation of His glorious attributes, especially His justice and His mercy as tempered with justice toward us. God necessarily aims at Himself in the first place as the highest good — indeed, as the only thing that is good in an absolute and unconditional sense, not by receiving goodness from another. Therefore, in all His works — and especially in this greatest of all — He first intends the manifestation of His own glory. And He fully accomplishes this in the end, to every point and degree He intended. He has made all things for Himself (Proverbs 16:4), and everything must ultimately redound to the glory of God (2 Corinthians 4:15). Christ Himself is said to belong to God (1 Corinthians 3:23), serving His glory in the entire administration

committed to Him. So in Ephesians 1:6, the ultimate end of the entire plan — choosing us from eternity, redeeming us through Christ, blessing us with every spiritual blessing in Him — is declared to be the praise and glory of His grace. And in verse 14, that we should be to the praise of His glory. This is the end of all the benefits we receive through Christ's death: we are filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God (Philippians 1:11). This is fully stated in chapter 2:11: that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The apostle makes this fully clear in Romans 9, where he establishes God's supreme sovereignty and independence in all His actions — His complete freedom from taking cause or occasion from anything among us — doing all things for His own sake and aiming only at His own glory. And this is what will be fully accomplished at the end of all things, when every creature declares: "Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever" (Revelation 5:13). But this lies beyond our present subject.

Second, there is an end of Christ's death that is intermediate and subordinate to the supreme end — namely, its effects in relation to us. This is what we are now addressing. As we said earlier, it is the bringing of us to God. Though this is one entire end in relation to the oblation and intercession of Christ, it can be considered in two distinct parts in terms of how the various acts within it relate to one another. One part is the end itself, and the other is the means for attaining that end. Both together make up the complete end of Christ's mediation with respect to us. The basis for this is God's appointment of a connection and coherence between the things Christ purchased for us — so that the one serves as the

means and way of attaining the other, one being the condition and the other the thing promised upon that condition. Yet both are equally and alike purchased for us by Jesus Christ. For if either is left out of His purchase, the other would be empty and useless, as we will explain later. Both consist in a communication of God and His goodness to us — and our participation in Him by virtue of that communication — whether in grace or glory, holiness or blessedness, faith or salvation. In this final pairing, faith is the means and salvation is the end; faith the condition, salvation the promised inheritance. Under the name of faith we include all saving grace that accompanies it. Under the name of salvation we include the entire glory to be revealed — the freedom of the glory of the children of God (Romans 8) — all the blessedness that consists in an eternal enjoyment of God. With faith come all the effectual means toward it, both external and internal — the word and the almighty sanctifying Spirit. With it also come all the changes in standing and condition that accompany it: justification, reconciliation, and adoption into the family of God. From it flow all the fruits of sanctification and universal holiness, along with all the other privileges and blessings believers enjoy in this life — which follow from the redemption and reconciliation purchased for them by Christ's oblation. What we maintain to be the end proposed and achieved by the bloodshedding of Jesus Christ — together with those other acts of His mediatorship declared to be inseparably joined to it — is the real, effective, and certain bestowal and application of all these things. This includes both the means and the end, the condition and the thing conditioned, faith and grace as well as salvation and glory — bestowed on all and every one for whom He died. Everyone for whom He died and offered Himself

has, by virtue of His death and oblation, a right purchased for him to all these things. In due time each will certainly and without fail receive them. Or to say the same thing in other words: the goal of Christ's securing grace and glory with His Father was that they might be certainly bestowed on all those for whom He died — some things conditionally, upon their believing, but faith itself unconditionally. All of this we will further explain and confirm after we have cleared away certain false ends that others have proposed.

CHAPTER 2



It was established earlier at length that the death, oblation, and bloodshedding of Jesus Christ is to be considered as the means for achieving an appointed end — and a means not desirable in itself, but only for the sake of that end. Now, since the end of anything must be something good (for goodness and end are inseparable — they go together), the end proposed must be either the good of the Father, the good of the Son, or our good. That it was not primarily His own good is abundantly clear. In His divine nature, He was eternally and essentially a partaker of all the glory proper to the Godhead. Though that glory admits of more or less outward manifestation to us, in itself it is always equally and perfectly eternal and absolute. In this regard, at the close of His earthly work, He requests no other glory than what He had with His Father before the world existed (John 17:5). And in respect of His human nature: since He was predestined from eternity — without any foresight of His obedience or suffering — to be personally united to the second Person of the Trinity from the moment of His conception, He likewise merited nothing for Himself by His death and oblation during the course of His earthly life. He had no need to suffer for His own sake, being perfectly and legally righteous. The glory He aimed at in enduring the curse and despising

the shame was not so much His own possession through the exaltation of His own nature, as it was the bringing of many children to glory — as was set before Him in the promise, which we described at length earlier. His exaltation, His authority over all flesh, and His appointment as judge of the living and the dead were indeed consequences of His deep humiliation and suffering. But that these were the meritorious effects and products of His sufferings — that they were the end He aimed at in making satisfaction for sin — this we deny. Christ has authority and dominion over all things, but the foundation of that dominion is not His death for all. He has dominion over all things as the One appointed heir of all things, who upholds all things by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:2-3). He is set over the works of God's hands, and all things are put in subjection under Him (Hebrews 2:7-8). And what are those "all things"? You can see in the psalm the apostle cites (Psalm 8:6-8). Did He die for all these things? Does He not also have authority over the angels? Are not principalities and powers made subject to Him? Will He not judge the angels at the last day? For the saints will join in this by giving their assent to His righteous judgments (1 Corinthians 6). And yet is it not expressly stated that the angels have no share in the whole plan of God manifest in the flesh — that He did not die for them to redeem them from sins? Of angels in general some had no need of redemption, and the fallen ones are eternally excluded from it (Hebrews 2:16): He did not take on the nature of angels but the seed of Abraham. God set Him as King on His holy hill of Zion, to crush His enemies and rule them with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:9). This is not the immediate effect of His death for them. Rather, all things are given into His hand out of the Father's direct love for His Son (John 3:35; Matthew 11:27).

That love of the Father is the foundation of all this sovereignty and dominion over all creatures, and of the power of judgment placed into His hand.

Moreover, even granting what cannot be proved — that Christ by His death secured this power of judgment — would anything follow from that to help prove a general ransom for all? Surely not. This dominion and power of judgment includes the power to condemn as well as to save. All judgment is committed to Him (John 5:22). He has been given authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man — authority exercised at the hour when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out: those who have done good to a resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to a resurrection of condemnation (verses 28-29; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Can it reasonably be claimed that Christ died to redeem people in order to gain the power to condemn them? Do not these two ideas cancel each other out? If He redeemed them by His death, He was not aiming at gaining the power to condemn them. If He was aiming at the latter, then the former was not His intention.

Nor, second, was it the Father's good that was the end — I am speaking now of the proximate and immediate end and product of Christ's death, not of the ultimate and remote end. I acknowledge that the supreme end of Christ's oblation and all the benefits purchased by it is the praise of His glorious grace. But in terms of this second possible end: the death of Christ does not directly tend toward obtaining anything for God, but rather toward obtaining all good things from God for us. Arminius and his followers, along with other universalists of our day, claim this to be the end proposed: that God, His justice being satisfied, might save sinners.

With the obstacle removed by Christ's satisfaction, God gained by His death the right and liberty to pardon sin on whatever condition He chose. So that after the satisfaction of Christ was given and accepted, it was in God's free disposal — as they put it — whether He would save anyone at all, and on what condition He would do so — whether faith or works. They say God had a good intention and desire to do good to humanity, but was prevented by sin, since His justice stood in the way. So He sent Christ to remove that obstacle, so that He might then show mercy to those who fulfilled whatever condition He chose to prescribe. Since they place the chief — if not the only — end of Christ's oblation in this, I must briefly show its falseness and folly, which can be done plainly through the following reasons.

First, the very foundation of this whole claim seems to me false and mistaken — namely, that God could not have had mercy on humanity unless satisfaction were made by His Son. It is true that given God's decree, purpose, and settled design to manifest His glory through the way of retributive justice, it was impossible for it to happen any other way. For with the Lord there is no change or shadow of turning (James 1:17; 1 Samuel 15:29). But to assert positively that absolutely and prior to His own constitution He could not have done it otherwise — that seems to me to be an unwritten tradition. Scripture says no such thing, nor can that conclusion be rightly drawn from it. If anyone disputes this, we will see what the Lord enables us to say in reply. In the meantime, we rest content in the words of Augustine: though other ways of saving us were not beyond His infinite wisdom, the way He actually chose was certainly the most fitting — and we know this precisely because He proceeded in it.

Second, this view would make the cause of God's sending His Son to die a general benevolence — a vague desire to do good or show mercy to all — rather than a complete act of His will and purpose to know, redeem, and save His elect, which we will disprove later.

Third, if the end of Christ's death was to acquire a right for His Father so that — despite His justice — He might save sinners, then Christ died to redeem a liberty for God rather than a liberty from evil for us. He would have died so that His Father might be freed from a condition in which it was impossible for Him to do what He desired and what His nature inclined Him toward — not so that we might be freed from the condition in which, without this purchased freedom, we would certainly perish. If this were true, I see no reason why Christ should be said to come and redeem His people from their sins, rather than simply to purchase this right and liberty for His Father. Where is any such assertion in Scripture? Where is anything of this nature? Does the Lord say He sent His Son out of love for Himself or for us? Is God or humanity made the immediate recipient of the good secured by this oblation? But someone will say: although this right arose immediately and in the first place to God through Christ's death, it was still intended for our good — Christ securing for the Father the right to now show mercy to us if we fulfilled whatever condition He chose to set. My answer is that this completely destroys the merit of Christ's death in relation to us and leaves it with nothing that truly deserves the name of merit. What is truly meritorious deserves that the thing merited — procured and obtained by it — shall be done and ought to be bestowed, not merely that it may be done. There is such a relationship between merit and the thing obtained by it — whether it

arises absolutely or by contract — that a real right to the thing obtained arises in those for whom or by whom it was procured. When a worker has labored all day, do we say his wages may be paid — or rather that they ought to be paid? Does he not have a right to them? Has any merit ever been conceived whose very nature consists in this: that the thing secured by it may be bestowed, but not that it ought to be? And shall Christ be said to purchase by His meritorious oblation nothing more from His Father than the freedom for the Father to apply the fullness of His death to some or all — and not that He should do so? "To the one who works, his wages are not credited as a favor but as what is owed" (Romans 4:4). Are not the fruits of Christ's death truly procured for us by His death — just as genuinely as if they had been obtained by our own efforts? And if so, then though in respect of the persons on whom they are bestowed, they are freely given, yet in respect of the purchase, the bestowing of them is a matter of debt.

Fourth, that cannot be assigned as the complete end of Christ's death which, even after being fully accomplished, would have made it not only possible that not one soul would be saved, but actually impossible that by virtue of it any sinful soul could be saved. For Scripture is abundantly clear that through Christ we have forgiveness of sins, grace, and glory — as we will show. But on this opposing view — where Christ is said to have purchased for the Father a right and liberty to bestow eternal life on all upon whatever conditions He chose — it would be entirely consistent that not one of those people ever enjoyed eternal life. Suppose the Father chose not to bestow it. On this view He was under no binding obligation to do so. He had a right to do it, yes. But a right may be exercised or not exercised at the holder's discretion. Suppose further

that He had prescribed a condition of works that was impossible for anyone to fulfill. Christ's death could have reached its complete end — and yet no one been saved. Was this His coming to save sinners, to seek and save the lost? Or could He, on the basis of such an accomplishment, have prayed as He did: "Father, I desire that those whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, to see My glory" (John 17:24)? Many other arguments could be used to overthrow this notion — which makes Christ's purchase, in relation to us, not the forgiveness of sins but only the possibility of forgiveness; not salvation but mere salvability; not reconciliation and peace with God, but only the opening of a door toward it. But I will bring those arguments forward when setting out the proper end of the death of Christ.

Ask these same people: what is it that the Father can and will do upon the death of Christ, now that His justice — which previously prevented the execution of His goodwill toward sinners — has been satisfied? Their answer is that He will enter into a new covenant of grace with them, upon the fulfillment of whose condition they will have all the benefits of Christ's death applied to them. But it seems to us that Christ Himself, with His death and passion, is the chief promise of the new covenant itself — as in Genesis 3:15. Therefore the covenant cannot be said to be procured by His death. Furthermore, the nature of the covenant itself undermines this proposal. The covenant says that those who are in it shall have such and such good things if they fulfill the condition — as though everything depended on their obedience. But that very obedience, and the whole condition the covenant requires, is itself a promise of the covenant (Jeremiah 31:33), confirmed and sealed by the blood of Christ. We do not deny that the death of Christ has

a proper end in relation to God — namely, the manifestation of His glory. This is why God calls Him His servant in whom He will be glorified (Isaiah 49). And the bringing of many sons to glory with which He was entrusted served the manifestation and praise of His glorious grace, so that His love for His elect might gloriously appear, His salvation being carried by Christ to the ends of the earth. This full declaration of His glory — through the way of mercy tempered with justice, since He presented Christ as a propitiation through faith in His blood so that He might be just and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus (Romans 3:26) — — this is all that accrued to the Lord through the death of His Son. Not a right and liberty to do what He previously desired but was prevented from doing by His own justice. In relation to us, the end of the oblation and bloodshedding of Jesus Christ was not that God might, if He chose, bestow good things upon us. It was that He should — by virtue of the compact and covenant that was the foundation of Christ's merit — bestow upon us all the good things Christ aimed at and intended to purchase and procure by His self-offering to God. What those good things are will be declared next.

CHAPTER 3



What Scripture affirms on this point was laid out at the beginning of the whole discourse. Having now expanded on the explanation of our position, we must support it more specifically by applying to our thesis the particular passages that bear on it — and there are very many. Our thesis, in brief, is this: Jesus Christ, according to the counsel and will of His Father, offered Himself on the cross to secure the things described earlier and makes continual intercession — with this intent and purpose: that all the good things procured by His death might be actually and certainly bestowed on and applied to all and every one for whom He died, according to the will and counsel of God. Let us now see what Scripture says to this, organizing the relevant passages under these headings.

- First, those that express the intention and counsel of God and our Savior's own mind — whose will was one with His Father's in this matter. - Second, those that describe the actual accomplishment and effect of His oblation — what it truly procured, effected, and produced. - Third, those that identify the persons for whom Christ died — those specifically designed in God's purpose and end as the objects of this work of redemption.

Regarding the first — the passages that express the counsel, purpose, mind, intention, and will of God and our Savior in this work. Matthew 18:11: "The Son of Man has come to save that which was lost" — words He repeats on another occasion in Luke 19:10. In the first instance they open the parable of the lost sheep. In the second they close the account of the recovered Zaccheus. In both places they describe the end of Christ's coming — to do His Father's will by recovering lost sinners. Just as Zaccheus was recovered through conversion and brought into the free covenant as a son of Abraham, or as the lost sheep is laid on the shepherd's shoulder and brought home — so unless Christ finds what He seeks and recovers what He came to save, He falls short of His purpose.

Second: Matthew 1:21, where the angel declares the end of Christ's coming in the flesh — and consequently of all His sufferings — to the same effect: He was to save His people from their sins. Whatever is required for a complete and perfect saving of His peculiar people from their sins was intended by His coming. To say that He accomplished salvation only in part or in some limited sense does not sit well with Christian ears.

Third: the similar statement of Paul in 1 Timothy 1:15 clearly declares the end of our Savior's coming according to His Father's will and counsel — namely, to save sinners. Not to open a door for them to enter if they choose or are able. Not to make a path passable so that they might be saved. Not to purchase reconciliation and pardon from His Father which they might never enjoy — but actually to save them from all the guilt and power of sin and from God's wrath for sin. If He does not accomplish this, He fails the purpose of His coming. And if that must not be said, then surely

He came for no more than those for whom that effect is actually secured. The Father's covenant with Him and the promise made to Him of seeing His offspring and seeing the Lord's pleasure prosper in His hand (Isaiah 53:10-12) — I described this earlier. It is clear from this that the decree and purpose of actually giving Christ a believing generation — whom He calls "the children God has given Me" (Hebrews 2:13) — is inseparably attached to the decree of Christ's making His soul an offering for sin. It is the end and goal of that offering.

Fourth: as the apostle states clearly in Hebrews 2:14-15: "Since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives." Nothing could more plainly set out the entire end of the incarnation and offering of Jesus Christ than these words — the deliverance of the children God gave Him from the power of death, hell, and the devil, bringing them near to God. There is nothing here about purchasing a possible deliverance for all and every person. In fact, not all are those children the Father gave Him. Not all are delivered from death and from the one who held its power. Therefore it was not for all that He took on flesh and blood.

Fifth: the same purpose and intention is found in Ephesians 5:25-26: "Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless." And also in Titus 2:14: "He

gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." I believe nothing could be clearer than these two passages. It would be impossible for human language to express more fully and vividly what we intend than the Holy Spirit has done in both of these places.

Sixth: what did Christ do? He gave Himself — both passages say so. For whom? For His church, says one. For us, says the other. Both expressions carry the same scope and force, as everyone knows. To what end did He do this? To sanctify and cleanse the church, to present her to Himself as a holy and glorious church without spot or wrinkle, says the Ephesians passage. To redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a special people eager for good works, says the Titus passage. Now I ask: are all people part of this church? Do all fall within the group Paul places himself and Titus in? Are all purged, purified, sanctified, made glorious, and brought near to Christ? Or does Christ fail in His aim toward the greater part of humanity? I dare not claim any of these.

Seventh: do you want our Savior Christ Himself expressing this even more plainly, narrowing the scope, declaring His entire design and purpose, and stating the end of His death? John 17:19: "For their sakes I consecrate Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth." For whose sakes? The men the Father gave Him out of the world (verse 6). Not the whole world — the world He was not praying for (verse 9). "I consecrate Myself" — to what? To the work He was about to do — to become an offering. And to what end? So that they also might be truly sanctified. The word "that" there expresses the intent and purpose of Christ — it marks out the end He aimed at. This is our hope, the hope of the Gospel: that He

has accomplished it. For the deliverer who comes from Zion turns away ungodliness from Jacob (Romans 11:26). And in this His purpose was to fulfill the will of His Father, which is why He came.

Eighth: that this was also His counsel is plain from Galatians 1:4: "Our Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father." The apostle further describes this will and purpose in Galatians 4:4-6: God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because we are sons, our deliverance from the law, our freedom from the guilt of sin, our adoption as sons, our receiving of the Spirit, and our drawing near to God — all of these are within the purpose of the Father in giving His only Son for us.

Ninth: I will add only one more passage, out of the many that could be cited — 2 Corinthians 5:21: "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." God's purpose in making His Son to be sin was that those for whom He was made sin might become righteousness. That was the end of God's sending Christ to be so, and Christ's willingness to become so. Now if the Lord did not purpose something He knew would never be fulfilled — and that He would not even work to bring about — then there are only two alternatives, both utterly impious. Rather, we conclude that He made Christ sin for no more than those who in effect actually become righteousness in Him. So it is apparent from these passages that the counsel and will of God, together with the purpose and intention of Christ in His oblation and bloodshedding, was to fulfill that will and counsel. From all this we draw the following argument:

what the Father and Son intended to accomplish in and toward all those for whom Christ died is most certainly effected. (If anyone denies this premise, I will at any time, by the Lord's help, undertake to defend it.) But the Father and Son intended, through the death of Christ, to redeem, purify, sanctify, and cleanse — to deliver from death, Satan, and the curse of the law, to remove all sin, to make righteousness in Christ, and to bring near to God — all those for whom He died. This was shown above. Therefore Christ died for all and only those in and toward whom all these things are actually accomplished. Whether that is all and every person, I leave to every person with any knowledge of these matters to judge.

The second category contains those passages that describe the actual accomplishment and effect of the oblation — what it really produces and achieves in and toward those for whom it is an offering. Such as Hebrews 9:12, 14: "By His own blood He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" — and: "The blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanses your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Two things are here attributed to the blood of Christ: one directed toward God — it obtained eternal redemption — and one directed toward us — it cleanses our consciences from dead works. So justification before God, by securing for us eternal redemption from the guilt of our sins and the wrath due to them, along with sanctification within us (or, as Hebrews 1:3 calls it, the purging of our sins) — these are the immediate products of the blood by which He entered the holy place, the oblation He presented to God through the eternal Spirit. This meritorious purging of our sins is specifically attributed to His offering

as accomplished before His ascension (Hebrews 1:3): "When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." And again, most expressly in Hebrews 9:26: "He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." This expiation — this putting away of sin by sacrifice — necessarily involves the actual sanctification of those for whom He was a sacrifice, just as "the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh" (verse 13). It is certain that whoever was either polluted or guilty, and for whom an expiation or sacrifice was offered under those ceremonial ordinances — which were shadows of good things to come — truly received, first, a legal cleansing and sanctifying for the purification of the flesh, and second, freedom from the punishment due for breach of the law as the rule of life for God's people. This much the sacrifice ceremonially accomplished for those to whom it applied. Since these were only shadows of good things to come, the sacrifice of Christ certainly accomplished spiritually for all those for whom it was a sacrifice whatever the other could prefigure — namely, spiritual cleansing through sanctification, and freedom from the guilt of sin. This is plainly proved by the passages cited. Whether this is accomplished in and for all people, let all who are able judge. Again, Christ is said in His death to bear our sins. In 1 Peter 2:24: "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross" — giving both what He did (bore our sins, carrying them up to the cross), what He intended ("so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness"), and what was its effect ("by His wounds you were healed"). This last phrase is taken from the same passage of the prophet where the Savior is said to bear our iniquities and to have them laid on

Him (Isaiah 53:6, 11). It therefore explains what the first phrase means — it tells us what Christ accomplished by bearing our sins. This expression is used more than once in Scripture to this purpose. By bearing our iniquities in His death, Christ secured and brought about — by virtue of the stripes and afflictions He underwent in offering Himself for us — that we should go free and not suffer any of the things He underwent on our behalf. To this you may also refer all those passages that clearly describe an exchange of suffering between Christ and us: Galatians 3:13, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us," along with several others we will have occasion to mention later. Peace and reconciliation with God — actual peace, by the removal of all enmity on both sides together with all its causes — is fully attributed to this oblation in Colossians 1:21-22: "Although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach." Likewise in Ephesians 2:13-16: "You who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity." Add to this all the passages where full deliverance from wrath, death, and the one who held the power of death is also declared to be the fruit of His oblation — as in Romans 5:8-10. In all of this you have a further picture of the immediate effects of

Christ's death: peace and reconciliation, deliverance from wrath, enmity, and everything that stood between us and the love and favor of God. He secured this redemption for His church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Therefore all and every one for whom He died may truly say: "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us" (Romans 8:33-34). That all of this is secured for every last descendant of Adam — so that all may equally claim this triumphant assurance — cannot be shown. Yet it is certain that all of this belongs to every one for whom He died and that these are the effects of His death in and toward those for whom He bore it. By His being slain He ransomed people for God by His blood from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation, and made them a kingdom and priests to God (Revelation 5:9-10). For He made an end of sin, He made atonement for iniquity, and He brought in everlasting righteousness (Daniel 9:24). Add also those passages where life is attributed to the death of Christ — then the list will be complete. John 6:33: He came down from heaven to give life to the world. Certainly He gives life to the very world for which He gave His life — the world of His sheep, for which He lays down His life (John 10:15), so that He might give them eternal life and they might never perish (verse 28). So He appeared to abolish death and bring life and immortality to light (2 Timothy 1:10), as also in Romans 5:4-10. Every one of these passages provides ample evidence against the general ransom or the universality of Christ's merit. Time does not allow as full a treatment of the subject as it deserves, so I will draw from the whole this general argument: If the death and oblation of Jesus Christ —

as a sacrifice to the Father — sanctifies all those for whom it is a sacrifice; purges away their sin; redeems them from wrath, curse, and guilt; works peace and reconciliation with God for them; secures life and immortality for them; bearing their iniquities and healing all their diseases — then He died only for those who in the outcome are sanctified, purged, redeemed, justified, freed from wrath and death, made alive, and saved. But that all are not sanctified, freed, and so on is plainly obvious. Therefore all people cannot be said to be the proper objects of Christ's death. The premise has been established above, the conclusion is plain from Scripture and experience, and the whole argument — if I am not mistaken — is sound.

Third, there are many passages that specifically identify the persons for whom Christ died — those specifically designated in God's purpose and aim as the objects of this work of redemption. We will briefly survey some of these. In several places they are called "many." Matthew 26:28: "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins." And: "By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities" (Isaiah 53:11). "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45; Matthew 20:28). He was to bring many sons to glory, and was therefore appointed the captain of their salvation through suffering (Hebrews 2:10). Although perhaps the word "many" alone is not enough to restrict the object of Christ's death to some rather than all — since "many" is sometimes used for all, as in Romans 5:19 — these "many" are described elsewhere in ways that are clearly not true of all people, and this provides a full and evident restriction. For these many are: Christ's

sheep (John 10:15); the children of God scattered abroad (John 11:52); those whom our Savior calls brothers (Hebrews 2:11); the children God gave Him who shared in flesh and blood (verses 13-14); and frequently, those given to Him by His Father (John 17), who will certainly be preserved. They are the sheep of whom He is shepherd through the blood of the covenant (Hebrews 13:20); His elect (Romans 8:34); His people (Matthew 1:21) — further described as His visited and redeemed people (Luke 1:68-69); the people He foreknew (Romans 11:2); the people He had at Corinth before their conversion — His people by election (Acts 18:10); the people He suffered outside the gate to sanctify (Hebrews 13:12); His church, which He redeemed with His own blood (Acts 20:28), which He loved and gave Himself for (Ephesians 5:25); the many whose sins He bore (Hebrews 9:28); and those with whom He made a covenant (Daniel 9:27). These many, described and characterized in ways that are by no means common to all but belong only to the elect, most clearly appear to be all and only those chosen by God to obtain eternal life through the offering and bloodshedding of Jesus Christ. Many objections are raised here with great confidence and loud protest, but they can be easily dismissed. And so you see the end of Christ's death as Scripture sets it out.

To clear the path forward, we must remove the obstacles placed in it by certain supposed replies and evasions used to escape the force of the argument drawn from Scripture's description of Christ as dying for many, for His sheep, for His elect, and the like. In response, our argument is called weak and without force, equivocal, subtle, fraudulent, false, ungodly, deceitful, and erroneous — all these labels heaped together to decorate it (as found in

a work on the universality of free grace, page 16). This variety of accusations, in my view, serves only to demonstrate the author's abundance of words in place of arguments. Slapping frightening names on what one cannot clearly refute is strong evidence of a weak case. When the Pharisees could not resist the Spirit by which our Savior spoke, they called Him a devil and a Samaritan. Water that makes the most noise is usually the shallowest. The Scythians had a proverb: the dogs that bark the most bite the least. But let us see what this respondent will actually produce after such a grand introduction, and hear him in his own words.

He says first: this argument is weak and without force, because the word "many" is often used to mean all and every person, and also to amplify or describe a great number — as in Daniel 12:2 and Romans 5:19, and in other places where "many" cannot be understood by any Christian as meaning less than all people.

Reply: first, if the argument rested only on the word "many" and not on the descriptions attached to those many — along with the presupposed distinction between people by God's purpose — this exception might have some appearance of force. But for that, see our following arguments. Only note in passing: if someone were to divide the residents of a city — London, say — into rich and poor, those who are in need and those who have plenty, and then said he would bestow his charity on "many" in London, on the poor, on those in need, everyone would easily understand he means to give it to them only. Second, neither of the passages cited directly proves that "many" must necessarily mean all. In Daniel 12:2, the word must be distributed across the separate parts of the statement rather than applied to the whole — so the sense is: the dead shall arise, many to life and many to shame. This is the natu-

ral reading, and such Hebrew idioms are not uncommon. It is also not unlikely that "many" are said to rise to life because, as the apostle says, not all will die. Regarding Romans 5:19: although the "many" there may seem to mean all, they are certainly not called "many" with any intent to denote all through amplification — since calling all "many" would be unlikely. Nor is any comparison being made between the number of those who died through Adam's disobedience and the number made righteous through Christ. The comparison is between the effects of Adam's sin and Christ's righteousness, and the manner in which death and life are communicated from each — with no consideration of the number of those who share in those effects. Third, I am confident our author cannot produce the additional passages he implies he is reserving for this point. The passages typically urged by Arminians in such cases would not in any way weaken our argument, as is clear from what was said above.

He adds a second claim: this argument is equivocal, subtle, and fraudulent, because when all men and every man are spoken of in connection with the death of Christ — as ransom and propitiation — only the fruits of His death are assumed to apply to them. But where the word "many" is used, more than just this one end of Christ's death is asserted.

Reply: First, it is denied that the death of Christ is anywhere in Scripture said to be for all men or for every man — which is assumed and pressed on us with great confidence as though it were an acknowledged fact. Second, that there is any end of Christ's death besides the fruit of His ransom and propitiation — an end that is directly intended rather than incidentally accompanying it — is utterly false. What other end could a ransom paid and an

atonement made have beyond their fruits? The end of any work is the same as its fruit, effect, and product. So this strange distinction — that the ransom and propitiation of Christ along with their fruits are for all, while other ends of His death are only for many — is neither equivocal nor subtle nor fraudulent. Third, the observation that where "many" is used, multiple ends are in view, but where "all" is used only the ransom is in view — is, first, self-defeating for the author's own position. By acknowledging that where "many" is mentioned, "all" cannot be understood (because more ends of Christ's death are mentioned than belong to all), he concedes the entire argument at hand. All his other answers attempting to show that "many" means "all" are thus against his own position. Second, it is pointless, because it cannot be proved that there are any additional ends of Christ's death beyond the fruit of His ransom. Third, it is false. For where Christ's death is spoken of as for many, He is said to give His life as a ransom for them (Matthew 20:28) — the very same language used where He is said to die for all (1 Timothy 2:6). What difference is there between these? What grounds for this observation? Such observations are typical of this author. For instance, his entire tenth chapter is spent proving that wherever the redemption purchased by Christ's oblation is mentioned, those for whom it was purchased are always spoken of in the third person — as "all," "the world," or the like. Yet in his own first chapter, he cites numerous passages to prove this general redemption where the persons for whom Christ suffered are mentioned in the first or second person (1 Peter 2:24; 1 Peter 3:18; Isaiah 53:5-6; 1 Corinthians 15:4; Galatians 3:13, and others).

Third, he continues: this argument is false and ungodly, because nowhere in Scripture is it said that Christ died or gave Himself as a ransom but for many — or only for many — or only for His sheep. And it is ungodliness to add to or take away from the words of God in Scripture.

Reply: Setting aside the author's friendly language and granting a small concession to make the meaning workable. First: Christ affirmed that He gave His life for many and for His sheep. He is said to have died for His church. Countless Scripture passages testify that not all people are His sheep or His church. From this we conclude by sound and undeniable reasoning that He did not die for those who are not His sheep or church. If drawing this conclusion — which is simply an explanation and unfolding of Scripture's own meaning — is adding to the word of God, then no one who ever spoke from the word of God can be considered innocent.

Second, note that in the very passage where our Savior says He lays down His life for His sheep, He immediately adds that some are not His sheep (John 10:26). If that is not equivalent to saying "for His sheep only," I do not know what would be.

Third, it would be easy to turn the charge around, but let us proceed.

Fourth, the author goes on: this argument is deceitful and erroneous, because Scripture nowhere says that the many He died for are His sheep — much less His elect, as the argument intends. As for the passage in John 10:15 commonly cited for this point, it is badly misread. Our Savior in John 10 was not setting out the difference between those for whom He died and those for whom He did not die — or between those for whom He died in one way ver-

sus another. He was setting out the difference between those who believe in Him and those who do not (verses 4-5, 14, 26-27). One hears His voice and follows Him; the other does not. Nor was our Savior there laying out the privileges of all He died for — or died for in one specific way — but the privileges of those who believe in Him through the ministry of the Gospel, and so come to know Him, draw near to God, and enter the kingdom through Him (verses 3-4, 9, 27). Nor was our Savior there showing the excellence of those for whom He died or died for in one particular way — in contrast to others — but the excellence of His own love and its fruits toward those who are brought in by His ministry to believe in Him (verses 11, 27). Nor was our Savior speaking primarily about paying a ransom or making propitiation, but about His ministry of the Gospel — and so about His love and faithfulness in that ministry, in which He laid down His life for those He ministered to. In this He gave us an example — not of making propitiation for sin, but of testifying love through suffering.

Reply: I am persuaded that only familiarity with the character of our times can excuse me in the reader's eyes for spending precious hours examining and transcribing such confused lines as those just quoted. But since nothing better is offered, we must be content to examine such evasions as these — evasions whose only strength lies in incoherent expressions, disjointed structure, and cloudy, windy phrases, all designed to raise such a thick fog that the matter at hand cannot be seen, lost in the smoke and vapor thrown up to cloud the eyes and confuse the minds of poor, misled souls. The argument being answered is this: Christ is said to die for many, and those many are described and identified as His sheep, as in John 10. I ask: what answer — or anything resembling an an-

swer — can be extracted from the confused heap of words just quoted? I could safely set aside the entire evasion without further comment, and only invite the reader to note how much force this one argument carries — and what a heap of nothing is thrown up against it. But lest anything should stick, I will make a few annotations on the passage, responding to the specific points that were marked — leaving the full vindication of the passage for when I press our arguments directly.

I say first: that the many Christ died for are His sheep was established above. Nor is John 10 misread at all. Our Savior clearly sets out a difference between those for whom He died and those for whom He would not die, calling the first His sheep (verse 15) — those to whom He would give eternal life (verse 28), those given to Him by His Father (chapter 17) — evidently distinguishing them from others who were not so. Nor does it matter what the primary intention of our Savior in this passage was — we do not argue from His primary intention but from the meaning of the words He uses and the truths He reveals, aimed at the consolation of believers.

Second, as for the distinction between those He died for in one way versus those He died for in another way — we acknowledge no such distinction, since this supposed distinction neither expresses nor implies anything that fits God's purpose or our Savior's intention in this matter. For all those for whom He died, He died in the same manner and for the same end.

Third, we deny that the primary distinction our Savior draws here is between believers and non-believers. The distinction is between the elect and the non-elect, between sheep and non-sheep. What distinguishes them in practice is the believing of the one — called "hearing His voice and knowing Him" — and the not believ-

ing of the other. The foundation of this difference lies in their distinct condition with respect to God's purpose and Christ's love, as is clear from the contrast in verses 26-27: "You do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice." First the distinction in the act is stated — believing versus not believing — and then the foundation of that distinction is given: their different standing, one group not being His sheep and the other being so, even those whom He loved and gave His life for.

He also says: the opposition here appears to be not so much between elect and non-elect as between Jews who are called and Gentiles who are not yet called.

Reply: the opposition is between sheep and non-sheep, with reference to election, not calling. Now who would the non-sheep represent? Those not yet called — the Gentiles? That contradicts the text itself, which calls certain ones sheep in designation even though they have not yet been called (verse 16). And who are the called — the Jews? True, they were outwardly called at that time, yet many of them were not sheep (verse 26). Truly, such evasions from the force of truth — achieved by so blatantly corrupting the word of God — are no small provocation to the One whose eye sees all things. But he adds:

He says: there is in Scripture a significant difference between sheep in general and the sheep of His flock and pasture, which is what He speaks of here (verses 4-5, 11, 15-16).

Reply: first, this supposed distinction, properly explained, will no doubt — if anyone can explain it — shed great light on the matter at hand. Second, if any distance is to be allowed, it can only be this: the sheep who are simply called sheep are those who are

Christ's solely by the Father's gift, and the sheep of His pasture are those who by the effective working of the Spirit have been actually brought home to Christ. Both groups are mentioned in this chapter (verse 16; verse 27), and together they make up the full number of those sheep for whom He laid down His life and to whom He gives life. But he continues:

He adds: "sheep" in verses 4-5, 11, and 15 are not mentioned as all those for whom He died, but as those who through His ministry have been brought in to believe and enjoy the benefit of His death, and to whom He ministers and imparts the Spirit.

Reply: first, the substance of this and the other objections is that by "sheep" is meant believers — but this contradicts verses 9 and 16, which call those who have not yet been gathered into His fold "sheep." Second, the claim that His sheep are not mentioned as those for whom He died directly contradicts verse 15: "I lay down My life for the sheep." Third, between those for whom He died and those He brings in by the ministry of His Spirit, there is no more difference than there is between Peter, James, and John and the three apostles who were with our Savior at the transfiguration — they are the same people. This is childish sophistry: simply assuming the very thing in question and inserting the disputed opinion in place of an actual answer. Fourth, the bringing in described here — being brought to believe and enjoy the benefit of Christ's death — is itself one of the most special fruits and benefits of that death. It will certainly be conferred on all for whom He died, or else His death will certainly do them no good at all. One more and we are done.

He says further: more ends of Christ's death are mentioned here than only ransom or propitiation, and yet it is not said "only for His sheep." But when only the ransom or propitiation is mentioned, it is said to be for all men. Therefore, this argument appears weak, fraudulent, ungodly, and erroneous.

Reply: first, nothing is mentioned or implied here concerning the death of Christ except what was accomplished by His being a propitiation and making His death a ransom for us — along with the fruits that certainly and infallibly flow from this. Second, if more ends of Christ's death than one are mentioned here, and such as do not belong to all — why do you deny that He speaks here of His sheep only? Be careful, or you will find yourself seeing the truth. Third, as for where it is said "for all men" — I do not know, but this I am certain of: Christ is said to give His life as a ransom, and this is mentioned precisely in those places where it is not said to be for all, as in Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45. From these brief annotations, I trust any fair-minded reader will be able to judge whether it is the argument being opposed or the objections raised against it that deserve to be called weak, fraudulent, ungodly, and erroneous.

Although I fear I have already stretched the reader's patience on this particular, I cannot pass over the discourse immediately following in the same author without a note — both for what it adds against the arguments we just cleared, and as an illustration of his remarkable skill at knocking down straw men he has built himself. To the preceding discussion he adds another objection, which he attributes to the opponents of universal redemption as though they had actually raised it against his reading of the general scriptural expressions. The supposed objection is that those words

were fitted for the time of Christ and His apostles and carry a different meaning than they appear to carry. Having neatly assembled and set up this straw man — to whose construction, I dare say boldly, not one of his opponents contributed so much as a drop of ink — he then proceeds to demolish it with I know not how many charges of error, blasphemy, and falsehood, accompanied by loud exclamations and passionate outcries, until the thing collapses to the ground. Had he not occasionally answered a real argument, one would think him a perfectly hopeless debater. As it is, to make sure he could succeed at least once, I believe he was very careful to make his self-constructed objection not too strong to be refuted by himself. In the meantime, how blind are those who admire him as a capable combatant — a man skilled only at sparring with his own shadow. Yet with empty performances like these, proving what no one denies and answering what no one objects, the greater part of Mr. More's book is stuffed.

CHAPTER 4



Further reasons confirming the preceding discussion will be held until we come to oppose the arguments for the general ransom. For now it will be sufficient to remove the general answer our opponents typically offer against the Scripture passages we have cited — an answer they use as a catch-all defense against all the weight brought against them. They say that in the offering of Christ, and with respect to the good things He procured, two things must be distinguished: first, the obtaining of those good things, and second, their application to particular persons. The first, they say, is general with respect to all — Christ obtained and procured all good things by His death from His Father: reconciliation, redemption, and forgiveness of sins for every person in the world, available to anyone who will believe and lay hold of Him. But with respect to application, these things are actually bestowed and conferred on only a few, because only a few believe — which is the condition on which they are bestowed. In this latter sense, they say, all the scriptural texts we have argued from are to be understood, so that they do not challenge the universality of merit they assert, but only the universality of application, which

they also deny. This answer is commonly set out in various forms and expressions, according to what seems best to those who use it and most suited to their several positions.

First, some of them say that Christ by His death and passion did absolutely — according to God's intention — purchase for every person: forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God, or a restoration to a state of grace and favor. All of this shall actually benefit those who believe. So the Arminians.

Second, others say that Christ died for all indeed, but conditionally for some — if they do believe or will believe (which He knows they cannot do of themselves) — and absolutely for His own, namely those on whom He purposes to bestow faith and grace, so that they actually come to possess the good things purchased for them. So Cameron and the French divines who follow his new method.

Third, some distinguish between a twofold reconciliation and redemption: one wrought by Christ with God for man, which they say is general for all; and a second, a reconciliation wrought by Christ in man toward God, actually bringing them into peace with Him.

Various other ways of expressing this view also exist. The sum of it all comes to this, and the weight of it all rests on the distinction just described — namely, that with respect to obtaining, Christ secured redemption and reconciliation for all; but with respect to application, it is bestowed only on those who believe and continue therein. The arguments for the generality of the ransom and the

universality of reconciliation will be considered later. For now we address only the distinction itself, the meaning and misapplication of which will be briefly explained.

First, the true nature and meaning of this distinction and its proper use: we acknowledge that it may be used in a sound and correct sense, however expressed — whether as obtaining and application, or as procuring reconciliation with God versus working reconciliation in us. By obtaining we mean the meritorious purchase of all good things made by Christ for us with and from His Father. By application we mean the actual enjoyment of those good things upon our believing. As an illustration: if a man pays a ransom price to free captives, the paying of the price functions as the obtaining, and the freeing of the captives functions as the application. But here we must note the following.

First, this distinction has no place in the intention and purpose of Christ — only in the things He procured. In His purpose, both are united. His entire aim was to deliver us from all evil and secure all good things to be actually bestowed on us. But with respect to the things themselves, they may be considered either as procured by Christ or as bestowed on us.

Second, the will of God is not in any sense conditional in this matter — as if He gave Christ to obtain peace, reconciliation, and forgiveness of sins on condition that we believe. There is a condition in the things themselves, but none in the will of God. That will is absolute: that such things shall be both procured and bestowed.

Third, not all the things Christ obtained for us are bestowed conditionally — some are bestowed absolutely. And regarding those that are bestowed conditionally: the very condition on which

they are bestowed has itself been actually purchased and procured for us, not conditionally but by the power of the purchase alone. For example: Christ purchased forgiveness of sins and eternal life for us, to be received upon our believing — that is, upon the condition of faith. But faith itself — the condition on whose fulfillment these blessings are bestowed — He secured for us absolutely, on no condition at all. For whatever condition might be proposed on which the Lord would bestow faith, I will show later to be empty and circular.

Fourth, both obtaining and application have for their objects the same individual persons. That is: for everyone for whom Christ obtained any good thing by His death, that good thing shall certainly be applied and actually bestowed. It therefore cannot be said that He obtained anything for any person that that person shall not in due time enjoy. For everyone with whom He worked reconciliation with God, in that person He also works reconciliation toward God. The one does not extend to persons the other does not reach. Once this is established, the opposing interpretation and misapplication of the distinction disappears. It will be briefly confirmed with the following reasons.

First, if the application of the good things procured is the very end for which they are procured — the reason Christ obtains them — then they must be applied to all for whom they are obtained. Otherwise Christ falls short of His end and aim, which must not be granted. That this application was the end of the obtaining of all good things for us appears, first, from this: if it were otherwise, and Christ did not aim at applying them but only at obtaining them, then the death of Christ could have had its full effect without the application of redemption and salvation to a single soul —

since that would not have been His aim. And so, despite everything He did for us, every soul in the world might have perished forever. Whether this is consistent with the dignity and sufficiency of His offering, with the purpose of His Father, and with His own intention — He who came into the world to save sinners, to seek the lost, and to bring many sons to glory — let all judge. Second, God in the act of sending His Son, laying the weight of iniquity upon Him, and giving Him over to an accursed death, would have to be said to have been entirely uncertain what the outcome would be for us. For did He intend that we should be saved by it? Then the application of it was what He aimed at — which is exactly what we assert. Did He not? Then He was certainly uncertain about the outcome — which is blasphemy, utterly contrary to Scripture and sound reason. Did He appoint a Savior without thinking about those to be saved? A Redeemer without determining who would be redeemed? Did He settle on a means without settling the end? Such an assertion opposes all the glorious perfections of God.

Second, if what is obtained for any person becomes theirs by right through the act of obtaining, then whatever Christ obtained for any person is to be applied to that person. For what is theirs by right must be made theirs in fact. And it is certain that whatever is obtained for any person belongs by right to the person for whom it was obtained. The very meaning of the word — whether you call it merit, obtaining, purchase, acquisition, or procuring — carries with it the idea of a right in those for whose good the merit was earned and the purchase made. Can something be said to be obtained for me that is in no way mine? When I obtain something by prayer or entreaty from another, once it is obtained it is my own. What is obtained by one person is granted by the one from whom

it was obtained. And if granted, it is granted to those for whom it was obtained. But someone will object: it is obtained conditionally, and until the condition is fulfilled no right accrues. I answer: if this condition is equally purchased and obtained along with the other things to be bestowed upon it, then this does not prevent everything procured from being applied. But if it is uncertain whether the condition will be fulfilled — first, this leaves God uncertain what the death of His Son will ultimately accomplish; and second, this does not answer but rather denies the very thing we are in the process of proving, which is thereby confirmed.

Third, Scripture perpetually joins these two things together and does not allow us to separate them so that one belongs to some while the other does not, as if they could have different persons as their objects. Isaiah 53:11: "By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many" — there is the application of all good things — "as He will bear their iniquities" — there is the obtaining. He justifies all whose iniquities He bore. Also verse 5 of that chapter: "He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed." His being pierced and our being healed, the obtaining and the application, His chastening and our peace, are inseparably bound together. So Romans 4:25: "He was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification." So Romans 5:18: "Through one act of righteousness" — that is, His obtaining — "there resulted justification of life to all men" — there is the application. Note who is called "all men" in this context. Most clearly, Romans 8:32-34: "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with

Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." From these words we draw several arguments for our position. First, to those for whom God gave His Son, He freely gives in Him all things as well — therefore everything obtained by Christ's death must be bestowed, and is bestowed, on those for whom He died (verse 32). Second, those for whom Christ died are justified, are God's elect, cannot be condemned, and can have nothing charged against them. Everything He purchased for them must be applied to them, for it is by virtue of it that they are saved in this way (verses 33-34). Third, for whom Christ died, for them He intercedes. And His intercession, as is conceded, is for the application of those things — and in this He is always heard. Those to whom the one belongs possess the other as well. So John 10:10: Christ came that His sheep might have life and have it abundantly. Also 1 John 4:9. And Hebrews 10:10: "by which will we have been sanctified" — there is the application — "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ" — there is the means of obtaining — "for by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14). In brief, this is proved by all the passages we cited when setting out the proper end of Christ's death. This may therefore stand as firm and immovable: the obtaining of good things by Christ and the application of them concern the same individual persons.

Second, we may consider the meaning of those who seek to maintain universal redemption by this distinction, and the use they make of it. Christ, they say, died for all people, and by His

death purchased reconciliation with God and forgiveness of sins for them all. This is applied to some, who thereby actually become reconciled to God and have their sins forgiven. But it is not applied to others, who therefore perish in a state of unreconciliation and enmity, under the guilt of their sins. This application, they say, was not procured or purchased by Christ — for if it were, then since He died for all, all must actually be reconciled, have their sins forgiven, and be saved. Rather, it depends on the fulfillment of the condition God has been pleased to prescribe — that is, believing. Some say this condition can be fulfilled by our own strength, at least by direct consequence if not in so many words. Others deny this and hold that God must give it. So when Scripture says that Christ has reconciled us to God, redeemed us, saved us by His blood, borne the punishment of our sins, and thereby made satisfaction for us — they assert that no more is meant than that Christ did what, upon the fulfillment of the required condition, will result in these things. They ascribe many glorious things to the death of Christ, but what they give with one hand they take away with the other — by making the enjoyment of these things conditional on something we must fulfill, something He did not purchase. They explicitly state that the proper and complete end of the death of Christ was to do what would enable God — His justice now satisfied — to save sinners if He chose, and on whatever condition pleased Him. A door of grace might thus be opened to all who would enter, but actual justification, forgiveness of sins, life, and immortality were not procured by Him — only the possibility of these things. So that all the error lying within this view may be more fully apparent, the full content of the position of those who hold it will be set out in a few assertions.

First, they say: God, considering all humanity as fallen in Adam and completely cut off from attaining salvation by the covenant of works, was yet inclined by His infinite goodness to desire the happiness of them all — that they might be delivered from misery and brought to Himself. This inclination they call His universal love and antecedent will, by which He earnestly desires all to be saved, and out of this love He sends Christ.

That God has any natural or necessary inclination — by His goodness or any other attribute — to do good to us or to any of His creatures, we deny. Everything that concerns us is an act of His free will and good pleasure, not a natural or necessary act of His deity, as will be explained.

Second, to ascribe to God an antecedent conditional will — whose fulfillment would depend on any free and contingent act or work of ours — is an insult to His wisdom, power, and sovereignty, and can hardly be excused from blasphemy. It contradicts Romans 9:19: "Who has resisted His will?"

Third, a general affection and inclination to do good to all does not seem to express the freedom, fullness, and dimensions of that most intense love of God that Scripture declares to be the cause of sending His Son. John 3:16: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." Ephesians 1:9: "He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him." Colossians 1:19: "It was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him." Romans 5:8: "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." These two points will, the Lord willing, be fully addressed if God grants life and strength and His people encouragement to continue through the second part of this controversy.

Fourth, we deny that all humanity is the object of the love of God that moved Him to send His Son to die. God has made some for the day of evil (Proverbs 16:4), hated them before they were born (Romans 9:13), long beforehand ordained them to condemnation (Jude 4), prepared them for destruction (Romans 9:22), appointed them to be captured and destroyed (2 Peter 2:12), assigned them to condemnation (1 Thessalonians 5:9), and destined them for their own place (Acts 1:25).

Second: God's justice having been injured by sin, unless something were done to satisfy it, that love of God by which He desires good for all sinners could in no way be put into action — it would remain forever in the bosom of God without producing any effect.

That neither Scripture nor sound reason compels or proves an absolute and total inability in God to save sinners by His own absolute will without satisfaction to His justice — supposing He purposed it to be so — is granted. Indeed, without such a purpose it could not have been otherwise. But He certainly could have effected it. It does not imply any violation of His holy nature.

An actual and necessary inclination toward doing something that cannot be accomplished without an act fulfilled externally by Him would be contrary to His eternal blessedness and all-sufficiency.

Third: therefore, God — to fulfill this supposed general love and goodwill toward all, and to put it into effect in such a way as seemed good to Him — sent His Son into the world to die. By doing so He satisfied His justice, which had stood in the way and was the only hindrance.

The failure of this claim will be laid out when we come to explain the love from which the sending of Christ was the proper fruit and result.

Fourth: therefore, the proper and immediate end and aim of God's purpose in sending His Son to die for all people was — in Arminius's view — that He might save sinners in whatever way He pleased, His justice that had been the hindrance now being satisfied. Or — in Corvinus's view — that He might will to save sinners. And Christ's intention was to make such satisfaction to the justice of God that He might obtain for Himself the power to save, on whatever conditions His Father was pleased to prescribe.

Whether this was the Father's intention in sending His Son, let it be judged. Something was said earlier in examining the scriptural passages that describe His purpose. Let the reader determine from those whether God in sending His Son intended to procure for Himself a liberty to save us if He chose — or to obtain certain salvation for His elect.

That such a mere possibility of salvation — or at most a velleity, a wishing for it on an uncertain condition to be fulfilled by us — should be the full, proper, and only immediate end of Christ's death will hardly sit well with tender Christian spirits.

The notion of Christ procuring for Himself the ability to save on a condition to be prescribed does not seem to answer to the certain purpose our Savior had in laying down His life — which Scripture says was to save His sheep and to bring many sons to glory, as shown earlier. Nor does it have any basis in Scripture.

Fifth: Christ therefore obtained for all and every person reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, life and salvation — not so that they should actually partake of these things, but so that God — His justice no longer standing in the way — might and would prescribe a condition to be fulfilled by them. Upon fulfilling it, He would apply and make them partakers of all the good things purchased by Christ. And here their distinction of obtaining and application comes in, which was hinted at earlier. On the explanation of this point they are remarkably divided.

Some say this goes so far that all people are thereby received into a new covenant — in which Adam functioned as a representative person just as in the fall from the old — so that all are restored in him. On this view no one will be condemned except those who actually sin against the condition into which they were born and fall from the state into which all are brought through Christ's death. So Borrius, Corvinus, and one writer of recent times who states plainly that all are reconciled, redeemed, saved, and justified in Christ. But others, more cautiously, deny this and assert that by nature we are all children of wrath, and that the wrath of God remains on all until they come to Christ — so that it is not actually removed from anyone until then.

Again, some say that Christ by His satisfaction removed original sin for all — and consequently only that — so that all infants, even those of Turks and pagans outside the covenant, dying before the age of reason, must without question be saved. But others, more carefully observing that the blood of Christ is said to cleanse us from all our sins (1 John 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18; Isaiah 53:6), say He died for all sins equally — absolutely for none, but conditionally for all. Furthermore, some affirm that after the satisfaction of Christ it

was entirely undetermined what condition would be prescribed, so that God could have returned all to the law and covenant of works. Others say that procuring a new way of salvation by faith was itself part of the fruit of Christ's death.

Again, some hold that the prescribed condition is to be fulfilled by our own strength, with the aid of such means as God is at all times and in all places ready to provide to all. Others deny this and affirm that effectual grace flowing specifically from election is necessary for believing — the first group erecting the idol of free will to prop up their position, the second group undermining their own position in order to establish grace. So Amyraut, Cameron, and others.

Moreover, some say that God's love in sending Christ is equal toward all. Others go further and maintain an inequality in God's love, even though He sent His Son to die for all. Though no greater love can be shown than the love by which the Lord gave His Son for us (Romans 8:32), they say Christ purchased a greater good for some and less for others. In doing so they entangle themselves in countless strange distinctions — or as one writer calls them, "extinctions" — blotting out all sense, reason, and the true meaning of Scripture. From this comes the multiplication of various ends of Christ's death, with Christ dying for some in one way and for others in another — hiding themselves in innumerable unintelligible expressions, making it extremely difficult to know what they mean and harder to find their actual position than to answer their arguments.

On one point they all agree well enough: that faith was not procured or merited for us by the death of Christ. They are all consistent on this with their own principles, since granting it even once

would bring down the whole structure of universal redemption. But in assigning the cause of faith they go separate ways again.

Some say God sent Christ to die for all, but only conditionally — if they did and would believe — as if, if they believe, Christ died for them, and if not, He did not. This makes the act its own cause, turning the object into the reason for itself. Others say He died absolutely for all, to secure all good things for them, which they would not enjoy however until they fulfilled the prescribed condition. Yet all agree that in His death Christ had no more regard for the elect than for others — He did not sustain their persons or stand in their place — but was a public representative standing in the place of all humanity.

As for the final outcome and immediate product of Christ's death, various writers have expressed themselves differently. Some locate it in the power of God, some in His will, some in the opening of a door of grace, some in a right Christ purchased for Himself to save whomever He pleased. Some say that in respect of us He had no end at all — so that all humanity might have perished after He had done everything. Others devise several distinct ends of this one act of Christ, corresponding to the different groups of persons for whom He died — persons they acknowledge to be distinguished by a prior decree. But what purpose it serves for the Lord to send His Son to die for those whom He Himself had determined not to save — but at least to pass over and leave to irremediable ruin for their sins — is not apparent. Nor is the meaning of the twofold destination invented by some. Such is the powerful force and evidence of truth that it scatters all its opponents and drives them to various hiding places. Those who are unwilling to yield and submit will surely lie down in darkness and error. Truth has no need of intri-

cate and convoluted distinctions. It does not force its defenders into such poor contrivances. It requires no winding and turning to reach a defensible position. It is not self-contradictory in its own fundamentals. Without any further qualifications, the whole matter can be summarized as follows.

Out of His infinite love for His elect, God sent His dear Son in the fullness of time — promised from the beginning of the world and made effectual through that promise — to die and pay a ransom of infinite value and dignity. The purpose was to purchase eternal redemption and to bring to Himself all and every one of those whom He had before ordained to eternal life, for the praise of His own glory. So freedom from all the evil from which we are delivered, and the enjoyment of all the good things given to us in our passage from death to life, from wrath and hell to heaven and glory — these are the proper fruits and effects of Christ's death as their meritorious cause. This may be clarified in all its parts through the following assertions.

First, the fountain and cause of God's sending Christ is His eternal love for His elect and for them alone. This will not be further established here, being reserved for the second major heading of this whole controversy.

Second, the value, worth, and dignity of the ransom Christ gave Himself to be, and of the price He paid, was infinite and immeasurable — fully sufficient to accomplish any purpose and secure any good for all and every one for whom it was intended, even if millions more had been created than ever were. More will be said on this later. See Acts 20:28: "God purchased His church with His own blood"; 1 Peter 1:18: "redeemed not with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ" — answering the mind and in-

tention of Almighty God. John 14:31: "as the Father commanded Me, so I act" — He who would have such a price paid as could be the foundation of the economy and administration of His love and grace that He intended, and of the way by which He would dispense it. Acts 13:38-39: "through this Man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the law of Moses." 2 Corinthians 5:20-21: "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Third, the intention and aim of the Father in this great work was the bringing of those many sons to glory — namely, His elect, whom by His free grace He had chosen from all peoples, of all sorts, nations, and conditions — to bring them into a new covenant of grace with Himself, the former covenant being in relation to them nullified and abolished in its outcome. Of this covenant Jesus Christ is the first and chief promise, as the one who was to secure for them all the other good things promised in it, as will be proved.

Fourth, the things purchased and secured for those persons — which are the proper effects of Christ's death and ransom, to certainly become theirs in possession and enjoyment in due time — are forgiveness of sin, freedom from wrath and the curse of the law, justification, sanctification, reconciliation with God, and eternal life. For the will of His Father in sending Him for these things, His own intention in laying down His life for them, and the truth of the purchase He made, is the foundation of His intercession —

begun on earth and continued in heaven — through which He, whom His Father always hears, desires and demands that the good things He procured might actually be bestowed on all and every one for whom they were procured. So the whole of what we maintain in this great matter is exceedingly clear and straightforward, without any complexity or difficulty — not clouded with strange expressions and unnecessary divisions, as is the opposing view. That opposing view will be addressed in the next part, through arguments that confirm the one and overthrow the other. But since the whole strength of that view rests on the one distinction we discussed earlier — variously expressed and maintained by our opponents — we will look at it a little further before coming to our arguments and then to answering the objections raised against them.

CHAPTER 5



The legitimate use of this distinction — how it may be understood in a sound sense, the various ways people have expressed what the phrase implies, and some arguments for overthrowing the false use of it however expressed — have already been laid out. Since this is the main support of the opposing position, understood in the sense and manner they apply it, one further blow will be delivered to it, and it is hoped, left dying. It will be briefly shown that although these two things may be distinguished, they cannot be separated — so that for whomever Christ obtained good, to them it must be applied, and for whomever He worked reconciliation with God, they must actually be reconciled to God. So the blood of Christ and His death cannot be viewed as a medicine kept in a box for anyone who happens to come and take some — applied now to one, then to another, with no specific design for one person over another, as though He intended no more benefit for one than for another. That would mean that although He has obtained all the good He purchased for us, it remains uncertain whether any of it will ever be ours. For it is well known that despite all the glorious things the Arminians assign to the death of Christ — which they say He purchased for all, such as forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and the like — those for whom this

purchase was made may still be damned, as by far the greatest part both are and certainly shall be. Now that there should be such a gap between these two things:

First, it contradicts common sense and our ordinary way of speaking, which would have to be twisted and forced to accommodate it. When a person has obtained an office — or another has obtained it on his behalf — can it be said that it is uncertain whether he will actually hold it? If it has been obtained for him, is it not his by right, even if not yet in his possession? What is obtained by petition belongs to the one for whom it is obtained. It does violence to common sense to say that a thing may or may not belong to a man when it has already been obtained for him — for in obtaining it, we declare it to be his. And so it is with the purchase Christ made and the good things He obtained for all those for whom He died.

Second, it is against all reason that the death of Christ, in God's intention, should be applied to any person who will never share in the merits of that death. God's will that Christ should die for any person is His intention that that person shall share in Christ's death — that it should belong to him, that is, be applied to him. For in this context, what is applied to any person is what is theirs in any respect according to God's will. But on the view we are opposing, the death of Christ is said to be applied to all — and yet the fruits of that death are never once made known to the vast majority of that supposed "all."

Second, that a ransom should be paid for captives by agreement for their release, and yet upon that payment the captives not be freed and set at liberty — this seems strange and highly unlikely. The death of Christ is a ransom (Matthew 20:28), paid by

compact for the deliverance of the captives for whom it was given. The promise by which His Father stood committed to Him — when He undertook to be a Savior and took on the office appointed to Him — was their deliverance, as was shown earlier. That after His accomplishing all of this the greatest number of those captives should never be released seems entirely at odds with what was agreed.

Third, it is contrary to Scripture, as was shown at length earlier. See chapter 10.

But now our opponents suppose they can sweep all of this aside with one slight distinction that will, as they say, make everything we have argued vanish. And it is this: it is true, they say, that all things absolutely procured and obtained for any person at once become theirs by right for whom they are obtained. But things obtained on condition do not become theirs until the condition is fulfilled. Christ has purchased by His death all good things for every person — not absolutely, but conditionally. Until that condition is fulfilled, unless they perform what is required, they have neither part, right, nor possession of those things. What this condition is they state in various terms: some call it "not resisting the redemption offered to them"; some, "yielding to the invitation of the gospel"; some say plainly, "faith." Now suppose Christ did purchase all things for us to be bestowed upon this condition — that we believe. Then I assert the following. First, this condition ought certainly to be made known to all for whom this purchase was made, if it was sincerely intended for them. All for whom He died must have the means to know that His death will benefit them if they believe — especially since it is in His power alone to grant them those means, He who intends good to them by His death. If I

were to secure a physician's promise to heal all who came to him, but left many ignorant of this arrangement — when no one but I could inform them, so that they might go to him and be healed — could I be said to intend their healing? Certainly not. The application to our subject is obvious. Second, this required condition is either within their power to perform or it is not. If it is, then all people have the power to believe — which is false. If it is not, then the Lord will either give them grace to perform it, or He will not. If He will, then why do not all believe? Why are not all saved? If He will not, then this whole business of Christ's obtaining salvation and redemption for all through His blood comes down to this: God intended that Christ should die for all, to procure for them forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with Him, eternal redemption, and glory — but on terms that they shall never enjoy the least benefit from these glorious things, unless they perform what He knows they are wholly unable to do, and which no one but He Himself can enable them to perform, and which regarding the greatest part of them He has resolved not to do. Is this to intend that Christ should die for them — for their good? Or rather that He should die for them to expose them to shame and misery? Is it not the same as promising a blind man a thousand pounds on condition that he can see? Third, this condition of faith is either purchased for us by the death of Christ, or it is not. If they say it is not, then the chief grace — without which redemption itself, however expressed, is of no value — does not depend on the grace of Christ as its meritorious and procuring cause. This is first exceedingly dishonoring to our blessed Savior and serves only to diminish the honor and love due to Him. Second, it is contrary to Scripture. Titus 3:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:21: "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our

behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" — and it is not obvious how we become the righteousness of God except through believing. Indeed the apostle expressly says: "For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake to believe in Him" (Philippians 1:29). God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Him (Ephesians 1:3) — of which faith is surely not the least. If faith is a fruit of Christ's death, why is it not bestowed on all, since He died for all? Especially since the whole obtaining of redemption is entirely useless without it? If they invent a condition upon which faith is bestowed, the emptiness of that will be exposed later. For now: if the condition is that people do not refuse or resist the means of grace, then I ask — is the fruit of Christ's death applied to all who fulfill this condition? Either the answer is no — in which case why bring up this condition at all? — or the answer is yes — in which case all who have not and do not resist the means of grace must be saved — that is, all pagans, unbelievers, and infants to whom the gospel was never preached. Fourth, this whole view tends to make Christ only half a mediator — one who procures the end but not the means to reach it. So despite this exception and new distinction, our position stands firm: the fruits of Christ's death in terms of obtaining good and applying it to us should not be divided, and our arguments confirming this remain unshaken. To conclude all of this: what we assert in this matter may be summed up as follows. Christ did not die for any upon condition that they believe. He died for all of God's elect so that they should believe, and believing have eternal life. Faith itself is among the chief effects and fruits of Christ's death, as will be shown. Nowhere does Scripture say — nor can it reasonably be maintained — that if we believe, Christ died for us, as though our believing should cre-

ate what otherwise did not exist, making the act the cause of its own object. Rather, Christ died for us so that we might believe. Salvation is indeed bestowed conditionally, but the faith that is the condition is procured absolutely. The question being thus stated, the difference laid open, and the matter in controversy made plain, we proceed in the next place to bring forward some of the arguments, demonstrations, testimonies, and proofs by which the truth we maintain is established and firmly grounded. One request to the reader: keep in mind some awareness of the foundational principles laid down earlier, for they stand in such relation to the arguments that follow that not one of those arguments can be fully answered until those foundations are overturned.

CHAPTER 1



The first argument may be drawn from the nature of the covenant of grace, which was established, ratified, and confirmed in and by the death of Christ. That was the testament of which He was the testator, ratified by His death — which is why His blood is called the blood of the new covenant (Matthew 26:28). The effects of the covenant cannot extend beyond its scope. But this covenant was not made universally with all people, but specifically with some. Therefore only those were in view in the benefits of Christ's death. The premise is clear from the very description of the covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-32: "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them." And Hebrews 8:9-11: "Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them on their

hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all will know Me, from the least to the greatest of them." Notice first: the condition of this covenant is not required of them — it is absolutely promised: "I will put My fear in their hearts." This is the main difference between the old covenant of works and the new covenant of grace: in the former, God only required the fulfillment of the prescribed condition; in the latter, He promises to accomplish it Himself in those with whom the covenant is made. Without this spiritual efficacy the new covenant would be as weak and useless for the purpose of a covenant — bringing and binding us to God — as the old. In what did the weakness and unprofitableness of the old covenant consist, the covenant God in His mercy abolished? Was it not this: that because of sin we were completely unable to fulfill its condition, "Do this and live"? That connection remains true: he who does these things shall live. But are we on our own any more able to fulfill the condition of the new covenant? Is it not just as impossible for a person by his own strength to repent and savingly believe the promise of the gospel as it would be to fulfill the whole law? This then is one main difference between the two covenants: in the old the Lord only required the condition; in the new, He will also work and accomplish it in all the members of the covenant. If the Lord were only to demand from us the obedience required by the covenant and not also to work it in us, the new covenant would be a display designed to increase our misery, not a sincere imparting and communicating of grace and mercy. If then this is the nature of the new covenant — as its very words show, and as could be abundantly proved — namely, that the condition of the covenant

shall certainly by free grace be worked and accomplished in all who are taken into it — then no more are in this covenant than those in whom those conditions are effected. But it is evident that this is not the case with all, for not all people have faith; faith belongs to God's elect. Therefore the covenant is not made with all, nor should its scope be extended beyond the remnant chosen by grace. Indeed, since every blessing of the new covenant is certainly shared and to be communicated to all covenant members, either faith is not one of those blessings — or all must have it, if the covenant itself is universal. But some may say that God does promise to write His law in our hearts and put His fear within us — but on condition. Name that condition, and the argument will be conceded. Is it "if they believe"? Nothing else can be imagined. That would mean: if they have the law written in their hearts (as every believer has), then God promises to write His law in their hearts. Is that plausible? I therefore cannot be persuaded that God has made a covenant of grace with all — especially with those who never heard a word of covenant, grace, or its condition — still less that they received grace for fulfilling the condition, without which the whole arrangement would be entirely useless. The covenant was made with Adam and he was acquainted with it (Genesis 3:15); renewed with Noah and not hidden from him; established again with Abraham with a full and rich declaration of its chief promises (Genesis 12) — promises which are certainly not to be fulfilled for all, as will appear later. Indeed, that first distinction between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent is sufficient by itself to overthrow the supposed universality of the covenant of grace. Who would dare to claim that God entered into a covenant of grace with the seed of the serpent? It is therefore plainly evident that the

new covenant of grace and all its promises are a distinguishing mercy, restricted to the people whom God foreknew — and therefore not extended universally to all. Now the blood of Jesus Christ being the blood of this covenant, and His offering intended only to secure the good things promised in it — for He was the guarantor of that covenant (Hebrews 7:22) and of that covenant alone — it cannot be conceived as having reference to all people, or to anyone other than those included in this covenant.

If the Lord intended that Christ should — and that by His death He did — procure pardon of sin and reconciliation with God for all and every person, to be actually enjoyed upon condition that they believe, then this goodwill and intention of God, along with this purchase made by Jesus Christ on their behalf, ought to be made known to them through the word, so that they might believe. For faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:14-17). If these things are not made known and revealed to all and every one who are involved — that is, those for whom the Lord intends this good and for whom He has made so great a purchase — then one of the following must be true. Either, first, that people may be saved without faith in and knowledge of Christ — which they cannot have unless He is revealed to them — and this has been shown to be false. Or else, second, that this goodwill of God and this purchase by Jesus Christ is plainly vain and frustrated in relation to those people — indeed a plain mockery of them. It will neither do them any good by helping them out of misery, nor serve God's justice by leaving them without excuse. For what blame can fall on them for failing to embrace a benefit they never heard of in their lives? Does it befit the wisdom of God to send Christ to die for people so that they might be saved — and

yet never cause them to hear of any such thing — while also determining that unless they hear of it and believe it they shall never be saved? What sensible person would pay a ransom for captives who he knows will never learn of the payment, and who will therefore never benefit from it? Is it consistent with the goodness of God to deal this way with His poor creatures — to hold out to all of them in pretense the most intense love imaginable, beyond all comparison, as His love in sending His Son is described to be — and yet never let them hear of any such thing, and in the end to condemn them for not believing it? Is it consistent with the love and kindness of Christ toward us to attribute to Him at His death such a resolve as this: "I will now by the offering of Myself obtain for all and every one peace and reconciliation with God, redemption and everlasting salvation, eternal glory in the heights of heaven — even for all these poor, miserable, wretched, condemned creatures who every hour should expect the sentence of condemnation. And all these things shall truly and really be communicated to them if they believe. But yet I will so order things that countless souls shall never hear one word of all this that I have done for them, shall never be urged to believe, and shall never have the object of faith set before them, by which they might possibly come to share in these things." Was this the mind and will, the design and purpose of our merciful High Priest? God forbid. It is the same as if a prince were to proclaim that certain captives were held in harsh bondage, and that since he has a full treasury he is resolved to redeem every last one of them — so that every one who thanks him for his goodwill may come out of prison — and in the meantime he takes no care at all to let these poor captives know his intention, being fully aware that unless he himself does it, it will never be

done. Would this not be considered a vain and showy display with no genuine intent toward those captives? Or as if a physician were to say that he has a medicine that cures all diseases and intends to cure the diseases of all — but lets very few know his mind or anything about his medicine — while knowing that without his informing them it will be known to very few. Would he be thought to genuinely desire, intend, or aim at the recovery of all? Now it is most clear from Scripture and the experience of all ages — both under the old and new dispensations of the covenant — that countless people, entire nations, have for long periods been passed over without any declaration of this mystery. The Lord did not arrange for it to be made known to all, not even in the smallest degree. They never heard so much as a rumor or report of any such thing. Under the old testament: "In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel. His tabernacle is in Salem; His dwelling place also is in Zion" (Psalm 76:1-2). "He declares His words to Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any nation; and as for His ordinances, they have not known them" (Psalm 147:19-20). Hence those descriptions of the nations and those prayers for judgment, as in Jeremiah 10:25: "Pour out Your wrath on the nations that do not know You, and on the families that do not call Your name." These same nations are fully described in Ephesians 2:12: "separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." And under the new covenant, though the church has extended her reach and many nations have come to the mountain of the Lord — so many as to be called "all peoples," "all nations," indeed "the world" and "the whole world" in comparison with the narrow bounds of

the Jewish church — yet now also Scripture and experience show clearly that many are still passed over. Millions of souls never hear a word of Christ or of reconciliation through Him. Of this we can give no other reason than: "Yes, Father, for this was well-pleasing in Your sight" (Matthew 11:26). In Scripture, Acts 16 records that the Holy Spirit expressly forbade the apostles to go to certain places with the word, but directed them another way — corresponding in some particulars to the former administration, in which God permitted all nations to walk in their own ways (Acts 14:16). And from experience — without multiplying examples — ask any of our fellow believers who have at any time been in the Indies, and they will readily confirm the truth of this.

The objections against this argument are weak and trivial, and will be reserved for a response later. In brief: how is this goodwill of God revealed to the thousands of descendants of unbelievers whom the Lord cuts off in infancy — so that they may not overrun the world, persecute His church, or disturb human society? How is it revealed to the people Paul speaks of — who from the works of creation might be led to a knowledge of God's eternal power and divine nature, but to whom any knowledge of redemption or a Redeemer was entirely out of reach?

CHAPTER 2



If Jesus Christ died for all people — that is, purchased and procured for them, according to the mind and will of God, all those things Scripture sets forth as the effects and fruits of His death (which may be summed up as "eternal redemption") — then He did this either absolutely or upon some condition to be fulfilled by them, according to God's purpose. If absolutely, then all and every one ought absolutely and certainly to become actual partakers of that eternal redemption so purchased. What could prevent any person from enjoying what God absolutely intended and Christ absolutely purchased for them? If conditionally, then He either procured this condition for them or He did not. If He did procure the condition for them — that it should be bestowed on them and worked within them — then He did so either absolutely or upon a further condition. If absolutely, then we are back where we started. For to procure something for another to be given to him on a certain condition, while at the same time securing that condition absolutely for him, is equivalent to procuring the thing itself absolutely. This is in fact exactly what we affirm in this very matter: Christ procured salvation for us, to be bestowed conditionally upon believing; but faith itself He procured absolutely, without prescribing any condition. Therefore we affirm that the purchasing

of salvation for us, in terms of its outcome, is as certain as if it had been purchased absolutely. So on their view as well, all must be absolutely saved. But if this condition is procured upon a further condition — let that condition be stated, and the same question will arise again: was the procuring of it absolute or conditional? The chain never reaches a stopping point unless they fix it somewhere, or it circles forever. On the other side: if this condition is not procured by Christ — the condition upon performance of which all the good things He purchased are actually to be enjoyed — then first, this condition must be made known to all, as in the second argument. Second, all people are either capable of fulfilling this condition on their own or they are not. If they are, then since that condition is faith in the promises, as all sides agree, all people are by the power of their own free will capable of believing. This contradicts Scripture, as will be shown by the Lord's help. If they are not capable, but faith must be bestowed on them and worked in them by God's free grace — then when God gave His Son to die for them and procure eternal redemption for all on condition that they believe, He either purposed to work faith in all of them by His grace so they might believe, or He did not. If He did, then why does He not actually do it? For He is of one purpose and who can turn Him? Why do not all believe? Why do not all have faith? Or does He fail in His purpose? If He did not purpose to bestow faith on all — or equivalently, if He purposed not to bestow faith on all, for God's will does not consist in a mere negation; what He does not will to be, He wills should not be — then the whole thing amounts to this: God gave Christ to die for all people, but on this condition: that they perform what they cannot perform without Him; and He purposed for His own part not to accomplish it in them. If this is

not extreme madness — to assign to God a will to bring about what He Himself knows and has ordained shall never happen; to grant something on a condition which cannot be fulfilled without His help, and which help He purposed not to give — let all judge. Is this anything but to mock poor creatures? Is it possible that any good at all could come to anyone from such a purpose, such a giving of a Redeemer? Is it consistent with God's goodness to intend so great a good as the redemption purchased by Christ, and to pretend He desires it to be profitable for people, when He knows they can no more fulfill the required condition than Lazarus could rise from the grave on his own? Does it befit the wisdom of God to purpose what He knows shall never come to pass? If a man were to promise a blind man a thousand pounds on condition that he open his eyes and see — knowing full well that he cannot — would that promise be supposed to come from a heart that pities his poverty, or rather from a mind that mocks his misery? If a king were to promise to pay a ransom for captives in Algiers on condition that they conquer their captors and come away — knowing full well that they cannot do so — would this be a kingly act? Or as if a man were to pay a price to free captives, but not so that their chains might be removed, without which they cannot leave the prison? Or to promise dead men great rewards on condition that they rise by their own power? Are these not as pointless as obtaining salvation for people on condition that they believe — without obtaining that condition for them? Would this not be assigning to Jesus Christ such a will and purpose as this: "I will obtain eternal life to be bestowed on people and become theirs through the application of the benefits of My death — but on this condition, that they believe. Yet as I will not reveal My mind and will in this matter, nor this condi-

tion itself, to countless of them — so concerning the rest, I know they are in no way able of themselves, any more than Lazarus was able to rise or a blind man to see, to fulfill the condition I require. And without fulfilling it, none of the good things intended for them can ever become theirs. Nor will I bring it about that this condition is ever fulfilled in them. That is, I will that what shall never be done shall be done — and not only know that it cannot be done, but also that it cannot be done because I will not do what is necessary for its accomplishment." Whether such a will and purpose befits the wisdom and goodness of our Savior, let the reader judge. In brief: an intention to do good to anyone upon performance of a condition which the intender knows is entirely beyond the strength of the one required to perform it — especially when he knows it cannot be accomplished without his own involvement, and has resolved not to provide the assistance necessary for its accomplishment — is a vain and fruitless display. That Christ should obtain eternal redemption from His Father, and that God through His Son should intend it for those who shall never partake of it — because they cannot fulfill, and God and Christ have purposed not to bestow, the condition on which alone it can actually become theirs — is unworthy of Christ and worthless to those for whom it is obtained. That anything Christ obtained for the sons of men should come to nothing for them is indeed a hard saying. Again: if God through Christ purposes to save all if they believe, because He died for all, and this faith is not purchased by Christ, nor are people capable of believing on their own — how does anyone come to be saved?

God bestows faith on some and not on others. I ask: is this distinguishing grace purchased for those some, as compared to those who are passed by without it? If it is, then Christ did not die equally for all — for He died that some might have faith and not others. Indeed, in comparison He cannot be said to have died for the others at all, since He did not die that they might have faith — without which He knew all the rest would be unprofitable and fruitless. But if this faith is not purchased for the saved by Christ, then those He saved have no more reason to thank Christ than those who are condemned — which would be strange and contrary to Revelation 1:5: "To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood, and has made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father." For my part, I maintain that Christ obtained salvation for people not conditionally upon their receiving it, but so fully and perfectly that they shall certainly receive it. He purchased salvation to be bestowed on those who believe, but He also purchased faith so that they would believe. Nor can it be objected that on our doctrine God requires of people what they cannot do — namely, faith to believe in Christ. For first, commands do not signify what God intends to happen, but what we are duty bound to do — which may be made known to us whether or not we are able to perform it. A command signifies no intention or purpose of God regarding outcomes. Second, as for the promises set alongside the command to believe — these do not set out the intention and purpose of God that Christ should die for us if we believe. That would be absurd: the act cannot create its own object, which must exist prior to the act, and is presupposed to exist before we are asked to believe it. Nor, second, do they set out God's purpose that Christ's death should be profitable to us if we believe — which we refuted above.

But third, they simply declare that faith is the way to salvation that God has appointed. So all who believe will undoubtedly be saved — faith and salvation being inseparably linked, as will be shown.

If all humanity, by the eternal purpose of God, is divided into two distinct groups — each separately and clearly described in Scripture — and Christ is specifically said to die for one of these groups and nowhere for the other, then He did not die for all. For He dies for every single person in the one group, and for no one at all in the other. There is indeed such a distinguishing division among people by God's eternal purpose: those He loves and those He hates (Romans 9:11-12); those He knows and those He does not know (John 10:14: 'I know My sheep'; 2 Timothy 2:19: 'God knows who are His'; Romans 8:29: 'whom He foreknew'; Romans 11:2: 'the people whom He foreknew'); 'I never knew you' (Matthew 7:23); and John 13:18: 'I do not speak of all of you; I know whom I have chosen.' Those appointed to life and glory, and those appointed to and fitted for destruction; elect and reprobate; those ordained to eternal life and those long foreordained to condemnation. Ephesians 1:4: 'He chose us in Him.' Acts 13:48: 'ordained to eternal life.' Romans 8:30: 'Whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.' On the other side, 1 Thessalonians 5:9: 'God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation' — which implies that others are destined for wrath. Romans 9:18-21: 'He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? Or

does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?' Jude 4: 'ordained to this condemnation.' 2 Peter 2:12: 'born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed.' Sheep and goats (Matthew 25:32; John 10 throughout); those on whom He has mercy and those whom He hardens (Romans 9); those who are His special people and children according to promise, who are not of the world — His church — and those who in contrast are the world, not prayed for, not His people (Titus 2:14; John 17:9-10; John 11:51; Hebrews 2:10-13). This distinction among people is everywhere traced back to the purpose, will, and good pleasure of God. Proverbs 16:4: 'The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil.' Matthew 11:25-26: 'I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.' Romans 9:11-12: 'For though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger."' Romans 9:16-17: 'So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."' Romans 8:28-30: 'And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among

many brothers; and those whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified.' So the first part of the argument is clearly established from Scripture. Now Christ is specifically and plainly said to die for those on the one side: for His people (Matthew 1:21); His sheep (John 10:11-12, 14); His church (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25); as distinguished from the world (Romans 5:8-9; John 11:51-52); His elect (Romans 8:32, 34); His children (Hebrews 2:12-13) — as laid out at greater length earlier. We may therefore confidently conclude that Christ did not die for all and every person — that is, not for those He never knew, whom He hates, whom He hardens, on whom He will not show mercy, who were long before ordained to condemnation; in short, not for the reprobate, not for the world, for which He would not pray. The objection that though Christ is said to die for His sheep, His elect, His chosen — He is not said to die for them only, since the word 'only' is nowhere expressed — carries no weight. For when people are divided into two such opposite categories as elect and reprobate, sheep and goats, and it is then affirmed that He died for His elect, is that not plainly equivalent in meaning to 'He died for His elect only'? Is not the sense just as clearly restricted as if that limiting word had been explicitly added? Does Scripture always add that word in every statement which must necessarily be understood as limited and restricted? When our Savior says, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life' (John 14) — He does not say He alone is so, yet that is necessarily how it must be understood. Similarly in Colossians 1:19: 'It was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him' — He does not add the word 'only,' yet it would be nothing less than blasphemy to imagine extending

that affirmation to anyone else. So despite this objection, this argument remains, as far as can be seen, unanswerable. This point could be pressed further by a more extended treatment of God's purpose of election and reprobation, showing how the death of Christ was a means set apart and appointed for saving His elect, and was never undergone or suffered for those whom in His eternal counsel He determined should perish for their sins and so never share in its benefits. But more must be said on this subject, if the Lord preserves us and grants help for the other part of this controversy concerning the reason for Christ's sending.

We should not assert and affirm what Scripture itself nowhere states first. But Scripture nowhere says Christ died for all people, much less for 'all and every person' — between which two there is a significant difference, as will be explained. Therefore this should not be asserted. It is true that Christ is said to give His life as a ransom for all, but nowhere for 'all people.' And because it is expressly stated in other places that He died for many, for His church, for those who believe, for the children God gave Him, for us, for some of all kinds — though not in those exact words, yet clearly in equivalent terms (Revelation 5:9-10) — it must be clearly proved that where 'all' is mentioned it cannot mean all believers, all His elect, His whole church, all the children God gave Him, or some of all kinds, before a universal conclusion can be drawn from it. If people will simply examine the particular passages carefully and hold back until they have done what is required, I am persuaded the controversy will be settled.

CHAPTER 3



For those for whom Christ died, He died as their surety in their place, as Romans 5:6-8 makes plain: 'For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Galatians 3:13: 'He became a curse for us.' 2 Corinthians 5:21: 'He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf.' All these passages plainly signify an exchange of persons — one being accepted in the place of another. Now if He died as the surety of those for whom He died, standing in their place, then at least two things follow. First, He freed them from the wrath and guilt of death He underwent for them — so that in and through Him they would all be reconciled and freed from the bondage of death. No other reason can be given for why Christ should undergo anything in another's place except that the other might be freed from what He endured for him. All justice requires this, as is also shown when our Savior is called the guarantor of a better covenant (Hebrews 7:22), bearing the punishment that brought us peace and the weight of our iniquities (Isaiah 53:5-7): 'He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we

might become the righteousness of God in Him' (2 Corinthians 5:21). But not all people are freed from wrath and actually reconciled to God. Until people come to Christ, the wrath of God remains on them (John 3:36) — it was never removed. For them, the gospel is a fragrance of death, bringing condemnation through their rejection of it, added to the guilt they already carried. Some have claimed that all people are redeemed, justified, and made righteous in Christ by His death — but this is so directly contradicted by Scripture that I consider it pointless to bother answering such objections. Second, it follows that if Christ died for all and every person, He made satisfaction for all their sins — since the reason He underwent death as a surety was to satisfy God's justice for sin. But Christ has not satisfied God's justice for all the sins of all and every person, as can be shown by several reasons.

First, for those whose sins He satisfied God's justice, that justice is satisfied — or else His satisfaction was rejected as insufficient, which would be the highest possible blasphemy to claim. But God's justice is not satisfied for all the sins of all and every person. Those who must themselves undergo eternal punishment for their sins in order for God's justice to be satisfied — for their sins, justice was not satisfied by Christ's punishment without their own punishment as well; they are not healed by His wounds. That countless souls will throughout eternity bear the punishment due for their own sins needs no proof among Christians, I hope. How can God's justice demand satisfaction from them for their sins, if it had already been satisfied for those very sins in Christ? Being satisfied and requiring satisfaction in order to be satisfied are contra-

dictory — they cannot both be true of the same thing in the same respect. That the Lord will require from some the very last cent is entirely clear (Matthew 5:26).

Second, Christ by undergoing death as our surety satisfied for no more than He intended to satisfy for — something as significant as satisfaction for human sin could not accidentally extend beyond His intention, will, and purpose, especially since His intention and willingness in sanctifying Himself as an offering was absolutely necessary to make His death an acceptable sacrifice. But Christ did not intend to satisfy for the sins of all and every person, for countless souls were already in hell under the punishment of their own sins — from which there is no redemption — at the very moment our Savior offered Himself for sin. Are we to suppose that Christ would offer Himself for those He knew to be beyond recovery, for whom it was utterly impossible that they would ever receive any benefit from His offering? Are we to think that the blood of the covenant was spent on those for whom our Savior intended no good at all? He could not intend good to them without directly opposing the eternal decree of His Father, and thereby of His own eternal deity. Did God send His Son? Did Christ come to die for Cain and Pharaoh, who had been damned ages before His suffering? The claim that Christ died for them and His death would have been available to them if they had believed and fulfilled the required condition is, in my judgment, entirely without force. First, for the most part they never heard of any such condition. Second, Christ at His death knew full well that they had not fulfilled the condition and were completely cut off from any possibility of ever doing so — meaning any intention to benefit them by His death would be vain and futile, which cannot be attributed to the Son of

God. Third, this conditional redemption — 'if they believe' — will be refuted shortly. Nor does the other objection carry any more weight — that Christ might just as well satisfy for those eternally damned at the time of His suffering (for whom it could not be useful) as for those already saved at that time (for whom it was not yet needed). For those who were saved were saved on this basis: that Christ would certainly suffer for them in due time, which suffering was as effectual in purpose and promise as in its actual execution — being counted in the mind of God as accomplished, with the covenant between God and Christ firmly ratified on mutually binding promises, so that it was indeed needed for them. But for those who were actually damned, there was no such basis, purpose, or expected outcome. To illustrate: suppose a man sends word to a prison that he will pay the ransom for the captives' release and invites the prisoners to come out, and the one who holds them accepts his word and pledge. When he comes to make payment, suppose he finds that some left as proposed while others remained stubbornly in their cells — some having heard what he had done, others not, all by his own arrangement, and long since dead. Does he, in paying his promised ransom, intend it for those who died stubbornly in the prison? Or only for those who came out? Doubtless only for the latter. No more can the passion of Christ be supposed to be a price paid for those who died in the prison of sin and corruption before His ransom was paid — though it very well could be for those delivered by virtue of His commitment to pay such a ransom. Third, if Christ died in the place of all people and made satisfaction for their sins, He did so either for all of their sins or only for some. If for only some, then who can be saved? If for all, then why are not all saved? They say it is because of unbelief —

people will not believe, and therefore are not saved. But is that unbelief a sin or not? If it is not a sin, how can it be a cause of damnation? If it is a sin, then Christ either died for it or He did not. If He did not die for it, then He did not die for all the sins of all people. If He did, then why does it still stand as an obstacle to their salvation? The only available answers are: either Christ did not die for their unbelief, or He did not remove their unbelief by His death because they would not believe, or He died for their unbelief conditionally — that is, on condition that they were not unbelievers. None of these appear to be reasonable positions.

For everyone Christ died for, He is their Mediator — this is clear since the offering Christ made of Himself to God in shedding His blood was one of the chief acts of His mediation. But He is not a Mediator for all and every person, which is equally evident: as Mediator He is priest for those He mediates for, and it belongs to a priest — as was shown — to sacrifice and intercede, to obtain good things and to apply them to those for whom they are obtained, as Hebrews 9 makes clear and as was proved at length earlier — none of which Christ does indiscriminately for all. That Christ is not a Mediator for every single person needs no proof; experience demonstrates it abundantly, along with countless Scripture passages. Some reply that Christ is a Mediator for certain people with respect to some acts but not others — but this, if I can judge at all, is a dishonest escape with no basis in Scripture, and would make our Savior a partial mediator for some, which is an unsatisfying notion. But this argument was addressed earlier.

CHAPTER 4



Another argument comes from the effect of Christ's death in bringing about sanctification: if the blood of Jesus Christ washes, purges, cleanses, and sanctifies those for whom it was shed — those for whom He was a sacrifice — then He certainly died, shed His blood, and was a sacrifice only for those who are in the end actually washed, purged, cleansed, and sanctified. That not all people are so is plainly evident — faith being the first means by which the heart is purified (Acts 15:9), and not all people have faith (2 Thessalonians 3:2); it belongs to God's elect (Titus 1:1). This conclusion is undeniable and cannot be evaded by any distinctions. This will be shown first from the types of Christ's blood, and then from plain statements about the thing itself. First, the type: the sacrifice of atonement, which the apostle explicitly compares with Christ's sacrifice and offering, is said in Hebrews 9:13 to ceremonially sanctify those for whom it was a sacrifice — 'the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh.' What was done outwardly and ceremonially in the type must be accomplished spiritually in the reality — in Christ's sacrifice, which those animal sacrifices foreshadowed. The apostle asserts this in the following verse: 'How much more will the blood of Christ, who

through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' The reply of Arminius and others — that the sacrifice sanctified not as it was offered but as it was applied, and that Christ's blood corresponds to the type not in the offering but in the application — is weak and unsatisfying. It merely asserts the very division between oblation and application that we are disproving, and uses that same division to weaken our argument. We grant that the blood of Christ sanctifies through the application of the good things it obtained, but we also demonstrate that it is applied to all for whom it was an offering. Second, it is explicitly stated in various places that the death and blood-shedding of our Savior does accomplish these things and was intended for that purpose. Romans 6:5-6: 'For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.' 2 Corinthians 1:20: all God's promises are 'Yes' in Christ, and through Him 'Amen' — confirmed, ratified, unchangeably established, and irrevocably granted to us, confirmed by the death of the testator (Hebrews 9:16), who was the guarantor of this better covenant (Hebrews 7:22). The sum of these promises is in Jeremiah 31:33, repeated by the apostle in Hebrews 8:10-12, setting out the nature of that covenant ratified in the blood of Jesus — which contains the full description of all free grace toward us, both in sanctification (verses 10-11) and in justification (verse 12). Among these promises is the most significant one of circumcising our hearts and giving new hearts and spirits to us (Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:26). So our entire sanctification, holiness, justifi-

cation, and reconciliation to God are obtained by and secured to us with unbreakable promises in the death and blood-shedding of Christ. We have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14); through death He destroyed the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, so that He might free those who through fear of death were in bondage all their lives (Hebrews 2:14-15). Note especially Titus 2:14 and Ephesians 5:25-26, in both of which our cleansing and sanctification are stated as the goal and intention of Christ Himself, and therefore as the certain effect of His death and offering. Adding only 1 Corinthians 1:30 — 'who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption' — our sanctification, along with all other effects of free grace, is the direct result of Christ's death. To summarize everything said so far: sanctification and holiness are the certain fruit and effect of Christ's death in all those for whom He died; but not all and every person share in this sanctification, purging, cleansing, and working of holiness; therefore Christ did not die for all and every person. It is entirely pointless to object that Christ's death is not the sole cause of these things, since they are not actually worked in anyone without the Spirit's working and faith apprehending Christ's death. For while multiple total causes of the same kind cannot all produce the same effect together, several causes of different kinds may all contribute to one effect, each being the sole cause in its own category. The Spirit of God is the efficient cause of sanctification; faith is the instrumental cause, grasping the righteousness of Christ; and these do not prevent Christ's blood from being the sole moral and meritorious cause of these things — rather they presuppose it, since it is the sole foundation for the Spirit's operation and the sole cause of

faith's existence. To illustrate: a captive is held by an enemy and someone pays a ransom for his release, whereupon the captor orders the jailer to unlock the prisoner and clothe him. Shall we say the ransom was not the cause — indeed the sole cause — of the prisoner's deliverance, simply because the jailer unlocked the chains and the judge's warrant was delivered? None of those things would have happened if the ransom had not been paid; they are no less the effect of that ransom than the prisoner's actual release. Similarly in our deliverance from the bondage of sin, the Spirit's working and the grace of God are causes in their own categories, but they are no less the fruit and effect of Christ's death than the deliverance they bring about — so Christ's death is clearly the chief cause of the whole. Second, to entirely remove this objection and all like it: faith itself is a proper and direct fruit obtained by Christ's death for all those for whom He died. If this is true, it completely overthrows the general ransom and universal redemption; and if it is not true, this entire controversy may gladly be set aside — for either way, free will must be established. This will be proved in the next argument.

Before pressing the intended argument, a few things must first be established.

Whatever is freely given to us in and through Christ is entirely the result of Christ's death. Nothing is given through Him to those who are His that He has not purchased — the price of His purchase being His own blood (1 Corinthians 6). For the covenant between His Father and Him, to make out all spiritual blessings to those given to Him, was expressly founded on this condition: that He would make His soul an offering for sin (Isaiah 53).

It is agreed on all sides that faith is so absolutely necessary for salvation — with no substitute accepted for the lack of it under the new covenant — that whatever God has done in His love by sending His Son, and whatever Christ has done or does in His offering and intercession for all or some, is without faith in us of no value, worth, or benefit to us, but only increases and intensifies condemnation. For whatever else may be said, this is certain: 'He who has not believed will be condemned' (Mark 16:16). So if there is in us a natural power to believe, and the act of believing comes from that power and is our own, then it is certainly and undeniably in our power to make God's love and Christ's death effective toward us or not, simply by believing. This is so obvious that even the sharpest of our opponents have explicitly admitted it, as I have noted elsewhere. Given this absolute necessity of faith, the cause of faith must be the chief and primary cause of salvation — since it is the cause of that without which the whole would not exist, and by which the whole exists and becomes effective.

I will give those of a contrary view their choice, provided they will answer directly, clearly, and without evasive distinctions: did our Savior by His death and intercession — which we proved are inseparably joined — merit or procure faith for us, or not? Or what amounts to the same thing: is faith a fruit and effect of Christ's death or not? I will proceed according to their answer. If they answer yes — that it is, or that Christ procured it by His death (provided they do not deliberately equivocate by speaking of faith as a doctrine rather than as a grace worked in a specific person) — then I ask: did Christ procure faith for all those for whom He died, absolutely or upon some condition they must fulfill? If absolutely, then if He died for all, all must absolutely believe. For what is ab-

solutely obtained for any person is without question absolutely theirs. But this contradicts the apostle: 'Not all have faith' and faith 'belongs to the elect of God' (Titus 1:1). If they say He procured faith for them to be given conditionally, I ask that they state that condition plainly — without equivocation — so we may know what it is. Is it, as some say, 'if they do not resist the grace of God'? But what does it mean not to resist the grace of God? Is it not to obey it? And what is it to obey the grace of God? Is it not to believe? So the condition of faith is faith itself. Christ obtained that they would believe on condition that they believe. Can they name a condition on our part required for faith that is not faith itself? If they can, let us hear it, and we will ask whether that condition was procured by Christ or not. If not, then the cause of faith is still resolved into ourselves, and Christ is not the author and finisher of it. If it was, then we are back where we started and must ask whether that condition was procured absolutely or conditionally — and so on without end.

But second, if they answer no — as their own principles consistently require them to do — and deny that faith is procured by Christ's death, then:

First, they must maintain that faith is an act of our own wills, so entirely our own as not to be worked in us by grace, and that it is wholly in our power to perform this spiritual act. Nothing is given to us by free grace in and through Christ except what He procured by His death and offering, as was established earlier. This is, first, contrary to express Scripture in very many places, which need not be listed here.

Second, it is contrary to the very nature of the new covenant, which does not merely prescribe and require its condition but effectively works it in all covenant members (Jeremiah 31:32-33; Ezekiel 36:26; Hebrews 3:8).

Third, it is contrary to the promotion of God's free grace — elevating the power of free will in fallen human nature while diminishing and undervaluing that grace.

Fourth, this teaching contradicts the accepted doctrine of our natural depravity and inability toward anything good, and by inevitable consequence it undermines that foundational article of original sin.

Fifth, it is contrary to sound reason, which will never allow that a natural faculty can of itself, without some spiritual enabling, produce an act that is purely spiritual (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Second, the advocates of universal redemption must trace almost the entire cause of our salvation back to ourselves — placing in our own power the ability to make everything God and Christ do for that purpose effective, or to frustrate their greatest efforts toward it. For everything that is done — whether in the Father's loving us and sending His Son to die for us, or in the Son's offering Himself as a sacrifice in our place — is admittedly of no value and produces no good outcome unless we believe; and whether we will believe is something Christ has neither worked nor procured by His death, nor can the Lord work it in us in any way that does not leave the final deciding vote on whether we will believe entirely to ourselves. Whether this is not to assign to ourselves the cause of our own happiness and to make ourselves the chief architects of our own glory, let all judge. With these premises established, I will

briefly prove what is denied — namely, that faith is procured for us by Christ's death, and therefore He did not die for all and every person, since not all people have faith — and this will be shown by the following reasons.

Christ's death purchased holiness and sanctification for us, as was proved at length in the eighth argument; but faith, as a grace of the Spirit dwelling within us, is formally a part of our sanctification and holiness; therefore He procured faith for us. The minor premise is entirely certain and not disputed; the major was sufficiently confirmed in the foregoing argument, and I see no valid objection to the conclusion. If someone should claim that Christ procured some parts of holiness for us — speaking of kinds, not degrees or measure — but not all, such as sanctification of hope, love, meekness, and the like: first, what basis exists for any such distinction among the graces of the Spirit, that some should be Christ's purchase and others our own natural endowment? Second, are we by nature more inclined and able to believe than to love and hope? On what ground could such a claim rest?

All the fruits of election are purchased for us by Jesus Christ, for we are chosen in Him (Ephesians 1:4) as the only cause and source of all those good things to which the Lord chooses us, for the praise of His glorious grace, so that in all things He might have first place. There is no need to prove that Jesus Christ is the only way and means by and through whom the Lord will certainly and actually bestow on His elect all the fruits, effects, and intentions of that love by which He chose them. Faith is a fruit — a principal fruit — of our election, for the apostle says we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy (Ephesians 1:4), and faith that purifies the heart is a principal part of that holiness.

Moreover, 'those whom He predestined, He also called' (Romans 8:29) — that is, with a calling that is according to His purpose, effectively working faith in them by the mighty operation of His Spirit, according to the surpassing greatness of His power (Ephesians 1:19) — and so those who are ordained to eternal life believe (Acts 13:48), their ordination to eternal life being the source from which their faith flows; and the elect obtained it while the rest were hardened (Romans 11).

Third, all the blessings of the new covenant are procured and purchased by Him in whom its promises are ratified and to whom they are made, for all the good things of the covenant are contained in and communicated through those promises, by the working of God's Spirit. Regarding the promises of the covenant and their being confirmed in Christ and granted to His own, as in Galatians 3:16, what is meant by those expressions was explained earlier. Therefore all the good things of the covenant are the effects, fruits, and purchase of Christ's death — He Himself, with all things through Him, being the substance and whole of it. That faith is among the good things of the new covenant is clear from its description in Jeremiah 31:33, Hebrews 8:10-12, and Ezekiel 36:26, along with various other passages.

Fourth, whatever is absolutely necessary for salvation must of necessity be procured by the One through whom we are fully and effectively saved. Let those who can explain how He can be said to procure salvation fully and effectively for us while not being the author and purchaser of that without which salvation cannot possibly be attained. Now without faith it is utterly impossible for anyone to attain salvation (Hebrews 11:6; Mark 16:16). But Jesus Christ, according to His name, perfectly saves us (Matthew 1:21),

procuring for us eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12), and being able to save completely those who come to God through Him (Hebrews 7:25); therefore faith also must be included among the things He procured.

Fifth, Scripture speaks in plain terms — and in terms so equivalent as to allow no escape. Philippians 1:29: 'For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.' Faith or belief is the gift, and Christ the one who procured it. 'God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ' (Ephesians 1:3). If faith is a spiritual blessing, it is given to us in Him and therefore for His sake. If it is not a spiritual blessing, then it is not worth debating in this sense. So whatever others may look to, I desire to look to Jesus 'as the author and perfecter of faith' (Hebrews 12:2). Various other reasons, arguments, and Scripture passages could be added to confirm this truth, but enough has been said; the whole argument may be summarized as follows:

If the fruit and effect procured and brought about by Christ's death — absolutely, without depending on any condition in man — is not shared by all, then Christ did not die for all. The premise is true, as is evident in the grace of faith: being procured by Christ's death to be absolutely given to those for whom He died, it is not common to all. Therefore our Savior did not die for all.

The eleventh argument comes from the type to the thing it represents, which clearly restricts the offering of Christ to God's elect. The people of Israel were certainly, in all the remarkable events that happened to them, a type of the church of God, as the apostle demonstrates at length in 1 Corinthians 10:11. Their institutions and ordinances all represented the spiritual realities of the Gospel

— their priests, altar, and sacrifices being nothing but shadows of the good things to come in Jesus Christ. Their Canaan was a type of heaven (Hebrews 4:3, 9), as was Jerusalem or Zion (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22). The whole people itself was a type of God's church — His elect, His chosen and called people — from which parallel, just as they were called a holy people and a royal priesthood, so believers are likewise called the same (1 Peter 2:5, 9). Indeed, God's people are called His Israel in countless places, as further developed in Hebrews 8:8. A true Israelite is as much as a true believer (John 1:47), and 'he is a Jew who is one inwardly.' It hardly needs to be proved that the people of Israel — as delivered from bondage, preserved, brought near to God, and brought into Canaan — were types of God's spiritual church, His elect and believers. Therefore we argue: those only are truly and spiritually redeemed by Jesus Christ who were designated, signified, and typified by the people of Israel in their physical and typical redemption, for no reason can be given why some should be typified as sharing in the same condition and benefits and not others. But by the Jewish people — in their deliverance from Egypt, their entrance into Canaan, and all their ordinances and institutions — only the elect and church of God were typified, as was proved before. In truth, it is the most senseless thing imaginable to suppose that the Jews were types for the entire world, or for anyone other than God's chosen ones, as is proved at length in Hebrews 9-10. Were the Jews and their ordinances types for the seven nations they destroyed and displaced in Canaan? Were they types for Egyptians, unbelievers, and haters of God and His Christ? We therefore conclude with certainty, from the proper correspondence

that ought to exist between types and the things they represent, that only the elect of God — His church and chosen ones — are redeemed by Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 5



Any doctrine that cannot be made to fit or conform to the reality it signifies, nor to the literal and derived language by which Scripture presents it — but instead involves clear contradictions to both — cannot possibly be sound and true, like the pure milk of the Word. This is exactly the case with universal redemption: it can never be made to fit either the reality of redemption itself or the language Scripture uses to describe it. Universal redemption alongside many dying in captivity is in itself an irreconcilable contradiction. To make this plain, consider some of the chief words and phrases Scripture uses to express this subject — redemption, reconciliation, satisfaction, merit, dying for us, bearing our sins, suretyship, Christ being God, a representative person, a Savior, saving completely, a sacrifice that removes sin, and the like. To these we may add the significance of certain prepositions and other words used in the original language in connection with this subject. It will easily be found that the general ransom, or universal redemption, fits almost none of them — it is too large for the bed and must be cut at head or foot.

Begin with the word 'redemption' itself — both the name and the reality. Redemption — which Scripture expresses with one Greek word sometimes and another most frequently — is the deliv-

erance of anyone from captivity and misery by means of a price or ransom. That this ransom or price of our deliverance was the blood of Christ is evident; He describes it with terms meaning 'ransom' (Matthew 20:28) and 'substitutionary ransom' (1 Timothy 2:6) — that is, the price paid for such a redemption, what was received as adequate compensation for our release. The goal in paying this price is the deliverance of those for whom it is paid from the evil oppressing them, which in spiritual redemption is the same as in physical and civil redemption, only with some adjustments as the nature of the matter requires. The Holy Spirit illustrates this by comparing the blood of Christ in this work of redemption with silver and gold and other such things as serve as the ransom in civil redemption (1 Peter 1:18). The evil from which we were oppressed was the punishment we had deserved — the satisfaction required when the debt is sin — from which we are also delivered by the payment of this price. So: 'Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus' (Romans 3:24); 'In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses' (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14). Free justification from the guilt of sin and pardon, delivering us from the punishment it deserved, is the effect of the redemption procured by paying the price mentioned. This is like a man whose friend is in bondage going and spending his estate to pay the price set by the captor for his friend's freedom, thereby setting him at liberty. Only, as noted earlier, this spiritual redemption has some surpassing features not found in other deliverances.

First, the one who receives the ransom also provides it. Christ is a propitiation to appease and atone for us before the Lord; but the Lord Himself set Him forth as such (Romans 3:24-25). God

Himself is often said to redeem us. His love is the cause of the price in terms of its provision, and His justice accepts the price in terms of its merit; for Christ came down from heaven to do the will of the One who sent Him (John 6:38; Hebrews 10:9-10). This differs from redemption among people, where the one who receives the ransom has no part in providing it.

Second, the captive is not so much freed from the power of the one who holds him as brought into that one's favor. When a captive is redeemed among people by payment of a ransom, he is immediately to be set free from the power and authority of the one who held him. But in this spiritual redemption, upon the payment of the ransom for us — which is the blood of Jesus — we are not removed from God but are brought near to Him (Ephesians 2:13). We are not delivered from His power but restored to His favor, since our misery was a punishment involving both banishment and bondage.

Third, as the judge was to be satisfied, so the captor was to be conquered. God the judge gave the devil the opportunity to fight for his dominion, which had been wrongfully seized — though what gave him that dominion was justly imposed by the Lord, and our bondage was rightly deserved by us (Hebrews 2:14; Colossians 2). He lost his power, strong as he was, by grasping for more than he could hold. Since the foundation of his kingdom was sin, in attacking Christ who had no sin he lost his power over those Christ came to redeem, having no claim on Him; so the strong man was bound and his house plundered.

In these and a few other circumstances our spiritual redemption differs from civil redemption, but in essence it corresponds to the word in its proper meaning as used among people. Scripture

expresses this in two ways: sometimes our Savior is said to die for our redemption, and sometimes for the redemption of our transgressions — both pointing to the same reality. Of the latter, Hebrews 9:15 is an example, which some say uses a figure of speech with transgressions standing for transgressors; others say it is a direct expression for the payment of a price by which we may be delivered from the evil of our transgressions. The other expression appears in Ephesians 1:7 and various other places where the Greek words for 'redemption' and 'ransom' occur, as also in Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45. These words — especially the term in 1 Timothy 2:6 — always carry, by their natural meaning, the sense of payment of a price, or an equal compensation in place of something owed, or a grant made for the one to whom that price is paid. With these observations about redemption in general, let us now see how well the idea of a general redemption fits.

Redemption is the freeing of a person from misery by means of a ransom, as the above shows. Now when a ransom is paid for a prisoner's freedom, is it not perfectly just that he should actually receive and enjoy the liberty so purchased for him by a valuable payment? If I were to pay a thousand pounds for a man's release from bondage to the one who holds him — the one with the power to free him, who accepts the price I give — would it not be unjust to me and to the poor prisoner if his deliverance were not carried out? Can it possibly make sense to speak of people being redeemed when those people are not actually freed? That a price should be paid and the purchase never completed? Yet all this must be accepted, along with countless other absurdities, if universal redemption is asserted. A price is paid for all, yet few are delivered; the redemption of all is complete, yet few are actually redeemed;

the judge satisfied, the captor conquered, and yet the prisoner still in chains. Plainly, 'universal' and 'redemption,' when the great majority of humanity perishes, are as incompatible as 'Roman' and 'Catholic.' If there is a universal redemption of all, then all people are redeemed. If they are redeemed, they are delivered from all the misery in which they were enslaved — whether in effect or in outcome — by the intervention of a ransom; so why are not all saved? In short: since the redemption worked by Christ is the complete deliverance of the redeemed from all misery in which they were trapped, purchased by His blood, it cannot possibly be conceived as universal unless all are saved. So the universalist position is incompatible with the meaning of redemption.

CHAPTER 6



Reconciliation is the renewing of friendship between parties who were previously at odds — both parties are properly said to be reconciled: both the one who offended and the one who was offended. God and man were separated, at enmity and at odds because of sin. Man was the offending party; God the offended. The alienation was mutual on both sides, but with this difference: man was alienated in his affections — the ground and cause of his anger and enmity toward God; God was alienated in terms of the effects and expressions of anger and enmity. The New Testament word for 'reconciliation' comes from a root meaning to change or turn from one thing or mindset to another. Hence the basic meaning of those words is 'exchange' and 'to exchange.' For those who are reconciled are usually changed in their affections, and always in terms of the distance and hostility between them. The word cannot be applied to any situation or persons until both parties are actually reconciled and all differences removed regarding any former grudge and ill will. If one party is pleased with the other but that other remains unappeased and implacable, there is no reconciliation. When our Savior commands that whoever brings his gift to the altar and there remembers that his brother has something against him — being offended for any reason — should

go and be reconciled to him, He fully intends a mutual return of goodwill, especially in terms of appeasing and reconciling the one who was offended. Nor are these words used among people in any other sense — they always mean, even in ordinary speech, a full restoration of friendship between disagreeing parties, most often with reference to some compensation made to the offended party. The reconciling of one party and of the other may be distinguished, but both are required to make up a complete reconciliation. Therefore the error of Socinus and his followers is remarkable: they would have the reconciliation mentioned in Scripture be nothing but our conversion to God without the appeasing of His anger and turning away of His wrath — which is a reconciliation on only one side. And the distinction drawn by some between the reconciliation of God to man — making that universal toward all — and the reconciliation of man to God — making that only for a small number of those to whom God is reconciled — is an equally distorted invention. Mutual alienation must have mutual reconciliation, since they are directly correlated. The state between God and man before the reconciliation made by Christ was a state of enmity. Man was at enmity with God — 'we were His enemies' (Colossians 1:20-21; Romans 5:10) — hating Him and opposing ourselves to Him in the highest rebellion to the utmost of our power. God also was at enmity toward us in this sense: His wrath was on us (Ephesians 2:3), which remains on us until we believe (John 3:36). To bring about complete reconciliation — which Christ is said in many places to accomplish — two things are required: first, that God's wrath be turned away, His anger removed, and all the effects of enmity on His part toward us; and second, that we be turned away from our opposition to Him and brought

into willing obedience. Until both of these happen, reconciliation is not complete. Now Scripture assigns both of these to our Savior as effects of His death and sacrifice. First, He turned away God's wrath from us and appeased Him toward us — that was the reconciling of God through His death. 'For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life' (Romans 5:10). That this means the reconciling of God — as the part of reconciliation that consists in turning away His wrath from us — is entirely clear. It is how God supremely demonstrates His love toward us, which is certainly shown in the forgiveness of sin through the turning away of His anger due to sin. It is also set in contrast with 'being saved from the wrath to come' later in the verse, which encompasses our conversion and full reconciliation to God. Besides, in verse 11 we are said to 'receive this reconciliation' — which we receive when it is grasped by faith, and which therefore cannot refer to our own conversion or reconciliation to God, which we do not properly accept or receive, but rather to His reconciliation to us. Second, He turns us from our enmity toward God, redeeming and reconciling us to God by the blood of His cross (Colossians 1:21) — that is, meritoriously and satisfactorily through His atoning work, then accomplishing it in due time actually and powerfully through His Spirit. Both of these are jointly mentioned in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, where we see: first, God being reconciled to us in Christ, which consists in the non-imputation of our sins and is the content of the gospel ministry (verses 18-19); second, the reconciling of us to God by accepting the pardon of our sins, which is the goal of that ministry (verse 20). The same is also declared at length in Ephesians 2:13-15. The actual and effective

accomplishment of both together — in terms of their procurement through the one offering, and in the course of time through the ordinances of the gospel in terms of final completion for each individual — makes up the reconciliation that is the effect of Christ's death. So it is stated in many places: 'We were reconciled to God through the death of His Son' (Romans 5:10); 'And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death' (Colossians 1:21-22). This is so clear throughout Scripture that no one can possibly deny that reconciliation is the direct effect and product of Christ's death. Now how this reconciliation can possibly be compatible with universal redemption, I cannot see. For if reconciliation is the proper effect of Christ's death, as everyone agrees, then if He died for all, I ask: First, how is it that God is not reconciled to all? For He is not — His wrath remains on some (John 3:36), and reconciliation is the turning away of that wrath. Second, how is it that all are not reconciled to God? For they are not — by nature all are children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3), and some throughout their lives do nothing but store up wrath against the day of wrath (Romans 2:5). Third, then how can reconciliation be said to exist between God and all people, when neither God is reconciled to all nor all are reconciled to God? Fourth, if God is reconciled to all, at what point does He become unreconciled toward those who perish? By what change — in His will or in His nature? Fifth, if all are reconciled by Christ's death, when do those who perish become unreconciled, given that they are born children of wrath? Sixth, since reconciliation on God's part consists in the turning away of His wrath and the non-imputation of sin (2 Corinthians 5:18-19), which is justification that renders us blessed

(Romans 4:6-8): if God is reconciled to all, why are not all justified and made blessed through the non-imputation of their sin? Those who have found a redemption in which no one is redeemed, and a reconciliation in which no one is reconciled, may easily answer these and similar questions. I leave that task to their leisure. In the meantime, I conclude this part of the argument: that reconciliation — which is the renewing of lost friendship, the slaying of enmity, the making of peace, the appeasing of God and turning away of His wrath, accompanied by the non-imputation of sins, and on our part conversion to God through faith and repentance — this reconciliation, being the effect of Christ's death and blood, cannot be claimed for any, nor can Christ be said to have died for any, except those of whom all its properties and acts may truly be affirmed. Whether they may be affirmed of all people or not, let everyone judge.

Reconciliation is the renewal of friendship between parties who were previously at odds — both parties being properly said to be reconciled, both the one who offended and the one who was offended. God and humanity were placed at a distance, in enmity and conflict, by sin. Humanity was the offending party, God the offended, and the alienation was mutual on both sides — though with this difference: humanity was alienated in regard to affections (the basis and cause of their enmity), while God was alienated in regard to the effects and expression of anger and enmity. The Greek word for reconciliation means a change or turning from one thing and one mind to another — its primary sense is exchange or substitution — since those who are reconciled always change with respect to the distance and conflict between them, and with respect to its effects. The word cannot be applied to any matter or

persons until both parties are actually reconciled and all differences removed. If one is pleased with the other but the other remains unappeased and implacable, there is no reconciliation. When our Savior commands that someone bringing his gift to the altar, who remembers that his brother has something against him, should go and be reconciled to him, He fully intends a mutual returning of hearts to one another — especially the appeasing of the one who was offended. As then the error of Socinus is notable — who would have the reconciliation mentioned in Scripture be nothing but our conversion to God without the appeasing of His anger and turning away of His wrath, which is a reconciliation that limps on one leg — so likewise the distinction some draw between the reconciliation of God to humanity (making it universal toward all) and the reconciliation of humanity to God (making it only for a small number of those to whom God is reconciled) is an equally distorted invention. Mutual alienation requires mutual reconciliation, since the two are related. The state between God and humanity before the reconciliation made by Christ was a state of enmity: humanity was at enmity with God (Colossians 1:20-21; Romans 5:10), hating Him and opposing God in open rebellion. God also was in this respect an enemy to us, in that His wrath rested on us (Ephesians 2:3), which remains on us until we believe (John 3:36). To make complete reconciliation — which Christ is said in many places to accomplish — two things are required: first, that God's wrath be turned away, His anger removed, and all the effects of enmity on His part toward us; second, that we be turned from our opposition to Him and brought into willing obedience. Until both are accomplished, reconciliation is not complete. Both are assigned in Scripture to our Savior as the effects of His death and

sacrifice. First, He turned away God's wrath from us and so appeased Him toward us — that is the reconciling of God: 'When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son' (Romans 5:10). That this refers to the reconciling of God — that part of reconciliation which consists in turning away His wrath from us — is clear: it is the means by which God chiefly demonstrates His love to us, which certainly consists in the forgiveness of sin through the turning away of His deserved anger. Moreover, we are said to receive this reconciliation (verse 11), which cannot mean our reconciliation to God or our conversion — which we cannot properly be said to receive — but rather His reconciliation to us, which we receive when we apprehend it by faith. Second, He turns us from our enmity toward God, redeeming and reconciling us to God by the blood of His cross (Colossians 1:21) — meritoriously and satisfactorily by way of acquisition and purchase, and accomplishing it in due time actually and effectively by His Spirit. Both are jointly described in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20: first, God being reconciled to us in Christ, consisting in a non-imputation of sins, which is the content of the ministry (verses 18-19); second, our reconciliation to God through accepting the pardon of our sins, which is the goal of the ministry (verse 20). The same is declared at length in Ephesians 2:13-15. Now how this reconciliation can possibly be harmonized with universal redemption I am completely unable to see. For if reconciliation is the proper effect of the death of Christ — as all agree — then if He died for all, I ask: first, how is it that God is not reconciled to all, since His wrath remains on some (John 3:36) and reconciliation is the turning away of wrath? Second, how is it that all are not reconciled to God, since by nature all are children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3) and some spend

their entire lives treasuring up wrath for the day of wrath (Romans 2:5)? Third, how then can reconciliation have been accomplished between God and all people, if neither God is reconciled to all nor all are reconciled to God? Fourth, if God is reconciled to all, when does He begin to be unreconciled toward those who perish, and by what change — in His will or His nature? Fifth, if all are reconciled by the death of Christ, when do those who perish become unreconciled, having been born as children of wrath? Sixth, since reconciliation on God's part consists in the turning away of His wrath and the non-imputation of sin (2 Corinthians 5:18-19) — which is justification, making us blessed (Romans 4:6-8) — why, if God is reconciled to all, are not all justified and made blessed through the non-imputation of their sins? Those who have devised a redemption in which none are redeemed and a reconciliation in which none are reconciled may easily answer these questions. In the meantime I conclude: this reconciliation — the renewal of lost friendship, the destruction of enmity, the making of peace, the appeasing of God and turning away of His wrath through a non-imputation of sins, and on our part conversion to God through faith and repentance — being the effect of the death and blood of Christ, cannot be affirmed of any, nor Christ said to have died for any, except only those of whom all its properties and essential components may be truly affirmed. Whether those properties may be affirmed of all people or not, let everyone judge.

CHAPTER 7



A third way Scripture expresses Christ's death for sinners is satisfaction — that by His death He made satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of those for whom He died, so that they might go free. It is true that the word 'satisfaction' does not appear in the Latin or English Bibles as applied to Christ's death, and in the New Testament not at all, and in the Old Testament only twice (Numbers 35:31-32). But the reality the word points to — a compensation made to God by Christ for our debts — is everywhere attributed to the death of our Savior, using other words in the original languages that are equivalent to the one we use to express it. That Christ made such satisfaction for all those for whom He died, or rather for their sins, is (as far as I know) acknowledged by all who bear the name of Christ outwardly, the wretched Socinians excepted, with whom we have no present concern. Let us first see what this satisfaction is, and then how incompatible it is with universal redemption.

Satisfaction is a legal term, originally applied to things, then extended and applied to persons — it means a full payment or compensation to a creditor from a debtor. Whoever is owed something from another person is that person's creditor, and the other is his debtor, under an obligation to pay or restore what is owed,

until freed by a lawful discharge of that obligation — by rendering satisfaction to what the creditor may rightfully require. If I owe a man a hundred pounds I am his debtor by virtue of the bond I have signed, until something is done that compensates him and leads him to cancel that bond — which is called satisfaction. This was then extended from financial debts to personal offenses: personal debts are wrongs and faults, and when a person commits them he becomes liable to punishment. The one who is to inflict that punishment, or upon whom it falls to see that it is done, is the creditor — which he must do unless satisfaction is made. Now there can be two kinds of satisfaction: first, by payment of the very thing specified in the obligation, either by the party bound or by someone else in his place — as when I owe a man twenty pounds and my friend goes and pays it, fully satisfying my creditor; second, by payment of something equivalent of a different kind — not the same thing specified in the obligation — which the creditor accepts in its place, after which freedom from the obligation follows, not automatically but by an act of grace.

In the matter at hand: first, the debtor is man, owing the ten thousand talents (Matthew 18).

Second, the debt is sin — 'forgive us our debts' (Matthew 6).

Third, what is required in place of it, to make satisfaction for it, is death — 'in the day you eat from it you will surely die' (Genesis 3); 'the wages of sin is death' (Romans 6).

Fourth, the obligation by which the debtor is bound is the law — 'cursed is everyone' (Deuteronomy 27); the justice (Romans 1:32) and the truth of God (Genesis 3).

Fifth, the creditor who requires this of us is God, considered as the offended party, the strict judge and supreme Lord of all things.

Sixth, what intervenes to cancel the obligation is the ransom paid by Christ — 'whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith' (Romans 3:24-25).

I will not enter into a lengthy discussion of the satisfaction made by Christ, but will only clarify it as far as necessary to shed light on the matter at hand. Two things need to be established: first, that Christ did make the kind of satisfaction we are describing, and what it consists of; and second, what God's response toward the debtor ought to be following the satisfaction made. As for the first: the word itself does not appear in Scripture in this connection, but the reality it signifies — a compensation made to God by Christ for our debts — does. To make satisfaction to God for our sins, it is required only that He undergo the punishment due to them, since that is the satisfaction required when sin is the debt. This Christ has certainly accomplished: 'He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross' (1 Peter 2:24); 'By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities' (Isaiah 53:11). The Hebrew word 'nasa' in verse 12 likewise points to a taking of the punishment of sin from us and transferring it to Himself, meaning essentially what we mean by the word satisfaction. Peter's Greek term used in its place carries the same meaning; for to bear iniquity in scriptural language is to undergo the punishment due to it (Leviticus 5:17), which we call making satisfaction for it. This is further illustrated by the description of how He bore our sins — 'He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities' (Isaiah 53:5) — to which is added that the punishment that brought us peace was on Him.

Every punishment is either for instruction or for correction; the first cannot apply to our Savior the Son of God, who had no need to be taught with suffering; it must therefore be punishment and correction for our sins laid upon Him, by which our peace — our freedom from punishment — was procured.

Moreover, the New Testament uses various words and expressions regarding our Savior's death that express what we mean by satisfaction. First, it is called a sacrifice of atonement (Ephesians 5:2), as is apparent from the type it is compared with in Hebrews 9:14-15. The Hebrew word 'asham' carries the same force (Isaiah 53:10; Leviticus 7:2): 'He made His soul an offering for sin' — a sacrifice of atonement for the removing of sin — which the apostle clarifies by saying He was made sin itself (2 Corinthians 5:21), with sin there standing for its consequence, the punishment due to it. He is also called a propitiation (1 John 2:2), which corresponds to the Hebrew word meaning to undertake the debt and make compensation for it — the office of the one who was to be Job's redeemer (Job 19:25). All these and various other words declare the same thing we mean by satisfaction: a taking upon Himself the full punishment due to sin, and in the offering of Himself doing what God, who was offended, was more pleased and satisfied with than He was displeased and offended by all the sins of all those for whom He suffered and offered Himself. There can be no more complete satisfaction made to any person than by doing what pleases him more than the offense against him displeases him. God was more pleased with the obedience, offering, and sacrifice of His Son than He was displeased with the sins and rebellions of all the elect. It is like a good king whose subjects have risen in rebellion against him, so that he is moved to destroy them, and the

king's only son intercedes for their pardon by offering himself to bear the punishment his father's justice has appointed for the rebels — he would properly make satisfaction for their offense, and in strict justice they ought to be pardoned. This was Christ, as the scapegoat that bore and carried away all the sins of God's people, falling under them Himself, though with the certainty of breaking the bonds of death and living forever. Now, since there are two kinds of satisfaction — payment of the very thing that was required, and payment of something else accepted by the creditor's grace in its place — it is worth asking which of these our Savior performed.

Fifth, since a debtor who has paid his debt is equitably due a discharge from any further obligation, the Lord — having accepted payment from Christ in place of all those for whom He died — ought in justice, according to the obligation He has placed upon Himself by free grace, to grant them a full discharge. Sixth, considering the relaxation of the law that the supreme lawgiver brought about concerning the persons bearing the required punishment, such actual satisfaction is made to it that it can bring no further charge against those for whom Christ died — as if they had personally fulfilled everything the law required (Romans 8:32-34). Now how consistent these things — which are themselves evident and flow directly from the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction stated above — are with universal redemption is easily seen. First, if the full debt of all is paid to the last requirement of the obligation, how is it that so many are confined in eternal punishment, never freed from their debts? Second, if the Lord as a just creditor ought to cancel all obligations and cease all claims against those whose debts are so paid, why does His wrath burn against some for eter-

nity? Let no one say it is because they do not live worthy of the benefit given — for that failure to live worthily is itself part of the debt, which is fully paid. As the third point states: the debt so paid is all our sins. Third, is it credible that God calls anyone to a second payment and demands satisfaction from those for whom, by His own acknowledgment, Christ has made full and sufficient satisfaction? Does He have a later accounting that He had not considered earlier? For regarding what was before Him He did not spare His own Son (Romans 8). Fourth, how is it that God never gives a discharge to countless souls, even though their debts are paid? Fifth, why does any soul live and die under the condemning power of the law, never released, if that law is fully satisfied on their behalf — such that it would be as if they had done everything it could require? Let those who can reconcile these things do so. I am no puzzle-solver for them. The inadequate distinctions by which this is attempted have already been addressed. And so much for satisfaction.

In reply: apply this argument to God, which is its real target, and it will be seen to carry no weight. We deny that there is anything in God or done by Him primarily for the good of any but Himself; His self-sufficiency will not allow Him to act with any ultimate reference to anything outside of Himself. And when Grotius says the right of punishment exists for the good of the community, we answer that the good of the community is the glory of God and that alone — so these things in Him cannot be separated.

Second, Grotius adds: punishment is not desirable in and for itself, but only for the sake of the community; whereas the right of dominion and the right of a creditor are things desirable in themselves, apart from any consideration of public benefit.

In reply: first, the comparison should not be between punishment and the right of dominion, but between the right of punishment and the right of dominion; the act of the one should not be compared with the right of the other.

Second, God desires nothing, nor is anything desirable to Him, except for His own sake; to suppose a good desirable to God for its own sake is not acceptable.

Third, there are some acts of supreme dominion that are just as little desirable in themselves as any act of punishment — such as the annihilation of an innocent creature, which Grotius will not deny that God is able to do.

Third, Grotius continues: anyone may without wrong give up the right of supreme dominion or creditorship, but the Lord cannot omit punishment for some sins — specifically those of the impenitent.

In reply: by virtue of His supreme dominion, God may withhold punishment without any violation of or damage to His justice. It is as great a thing to impute sin where it does not exist and to inflict punishment on that basis, as it is not to impute sin where it does exist and to withhold or not inflict punishment on that basis. Now the first of these God did toward Christ, and therefore He may do the latter.

Second, any wrong or injustice in not punishing a sin does not arise from a natural obligation but from the consideration of God's own positive act of will, by which He has purposed to do it.

Fourth, Grotius adds: no one can be called just merely for using his own right or authority; but God is called just for punishing or for not remitting sin (Revelation 16:5).

In reply: however it may be in other cases, in this matter God can certainly be said to be just in requiring His debt or exercising His authority, because His own will is the only rule of justice.

Second, we do not say that punishing is an act of authority, but an act of requiring a just debt — with the requiring of this from Christ in our place presupposing the intervention of an act of supreme authority.

Fifth, his final argument is: the virtue by which one relinquishes authority or cancels a debt is generosity, but the virtue by which a person refrains from punishment is mercy — therefore punishment cannot be an act of requiring a debt or exercising authority.

In reply: the virtue by which a person relinquishes the requiring of what is owed, considered broadly, is not always generosity. For as Grotius himself acknowledges, a debt may arise through injury to one's reputation, credit, or name through a lie, slander, or other means. The virtue by which a person is moved not to demand reparation in such a case is not generosity but either mercy or that grace of the Gospel for which moralists have no name. And so it is with every offended party who has the right to require punishment from his offender but chooses not to exercise it. So, notwithstanding these objections, this remains clearly evident in the matter of satisfaction: that God as a creditor does exactly require payment of the debt in the form of punishment.

The second prominent element is an act of supreme sovereignty and authority, requiring the punishment of Christ as the full and complete answer to the obligation and fulfillment of the law (Romans 8:3; 10:4).

With these things now unfolded, we may briefly note some natural consequences that follow from them. First, the full and complete debt of all those for whom Jesus Christ was surety was fully paid to God, meeting the full requirement of the obligation. Second, the Lord, as a just creditor, ought in all fairness to cancel the bond and cease all suits, actions, and proceedings against the debtor, since the debt has been fully paid. Third, the debt so paid was not this or that particular sin but all the sins of all those for whom and in whose name this payment was made (1 John 1:7), as was demonstrated earlier. Fourth, requiring a second payment of a debt already paid is not consistent with the justice God demonstrated in setting forth Christ as a propitiation for our sins (Romans 3:25).

Fifth, since it is equitably due to a debtor to receive a discharge from further obligation once his debt is paid, the Lord — having accepted payment from Christ in place of all those for whom He died — ought in justice, according to the obligation He has taken upon Himself in free grace, to grant them a full discharge. Sixth, considering the relaxation of the law that the supreme lawgiver brought about regarding the persons bearing the required punishment, such actual satisfaction is made to it that it can bring no further charge against those for whom Christ died — as if they had personally fulfilled in obedience everything the law required (Romans 8:32-34). Now how consistent these things — which are themselves evident and follow directly from the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction — are with universal redemption is easily seen. First, if the full debt of all is paid to the utmost requirement of the obligation, how is it that so many are confined in eternal punishment, never freed from their debts? Second, if the Lord as a just creditor

ought to cancel all obligations and cease all claims against those whose debts have been so paid, why does His wrath burn against some for eternity? Let no one say it is because they do not live worthy of the benefit given — for that failure to live worthily is itself part of the debt, which is fully paid, as the third consequence states: the debt so paid is all our sins. Third, is it credible that God demands a second payment and requires satisfaction from those for whom, by His own acknowledgment, Christ has made full and sufficient satisfaction? Does He have a later accounting He had not thought of? For in regard to what was before Him, He did not spare His own Son (Romans 8). Fourth, how is it that God never grants a discharge to countless souls, even though their debts are paid? Fifth, why does any soul live and die under the condemning power of the law, never released, if that law has been fully satisfied on his behalf — so that it would be as if he had done everything the law could require? Let those who can reconcile these things do so. The inadequate distinctions by which this is attempted have already been addressed. And so much for satisfaction.

CHAPTER 8



Consider what it means, according to Scripture, to live under the effects of God's wrath, and then see how the elect are delivered from it before their actual calling. This consists of several things. First, to be in a state of such alienation from God that none of their services are acceptable to Him — 'The prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord' (Proverbs 28:9). Second, to have no outward enjoyment sanctified, but for all things to be unclean to them (Titus 1:15). Third, to be under the power of Satan, who works freely in the sons of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2). Fourth, to be in bondage to death (Hebrews 2:14). Fifth, to be under the curse and condemning power of the law (Galatians 3:13). Sixth, to be exposed to God's judgment and guilty of eternal death and condemnation (Romans 3:19). Seventh, to be under the power and dominion of sin ruling over them (Romans 6:17). These and similar things are what we call the effects of God's anger. Now let anyone tell me what more the reprobate in this life lie under. And do not all the elect until their actual reconciliation in and through Christ lie under the very same? For first, are not their prayers an abomination to the Lord? Can they without faith please God (Hebrews 11:6)? And we suppose them not yet to have faith — for if they have it, they are already actually reconciled. Second, are

they not under the power of Satan? If not, why does Christ come in and for them to destroy the works of the devil? Did He not come to deliver His people from him who had the power of death, that is, the devil (Hebrews 2:14; Ephesians 2:2)? Third, are their enjoyments sanctified to them? Does anything have a sanctified relation without faith (1 Corinthians 7:14)? Fourth, are they not in bondage to death? The apostle plainly states they are until actually freed by Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:14). Fifth, are they not exposed to judgment and guilty of eternal death? How then does Paul say there is no difference — that all are subject to God's judgment and guilty before Him (Romans 3:9)? And that Christ saves them from this wrath — which in terms of merit was coming upon them (Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:10)? Sixth, are they not under the curse of the law? How are they freed from it? By Christ becoming a curse for them (Galatians 3:13). Are they not under the dominion of sin? 'Thanks be to God,' says Paul, 'you were slaves of sin, but you obeyed' (Romans 6:17). In short, Scripture is abundantly clear in placing and charging all the misery and wrath due to an unreconciled condition upon God's elect until they actually share in the deliverance through Christ.

Some men think to sweep away everything said above with one word, claiming that all this is so only in the elect's own perception — not that these things are actually true in reality. But if these things are only as they seem in their perception, why are they any different for the rest of the whole world? Scripture makes no distinction between them on this point. And if it is so for all, then let all form this new perception as quickly as they can, and all shall be well with the whole world — now so miserably captive under a misunderstanding of their own condition. That is to say: let them de-

clare that Scripture is fiction, and the terror of the Almighty a mere scarecrow to frighten children, that sin exists only in the imagination — and live accordingly to their blasphemous ideas. Some men's words spread like gangrene.

Fourth, of the particular Scripture passages that could abundantly be cited in support, I will be content to name only one. John 3:36: 'He who does not believe the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.' It abides — it was there, and there it will remain if unbelief continues. But upon believing it is removed. But is not God's love unchangeable, by which we will be freed from this wrath? Who denies it? But is an apprentice free because he will be so when his term ends? Because God has purposed to free His people in His own time and will do so — are they therefore already free before He does it? But are we not in Christ from all eternity? Yes, we are chosen in Him, and in some sense in Him from eternity. But how? In the same way as we actually exist now? A person cannot actually be in Christ until he actually is. Now how are we so from eternity? Are we eternal? No — God from eternity has only purposed that we shall be. Does this give us an eternal existence? No, we are of yesterday. Our being in Christ reflects only a like purpose, and from that purpose only a like inference can be drawn.

With this now clarified, it should be apparent to all how strained and far-fetched it is to argue from God's decree of election to the overthrow of Christ's merit and satisfaction. The redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ is the chief means by which that purpose is carried into execution — the will of the Lord prospering in His hand. Indeed the argument may be turned around and will hold undeniably on the other side. The conclusion follows clearly

from God's purpose to save sinners to the satisfaction of Christ for those sinners. The same act of God's will that sets us apart from eternity for the enjoyment of all spiritual blessings in heavenly places also sets apart Jesus Christ to be the purchaser and obtainer of all those spiritual blessings, and to make satisfaction for all their sins. That He did so — being the main point disputed — will be proved by the following arguments.

First, the eternal love of God toward His elect is nothing but His purpose and good pleasure — a pure act of His will by which He determines to do certain things for them in His own time and way.

Second, no purpose of God, no inward eternal act of His will, produces any outward effect or changes anything in the nature and condition of the thing His purpose concerns; it only makes the event and outcome certain and necessary with respect to that purpose.

Third, the wrath and anger of God under which sinners lie is not a passion in God, but only the outward effects of anger — such as guilt, bondage, and the like.

Fourth, an act of God's eternal love that is inward within Himself does not exempt the creature from the condition it lies under — under anger and wrath — until some act of free grace in time actually changes its state and condition. For example: God, beholding the mass of humanity in His own sovereign power as the clay in the potter's hand, determined to make some vessels for honor to praise His glorious grace and others for dishonor to demonstrate His avenging justice — and to this end permitted all to fall into sin and the guilt of condemnation, so that all became li-

able to His wrath and curse. His purpose to save some of these does not at all exempt or free them from the common condition of the rest, in terms of their actual state, until something is actually accomplished to bring them near to Himself. So notwithstanding His eternal purpose, His wrath in terms of its effects remains on them until that eternal purpose expresses itself in some distinguishing act of free grace. This may be further demonstrated by the following arguments.

First, if the sinner lacks nothing for acceptance and peace except a manifestation of God's eternal love, then justification in the gospel sense is nothing but an awareness of God's eternal decree and purpose. But Scripture nowhere teaches that God's justifying of a person is His making known to that person His decree of election, or that justification consists in a person's recognition of that decree, purpose, or love. It is true that a discovery of it is made to justified believers (Romans 5:5), but this is after they are justified by faith and have peace with God (verse 1). In Scripture, justification is an act of God pronouncing an ungodly person — upon his believing — to be absolved from the guilt of sin and clothed with the all-sufficient righteousness of Christ (Romans 4:5; 3:22). But there is not the slightest foundation in Scripture for this manifestation of eternal love as the form of justification.

Second, Scripture is very clear in placing all people before actual reconciliation in the same state and condition, with no real difference at all — the Lord reserving to Himself His distinguishing purpose of the change He will afterward bring about by His free grace. 'There is none righteous, not even one' (Romans 3:10) — for Paul has proven that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin (verses 9-10). All humanity is in the same condition in terms of

themselves and their actual state. 'Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God' (Romans 3:19), exposed to His judgment. 'Who regards you as superior? Or what do you have that you did not receive?' (1 Corinthians 4:7). All distinction in state and condition is by God's actual grace. 'We too were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest' (Ephesians 2:3). The condition of all people during their unregenerate state is one and the same; the purpose of God regarding the difference that will be made is reserved with Himself. Now I ask: do the reprobate in that condition lie under the effects of God's wrath or not? If you say no, who will believe you? If yes, then why not the elect also? The same condition has the same qualities — we have shown there is no actual distinction. Produce some difference that has a real existence, or the argument is conceded.

Third, consider what it means according to Scripture to live under the effects of God's wrath, and then see how the elect are delivered from it before their actual calling. This consists of several things: first, to be in a state of alienation from God such that none of their services are acceptable to Him — 'the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord' (Proverbs 28:9); second, to have no outward enjoyment sanctified, but all things unclean to them (Titus 1:15); third, to be under the power of Satan, who works freely in the sons of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2); fourth, to be in bondage to death (Hebrews 2:14); fifth, to be under the curse and condemning power of the law (Galatians 3:13); sixth, to be exposed to God's judgment and guilty of eternal death and condemnation (Romans 3:19); seventh, to be under the power and dominion of sin ruling over them (Romans 6:17). These are what we call the ef-

fects of God's anger. Let anyone tell me: what more do the reprobate in this life lie under? And do not all the elect, until their actual reconciliation in and through Christ, lie under the very same? First, are not their prayers an abomination to the Lord? Can they without faith please God (Hebrews 11:6)? Second, are they not under the power of Satan? If not, why does Christ come for them to destroy the works of the devil and deliver His people from him who had the power of death (Hebrews 2:14; Ephesians 2:2)? Third, are their enjoyments sanctified to them? Does anything have a sanctified relation without faith (1 Corinthians 7:14)? Fourth, are they not in bondage to death? The apostle plainly states they are until actually freed by Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:14). Fifth, are they not exposed to judgment and guilty of eternal death? How then does Paul say there is no difference — that all are subject to God's judgment and are guilty before Him (Romans 3:9) — and that Christ saves them from this wrath that was to come upon them (Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1)? Sixth, are they not under the curse of the law? How are they freed from it? By Christ becoming a curse for them (Galatians 3:13). Are they not under the dominion of sin? 'Thanks be to God,' says Paul, 'that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient' (Romans 6:17). In short, Scripture is abundantly clear in laying and charging all the misery and wrath of an unreconciled condition upon God's elect until they actually share in the deliverance through Christ.

But some think to dismiss all that has been said with one word, claiming that all this is so only in the elect's own perception — not that these things are actually the case. But if these things are so only in their perception, why are they different for the rest of the whole world? Scripture gives us no distinction between them. And

if it is so for all, then let all form this new perception as quickly as they can, and all will be well with the whole world — now so miserably captive under a misunderstanding of their own condition. That is to say: let them declare that Scripture is fiction, and the terror of the Almighty a scarecrow to frighten children, that sin exists only in the imagination — and live accordingly to their blasphemous ideas. Some men's words spread like a disease.

Fourth, among the particular Scripture passages that could abundantly be cited for our purpose, I will be content to name only one: John 3:36 — 'He who does not believe the Son, the wrath of God abides on him' — it abides: there it was, and there it will remain if unbelief continues, but upon believing it is removed. But is not God's love unchangeable, by which we shall be freed from this wrath? Who denies it? But is an apprentice free simply because he will be so at the end of seven years? Because God has purposed to free His people in His own time and will certainly do so, does that make them free before He does it? But are we not in Christ from all eternity? Yes, chosen in Him we are, and therefore in some sense in Him — but how? In reality, a person cannot be in Christ until he actually is; so how are we so from eternity? Are we eternal? No — God alone from eternity has purposed that we shall be. Does this give us an eternal existence? We are, alas, creatures of yesterday. Our being in Christ relates only to a similar purpose, and therefore from that only a similar inference can be drawn.

With this clarified, it is, I hope, clear to all how strained and misguided it is to argue from God's decree of election to the overthrow of Christ's merit and satisfaction. The redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ is indeed the chief means of carrying that purpose into effect — the Lord's pleasure prospering in His hand.

Yes, the argument may be turned around and will hold unmistakably on the other side: the connection is evident from God's purpose to save sinners to the satisfaction of Christ for those sinners. The same act of God's will that sets us apart from eternity for the enjoyment of all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places also sets apart Jesus Christ to be the purchaser and procurer of all those spiritual blessings, and to make satisfaction for all their sins. That He did this — being the main thing opposed — we prove by the following arguments.

CHAPTER 9



If Christ took our sins upon Himself, and God laid and imposed them on Him, such that He underwent the punishment due to them in our place, then He made satisfaction to God's justice for them so that sinners might go free. But Christ did take and bear our sins, and they were laid upon Him, so that He underwent the punishment due to them — and this in our place. Therefore He made satisfaction to God's justice for them. The conclusion of the argument is clear and was proved earlier. The premise has three parts that must each be confirmed separately: first, that Christ took and bore our sins, God laying them on Him; second, that He bore them in such a way as to undergo the punishment due to them; third, that He did this in our place.

For the first — that He took and bore our sins: 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!' (John 1:29); 'He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross' (1 Peter 2:24); Isaiah 53:11: 'He will bear their iniquities,' and verse 12: 'He Himself bore the sin of many.' That God also laid or imposed our sins on Him is equally clear. Isaiah 53:6: 'The Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.' 2 Corinthians 5:21: 'He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf.'

The second part is that in doing so, our Savior underwent the punishment due to the sins He bore and that were laid upon Him. Death and the curse of the law contain the full punishment due to sin. Genesis 3: 'You will surely die' — that was the threat; death was what entered through sin (Romans 5:12), which word in those contexts encompasses all the misery due to our transgression, as also expressed in the curse of the law (Deuteronomy 27:26): 'Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them' — and that all punishments whatever are included in these is beyond question. Now Jesus Christ, in bearing our sins, underwent both: 'By the grace of God He tasted death' (Hebrews 2:9), delivering from death through death (verse 14); 'He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all' (Romans 8:32). So also the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13): 'He became a curse for us' — made accursed. And this by way of bearing the punishment contained in death and the curse: 'The Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief' (Isaiah 53:10); 'He did not spare Him' (Romans 8:32), 'but condemned sin in the flesh' (Romans 8:3). It remains only to show that He did this in our place, and the whole argument is confirmed.

Our Savior Himself makes this plain. Matthew 20:28: 'Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45) — the word always implies a substitution and exchange of one person or thing in the place of another (as in Matthew 2:22). So also 1 Timothy 2:6; 1 Peter 3:18: 'Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust.' And Psalm 69:4: 'What I did not steal, I then have to restore' — namely, our debt — so fully that we are thereby discharged

(Romans 8:34), where it is stated on this very ground that He died in our place. So the several parts of this first argument are confirmed.

If Jesus Christ paid into His Father's hands a valuable price and ransom for our sins as our surety — thereby discharging the debt we were under so that we might go free — then He bore the punishment due to our sins and made satisfaction to God's justice for them. For to pay such a ransom is to make such satisfaction. But Jesus Christ did pay such a price and ransom as our surety into His Father's hands. Therefore He made satisfaction.

There are four things to be proved in the second proposition: first, that Christ paid such a price and ransom; second, that He paid it into the hands of His Father; third, that He did it as our surety; fourth, that we might go free. All of these will be proved in order.

First: our Savior Himself affirms it. Matthew 20:28: 'Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45), which the apostle describes as 'a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time' (1 Timothy 2:6). Hence we are said to have deliverance through the ransom paid by Christ (Romans 3:24). 'You were bought with a price' (1 Corinthians 6:20), which price was His own blood (Acts 20:28), compared to and shown to be far above silver and gold in this work of redemption (1 Peter 1:18). So this first part is entirely clear and evident.

Second, He paid this price into the hands of His Father. In the case of deliverance from captivity, a price must be paid to the judge or the jailer — that is, to God or the devil; to say the latter

would be the height of blasphemy, for Satan was to be conquered, not compensated. As for the former, Scripture is clear: it was God's wrath that was upon us (John 3:36); it was He who had shut us all up under sin (Romans 3); He is the great King to whom the debt is owed (Matthew 18:23-24); He is the only lawgiver who can destroy and save (James 4:12). Indeed, the ways in which this ransom-paying is described in Scripture abundantly confirm that payment was made to the Father. For His death and blood-shedding is called an offering and sacrifice (Ephesians 5:2), and His soul a sacrifice or offering for sin (Isaiah 53:10). Certainly offerings and sacrifices are to be directed to God alone.

Third, that He did this as our surety we are assured in Hebrews 7:22 — He was made the guarantor of a better covenant — and in carrying out the duty that rested on Him as such, 'He restored what He did not take away' (Psalm 69:4). All of which could have had no other purpose than that we might go free.

To make atonement for sin and to reconcile God to sinners is in effect to make satisfaction to God's justice for sin — everything we mean by that expression. But Jesus Christ by His death and offering did make atonement for sin and reconcile God to sinners — therefore this cannot be denied.

The first proposition is self-evident; the second is confirmed by Romans 3:24-25: 'Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation' — an atonement, a mercy seat, a covering of iniquity — 'in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness.' Similarly, Hebrews 2:17 says He is a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people — to reconcile God who was of-

fended by the sins of His people — which reconciliation we are said to receive (Romans 5:11). And all this is said to be accomplished through 'one righteous act' or satisfaction of Christ (the original words will not bear the meaning usually rendered as 'by the righteousness of one,' for if that were the meaning, the original would have been expressed differently). Through this we were delivered from what it was otherwise impossible to be delivered from (Romans 8:3).

The exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ while He was on earth — consisting in bearing the punishment due to our sins, making atonement with God by undergoing His wrath, and reconciling Him to sinners upon the satisfaction made to His justice — cannot be rejected or denied without serious error. That this was the exercise of Christ's priestly office is most apparent: first, from all the types and sacrifices that prefigured it, their chief purpose being propitiation and atonement; second, from the very nature of the priestly office appointed for sacrifice, Christ having nothing to offer but His own blood through the eternal Spirit; and third, from various and indeed countless Scriptures affirming the same. One or two passages will serve: Hebrews 9:13-14 — 'For if the blood of goats and bulls... how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God?' — where Christ's death is compared to, shown to be greater than, and in fulfillment answers the atoning sacrifices made by the blood of bulls and goats, and so must spiritually accomplish what they outwardly performed and symbolically foreshadowed — namely, deliverance from the guilt of sin through expiation and atonement. For just as in those sacrifices the life and blood of the animal was accepted in place of the offerer who was to die for

breaking the law, so in this the blood of Christ was accepted as atonement and propitiation for us, He Himself being priest, altar, and sacrifice. Hebrews 10:10, 12 states explicitly that He offered up His own body as a sacrifice for sins — replacing all the old insufficient outward sacrifices that could not perfect those who offered them — securing the forgiveness and pardon of sins through that offering of Himself (verse 19).

We also affirm that in doing this, our Savior underwent the wrath of God that was due to us. Since some question this, I will briefly confirm it with the following reasons.

First, the punishment due to sin is the wrath of God (Romans 1:18; 2:5; Ephesians 2:3; John 3:36). Jesus Christ underwent the punishment due to sin (2 Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 53:6; 1 Peter 2:24). Therefore He underwent the wrath of God.

Second, the curse of the law is the wrath of God received as punishment (Deuteronomy 29:20-21). But Jesus Christ underwent the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13) — becoming a curse for us, the same curse that falls on those who are outside of Christ and under the works of the law (verse 10). Therefore He underwent the wrath of God.

No doctrine can be true or consistent with the Gospel if it strikes at the root of gospel faith and pulls away the foundation of all the strong comfort God so abundantly desires us to receive. Such is the doctrine that denies the satisfaction made by Christ and His bearing of the Father's wrath. It leaves the poor soul like Noah's dove in distress, finding no place to rest. When a soul is driven out of its self-righteousness and begins to look to heaven and earth for a resting place — perceiving a flood of wrath covering

all the world, the wrath of God revealing itself from heaven against all ungodliness, so that it can find no rest, unable to reach heaven by its own effort and unwilling to fall to hell — if the Lord Jesus Christ does not appear as an ark in the midst of the waters, upon whom the floods have fallen and yet who has risen above them all, what shall that soul do? When the flood came, there were many mountains impressive in appearance, far higher than the ark — yet those mountains were all submerged while the ark rode on top of the waters. Many towering hills and mountains of self-righteousness and vague divine mercy at first appear to the soul far grander than Jesus Christ; but when the flood of wrath comes and spreads itself, all those mountains are quickly covered. Only the ark — the Lord Jesus Christ — though the flood falls on Him also, rises entirely above it and gives safety to those who rest upon Him. Let me now ask any of those troubled souls who have ever wandered and been tossed with fear of the wrath to come: did you ever find a resting place until you came to this — that God did not spare His only Son but gave Him up to death for us all; that He made Him to be sin for us; that He placed all the sins of all the elect into that cup Christ was to drink; that the wrath and flood they feared did fall upon Jesus Christ (though now as the ark He is above it, so that those who enter into Him are safe) — the storm having been His and the safety theirs? Just as all the waters that would have fallen on those in the ark fell upon the ark while they remained dry and safe, so all the wrath that should have fallen on them fell on Christ — and this alone causes their souls to dwell in safety. Has not this been your foundation, your resting place? If not — in its substance — I fear you are standing on rotten foundations. What would you say if someone came and pulled this ark out from under

you and handed you an old rotting post to cling to in the flood of wrath? It is too late to tell you no wrath is due to you — the Word of truth and your own consciences have told you otherwise: you know the wages of sin is death for all who bear it; whoever it is found in must die. So the soul may well say: deprive me of the satisfaction of Christ and I am undone. If He did not fulfill justice, I must; if He did not endure wrath, I must — and for eternity. Do not rob me of my only treasure. Denying the satisfaction of Christ destroys the foundation of faith and comfort.

Another argument may be drawn from a few particular Scripture passages. First, 2 Corinthians 5:21: 'He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf.' He was made to be sin for us — how could that be? Are not the very next words 'who knew no sin'? Was He not a lamb without spot and blemish? Certainly He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth. What then does this mean — God made Him to be sin? It cannot mean that God made Him sinful or a sinner through inherent sin; that is incompatible with God's justice and with the holiness of our Redeemer's person. What then does it mean — He was made to be sin, He who knew no sin? Clearly: by divine appointment and consent, God charged against Him what He was not personally guilty of. God charged upon Him and imputed to Him all the sins of all the elect, and proceeded against Him accordingly. He stood as our surety, fully charged with the entire debt and required to pay every last amount, as a surety must if called upon — even though he neither borrowed the money nor possesses any of what is in the obligation, he must pay all if brought to judgment. The Lord Christ, if I may put it this way, was brought to the full execution of His Father's justice; in response He underwent everything due to sin —

which we proved earlier to be death, wrath, and curse. If it is objected that God was always pleased with His Son, as He testified repeatedly from heaven, how then could He pour His wrath on Him?

In answer: it is true He was always well pleased with His Son, yet it pleased Him to bruise Him and to put Him to grief. He was always pleased with the holiness of His Son's person, the excellence and perfection of His righteousness, and the sweetness of His obedience — but He was displeased with the sins that were charged on Him, and therefore it pleased Him to bruise and put to grief the very One with whom He was always pleased. Nor does the other objection carry any more weight — that Christ underwent no more than what the elect lay under, and that the elect do not lie under wrath and the punishment due to sin.

In answer: the claim is completely false, and neither part of it holds. First, Christ underwent not only the wrath (taken as what is endured) that the elect lay under, but also the wrath they would have had to undergo had He not borne it for them — He delivered them from the wrath to come. Second, the elect in their respective lifetimes do lie under all of God's wrath in terms of what they have merited and incurred, though not in terms of what they actually endure — they are guilty of it, though not presently suffering its punishment. So, notwithstanding these objections, it stands firm: He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us.

Isaiah 53:5: 'But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.' Something was said earlier about this passage; a few additional observations will help clarify the meaning of the words. 'The chasten-

ing for our well-being fell upon Him' — that is, He was chastened or punished so that we might have peace and go free. Our sins were the cause of His wounding, and our iniquities the cause of His being crushed, all our sins meeting upon Him as verse 6 states. In other words, He bore our sins — as Peter interprets it: 'He Himself bore our sins' (1 Peter 2:24). He bore our sins not, as some suppose, by declaring that we were never truly sinful, but by being wounded for them, crushed for them, undergoing the punishment due to them — consisting of death, wrath, and curse — thus making His soul an offering for sin. 'He bore our sins' — that is, say some, He declared that we have an eternal righteousness before God because of His eternal purpose to do us good. But is this interpreting Scripture, or corrupting the Word of God? Ask the Word what it means by Christ's bearing of sins, and it will answer: His being struck for our transgressions (Isaiah 53:8), His being cut off for our sins (Daniel 9:26). Nor does the expression 'bearing sins' have any other meaning in Scripture. Leviticus 5:1: 'If a person sins in that he hears a public adjuration to testify, and though he is a witness, he does not speak, he shall bear his iniquity' — meaning not that he shall declare himself or others to be free from sin, but that he shall undergo the punishment due to sin, as our Savior did in bearing our iniquities. One would have to be a very clever deceiver to rob a believer of this foundation.

No more arguments or texts on this subject will be urged here, though the cause itself would prompt even the least skilled to find an abundance of them. I have gone as far as the nature of a digression reasonably allows. Nor will I undertake at this time to answer objections to the contrary. A full treatment of the whole matter of Christ's satisfaction — which would require searching out, present-

ing, and refuting all objections — is not my current purpose. As for the objections raised in the debate that gave occasion to this discussion, I will not reproduce them here, lest some think I deliberately constructed weak objections in order to achieve an easy victory over a man of straw of my own making. So weak were they, and so slight was their force against so fundamental a truth as the one we maintain.

CHAPTER 10



A fourth thing attributed to Christ's death is merit — that worth and value of His death by which He purchased and obtained for those for whom He died all the good things Scripture assigns as the fruits and effects of His death. Much need not be said about this, since we have already considered the reality itself under the idea of obtaining. The word 'merit' does not appear in the New Testament in any translation I have seen of the original. But the reality the word points to is evident in both testaments. Isaiah 53:5: 'The punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed' — the securing of our peace and healing was the merit of His punishment and wounds. Hebrews 9:12: 'having obtained eternal redemption' through His blood says essentially what we mean by Christ's merit. The nearest equivalent word is found in Acts 20:28: 'purchased with His own blood' — purchase and merit, obtaining and acquiring being equivalent terms in this matter. What we mean by merit is the performance of such an action that the intended result is justly due to the agent, according to the fairness and equality required in justice: 'Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due' (Romans 4:4). That such merit attaches to Christ's death is clear from what was said earlier and is not disputed by our

opponents. Christ by His death therefore merited and purchased for all those for whom He died all those things Scripture assigns as the fruits and effects of His death. These may be grouped under two headings: first, what He delivered from — freedom from the hands of our enemies (Luke 1:74), from the coming wrath (1 Thessalonians 1), from death's power (Hebrews 2:14), from the works of the devil (1 John 3:8), from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13), from empty conduct (1 Peter 1:18), from the present evil age (Galatians 1:4), and the purging of our sins (Hebrews 1:3); second, what He secured — reconciliation with God (Romans 5:10; Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 2:20), the appeasing of God through propitiation (Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2), peacemaking (Ephesians 2:14), and salvation (Matthew 1:21). All these our Savior by His death merited and purchased for all those for whom He died — so procuring them from His Father that they ought, in view of that merit and according to the fairness of justice, to be bestowed on those for whom they were procured. It was entirely by free grace that God sent Jesus Christ to die for any, and for whom He sent Him to die; it is by free grace that the good things procured by His death are given to any person in terms of those on whom they are bestowed. But considering His own appointment and arrangement — that Jesus Christ by His death should merit and procure grace and glory for those for whom He died — it is a matter of justice with respect to Christ that these things be communicated to them; not merely that they may be, but that they ought to be, and it is injustice if they are not. Having said this about the nature of Christ's merit, it quickly becomes apparent how incompatible the general ransom is with it. For if Christ merited grace and glory for all those for whom He died, and if He died

for all, how is it that these things are not communicated and given to all? Is the deficiency in the merit of Christ, or in the justice of God? How pointless it is to object that these things are not given absolutely but conditionally, and were so procured — when the very condition itself has also been merited and procured (Ephesians 1:3-4; Philippians 1:29), as has already been shown.

Fifth, the very phrases 'dying for us,' 'bearing our sins,' 'being our surety,' and the like, by which Christ's death for us is expressed, are incompatible with payment of a ransom for all. To die for another in Scripture is to die in that person's place so that the other might go free — as Judah entreated his brother Joseph to take him as a slave in place of Benjamin so that Benjamin might be released (Genesis 44:33), Judah thereby honoring the commitment by which he had pledged himself to his father as Benjamin's surety. A surety for another (as Christ was for us, Hebrews 7:22) must bear the danger so that the other might be delivered. So David, wishing he had died for his son Absalom (2 Samuel 18:33), meant an exchange of his life for Absalom's, so that Absalom might have lived. Paul suggests the same in Romans 5:7, noting what might theoretically happen among people — that someone would die for another — alluding to those who voluntarily gave themselves to death for their country or friends, thereby preserving the life of those who would otherwise have died. This plainly is the meaning of 'Christ died for us' — that in undergoing death there was a substitution of His person in the place of ours. Some object that where the Greek preposition meaning 'for the benefit of' is used, as in Hebrews 2:9 ('so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone'), it indicates only benefit to those for whom He died, not requiring any substitution. But this objection

carries little force, for the same preposition used in a similar construction elsewhere clearly does imply substitution — as in Romans 9:3, where Paul says he could wish himself accursed from Christ for his brothers, meaning in their place. And regarding the Greek word 'anti' also used, there is no doubt: it always signifies a substitution and exchange, whether applied to things or persons — as 'a serpent instead of a fish' (Luke 11:11), 'an eye for an eye' (Matthew 5:38), and Archelaus is said to reign in the place of his father (Matthew 2:22). This word is used of our Savior's death in Matthew 20:28: 'The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many' — that is, in the place of many. So plainly, Christ dying for us as a surety (Hebrews 7:22) and thereby bearing our sins in His own body (1 Peter 2:24), being made a curse for us, was an undergoing of death, punishment, curse, and wrath — not only for our benefit but directly in our place. A substitution of His person in the room and place of ours was permitted and accepted by God. With this established, I ask: first, did Christ die in this way for all — that is, did He die in the place and stead of all, His person substituted in theirs? For example, did He die in the place of Cain and Pharaoh and the rest who long before His death were under the power of eternal death, never to be delivered? Second, is it just that those — any of them — in whose place Christ died bearing their sins, should themselves also die and bear their own sins for eternity? Third, what principle of equity or precedent is there for a surety, having fully answered and satisfied every requirement of the obligation, to have those for whom he was surety afterward pursued again? Fourth, did Christ hang on the cross in the place of the reprobate? Fifth, did He undergo everything due to those for whom He died? If not, how can He be said to have died in their

place? If so, why are they not all delivered? I will add only this: to claim that Christ died for all people is the surest way to prove that He died for no one in the sense Christians have always believed, and to push poor souls into the depths of Socinian error.

CHAPTER 11



Our next argument comes from particular Scripture passages that clearly and plainly set out the truth of what we affirm; from the great number of them I will take a few to examine and with them close our arguments.

The first is the very first mention of Jesus Christ — the first revelation of God's mind concerning a distinction between the people of Christ and His enemies — in Genesis 3:15: 'And I will put enmity between you (the serpent) and the woman, and between your seed and her seed.' By the seed of the woman is meant the whole body of the elect: Christ in the first place as the head, and all the rest as His members. By the seed of the serpent is meant the devil together with the whole multitude of the reprobate, making up the opposing kingdom in opposition to the kingdom and body of Jesus Christ. That the seed of the woman refers to Christ along with all the elect is most apparent: for those in whom all the things foretold of the seed of the woman are fulfilled are the seed of the woman — the properties of a thing prove the thing itself. But in the elect and believers, in and through Christ, are found all the properties of the seed of the woman — for in them, through them, and for them the head of the serpent is crushed, Satan is trodden down under their feet, the devil is defeated in his temptations, and the

devil's agents are frustrated in their schemes; this is stated principally and especially of Christ Himself and collectively of His whole body, which bears a continual hatred toward the serpent and his seed.

Second, by the seed of the serpent is meant all the reprobate — the worldly, the impenitent, and unbelievers.

First, because the enmity of the serpent lives and works in them; they hate and oppose the seed of the woman, they have a perpetual enmity with it, and everything said of the seed of the serpent applies properly to them.

Second, they are often called this in Scripture: 'You brood of vipers!' (Matthew 3:7; 23:33); Christ told the reprobate Pharisees 'You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father' (John 8:44); similarly 'son of the devil' (Acts 13:10), meaning the seed of the serpent, 'for the one who practices sin is of the devil' (1 John 3:8). These things being undeniable, we proceed as follows: Christ died for no more than God promised Him He should die for; but God did not promise Him to all — He did not promise the seed of the woman to the seed of the serpent, or Christ to the reprobate; on the contrary, in the very first word about Him He promises an enmity against them. In short: the seed of the woman did not die for the seed of the serpent.

Second, Matthew 7:23: 'I will declare to them, "I never knew you.'" Christ on the last day declares to some that He never knew them. Christ says plainly that He knows His own, for whom He lays down His life (John 10:14, 17). Surely He knows whom and what He has bought. Would it not be remarkable if Christ died for people and purchased them, and then refused to acknowledge

them but declared He never knew them? If they were bought with a price, surely they are His own (1 Corinthians 6:20)? If Christ so bought them and paid with the price of His precious blood for them, and then in the end declared He never knew them — could they not well reply: 'Lord! Was not Your soul deeply grieved for our sakes? Did You not endure for us that anguish that made You sweat drops of blood? Did You not pour out Your own blood that ours might be spared? Did You not sanctify Yourself as an offering for us just as for Your apostles? Was not Your precious blood shed for us through stripes, through sweat, through nails, through thorns, through spear? Did You not remember us when You hung upon the cross? And now do You say You never knew us?' What can be said in answer to this plea if a general ransom is granted, I do not know.

Third, Matthew 11:25: 'I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.' Those from whom God in His sovereignty as Lord of heaven and earth, of His own good pleasure, hides the Gospel — whether in respect of its outward preaching or the inward revelation of its power in their hearts — for those Christ certainly did not die. For what purpose would the Father send His only Son to die for the redemption of those whom He in His good pleasure had determined should be eternal strangers to that redemption and never even hear of it in the power of its revelation to them? Now that such people exist, our Savior here affirms and thanks His Father for that arrangement — at which so many today are complaining.

Fourth, John 10:11, 15-16, 27-28: This clear passage, which by itself is sufficient to overturn the general ransom, has been briefly considered earlier and will therefore be treated even more briefly now. First, that not all people are the sheep of Christ is most evident: He Himself says so in verse 26 — 'you do not believe because you are not of My sheep'; the distinction on the last day will make it plain when the sheep and the goats are separated; and the properties of the sheep described here — that they hear the voice of Christ, that they know Him, and the like — are not true of all. Second, the sheep mentioned here include all His elect, both those not yet called and those already called (verse 16), some not yet in His visible fold — so they are sheep by election, not by believing. Third, Christ states so plainly that He lays down His life for His sheep that He evidently excludes all others: first, He lays down His life for them as sheep, and what belongs to them as such belongs only to such — if He lays down His life for sheep as sheep, He does not do so for goats and wolves and dogs; second, He lays it down as a shepherd (verse 11) and therefore for them as the sheep — what has the shepherd to do with wolves except to drive them away?; third, dividing all into sheep and others (verse 26), He says He lays down His life for His sheep, which is the same as saying He does it for them only; fourth, He describes those for whom He died as those the Father gave to Him (verse 29; 17:6), 'Yours they were, and You gave them to Me' — which are not all — and He gives to them eternal life and they will never perish (verse 28). Let the sheep of Christ hold firmly to this evidence and all the world will never deprive them of their inheritance. To confirm this further, add Matthew 20:28 and John 11:52.

Fifth, Romans 8:32-34: the apostle's purpose here is to offer consolation to believers in affliction or under any distress — which he does in verse 31 in general, from the assurance of God's presence with them and His help at all times, sufficient to overcome all opposition. To demonstrate this presence and kindness, the apostle points back to that most excellent, extraordinary, and unique act of love toward them: God sending His Son to die for them, not sparing Him, but requiring their debt at His hand. He then argues from the greater to the lesser — if God has done the greater, will He not also do the lesser? If He gives His Son to death, will He not also freely give all things? From this we may observe: first, that the greatest expression of God's love toward believers is in sending His Son to die for them — this is made the chief of all; now if God sent His Son to die for all, He has made as great an act of love and as great a demonstration of it to those who perish as to those who are saved, which is plainly false. Second, for everyone for whom He has given and not spared His Son, He will certainly and freely give all things; but He does not give all good things — faith, grace, and glory — to all; from which we conclude that Christ did not die for all. Again, verse 33 describes those who share in this consolation as God's elect — not all, but only those He has chosen; and verse 34 further confirms that those He is speaking of will be freely justified and freed from condemnation — first because Christ died for them, and second because He is risen and makes intercession for those for whom He died. This yields two unanswerable arguments: first, Christ's death infallibly frees from condemnation all for whom He died; second, the apostle makes an inseparable connection between the death and intercession of Jesus Christ — for those for whom He died, He makes intercession, and He saves to

the uttermost those for whom He intercedes (Hebrews 7:25). From all this it is undeniably clear that Christ's death with its fruits and benefits belongs only to God's elect.

Sixth, Ephesians 1:7: 'In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses.' If His blood were shed for all, then all must share in those things available through His blood; but among these is the redemption that consists in the forgiveness of sins, which certainly not all have — for those who have it are blessed (Romans 4) and will be blessed forever, a blessing that does not come on all but on the seed of righteous Abraham.

Seventh, 2 Corinthians 5:21: 'He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.' It was in His death that Christ was made sin or an offering for it; now for everyone He was made sin for, they are made the righteousness of God in Him. 'By His scourging we are healed' (Isaiah 53); 'Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends' (John 15:13). His intercession is not a greater act of love than His dying, nor is anything else He does for His elect. If then He laid down His life for all — which is the greatest thing — why does He not also do everything else for them and save them completely?

Eighth, John 17:9: 'I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.' And verse 19: 'For their sakes I sanctify Myself.'

Ninth, Ephesians 5:25: 'Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her' (as Acts 20:28). The object of Christ's love and His death is here stated to be His bride, His church — as properly as a man's own wife is the

only rightful object of his conjugal love. And if Christ had a love for others so as to die for them, then the exhortation effectively allows men a similar range of conjugal affections for women other than their wives.

I had intended to add further arguments, planning a full treatment of the whole controversy. But on reviewing what has been said, I am confident that what has already been presented will be sufficient to satisfy those who are willing to be satisfied by anything, and that those who are determined to resist will not be satisfied by more. So here our arguments come to an end.

CHAPTER 1



A second thing to consider is the structure and administration of the new covenant in the gospel age, with the expansion and enlargement of the kingdom and dominion of Christ after His appearance in the flesh. By this, all external distinctions having been removed, the division between Gentiles taken away, the dividing wall broken down, the promise to Abraham that he should be heir of the world as the father of the faithful was now to be fully fulfilled. Now this administration stands in sharp contrast to the earlier arrangement that was restricted to one people and family as God's special people — with all the rest of the world excluded — and for this reason gives rise to many broad, general expressions in Scripture. These expressions are far from meaning a universal collection of every individual, but indicate only the removal of all the restricting qualifications that were previously in force. So considering the purpose for which these general expressions are used — and what they are aimed at — will clearly reveal their nature, how they are to be understood, and who is intended and included in them. The purpose is only this expansion of the visible kingdom of Christ to all nations — in terms of right — and to many in terms of reality, since God has elect in all those nations to be gathered in during the various generations in which the

means of grace operate in those places. It is therefore clear that these expressions indicate only a distribution across all groups and peoples, not a universal gathering of every single individual. The thing intended requires the one and not the other. Hence the objections raised against the particular nature of Christ's ransom and its restriction to the elect alone — drawn from the terms 'all,' 'all people,' 'all nations,' 'the world,' 'the whole world,' and the like — are all extremely weak and invalid. They force the general expressions of Scripture beyond their aim and intent. The Holy Spirit uses them only to demonstrate the removal of all personal and national distinctions, the breaking of all the narrow bounds of the old covenant, the expansion of Christ's kingdom beyond the borders of Judea and Jerusalem, the abolishing of all old restrictions, and the opening of the way for the elect among all peoples — called 'the fullness of the Gentiles' — to come in. There being now 'neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, or free, but Christ is all, and in all' (Colossians 3:11). Hence the Lord promises to 'pour out My Spirit on all mankind' (Joel 2:28), which Peter interprets as fulfilled by the filling of the apostles with the gifts of the Spirit, enabling them to preach to various nations (Acts 2:17). 'Through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles' (Romans 1:5) — not among the Jews only, but some among all nations. The gospel being 'the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek' (verse 16) — meaning, as to salvation, only the particular people bought by Christ, whom He redeemed from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Revelation 5:9), where a clear distribution is given of what elsewhere is stated in general terms.

The gospel is commanded to be preached to all these nations (Matthew 28:19), so that the redeemed among all of them might be brought home to God (John 11:52). This is what the apostle sets out at length in Ephesians 2:14-17. In this sense — which we have explained — and in no other sense are those many passages to be taken that are commonly used as evidence for universal grace and redemption, as will afterward be shown in particular.

Third, an exact distinction must be made between human duty and God's purpose, since there is no necessary connection between them. The purpose and decree of God is not the rule of our duty, nor does the fulfilling of our duty in doing what we are commanded declare what God purposes to do or has decreed shall happen. This is especially to be seen and considered in the duty of gospel ministers in proclaiming the Word — in exhortations, invitations, commands, and warnings entrusted to them. All of these are ongoing declarations of our duty and show God's approval of the things exhorted and invited to, as well as the truth of the connection between one thing and another. But they are not declarations of God's counsel and purpose with respect to particular persons in the ministry of the Word. A minister is not to inquire into, nor trouble himself about, those secrets of God's eternal mind — namely, whom He purposes to save and for whom in particular He sent Christ to die. It is enough for them to search His revealed will and take their direction from that, for that is the source of their commission. Therefore there is no logical step from the universal commands of the Word regarding things to God's purpose within Himself regarding persons. They command and invite all to repent and believe, but they do not know in particular on whom God will bestow repentance leading to salvation, or in whom He will power-

fully work faith. When they make offers and invitations in God's name to all, they are not saying to all: it is God's purpose and intention that you should believe. Who gave them any such authority? Rather, they declare that it is His command, which makes it the duty of those addressed. They do not declare God's mind as to what He Himself will specifically do. The external offer is such that from it every person may understand their own duty — but no one can conclude God's purpose from it, though that purpose may be known upon the fulfilling of that duty. The objection is then groundless that claims God has given Christ for all to whom He offers Christ in gospel preaching. For His offer in gospel preaching does not declare to any particular person either what God has done or what He will do for that person — but rather what that person ought to do if he wishes to be approved by God and receive the promised good things. From this it follows: first, that God always intends to save some among those to whom He sends the gospel in its power. The ministers of it — being first, unaware of His particular purpose; second, bound to seek the good of all and every one as far as in them lies; third, to hope well of all and think the best of all, as is fitting for them — may offer Jesus Christ with life and salvation in Him, even though the Lord has given His Son only to His elect.

The infinite value and worth we attribute to Christ's death is seriously undervalued by those who assert universal redemption. That this value extends to this or that object, fewer or more individuals, is external to it, as we showed earlier. But its true worth consists in the immediate effects, fruits, and results of it — in what

it is by its own nature fit and able to accomplish. And these the universalists openly and plainly undervalue — indeed, they nearly reduce them to nothing.

First, they say that by it a door of grace was opened for sinners — they are uncertain where — but they deny that any were effectively brought through that door by it. Second, they say that God could, if He chose and on whatever condition He pleased, save those for whom Christ died — but they deny that a right of salvation was actually purchased by Him for any. From this they conclude: first, that after Christ's death, God could have dealt with humanity again on a legal footing; second, that all and every person could have been damned, and yet the death of Christ have had its full effect. They also grant that faith and sanctification are not purchased by His death — indeed, they say no more is procured for anyone than what he might go to hell in possession of. In various other ways they express their low opinion and slight regard for the inherent value and sufficiency of the death and blood-shedding of Jesus Christ. To the honor of Jesus Christ our mediator — God and man, our all-sufficient Redeemer — we affirm: so great and so dignified was His death and blood-shedding, of such precious value, of such infinite fullness and sufficiency was this offering of Himself, that it was in every way able and perfectly sufficient to redeem, justify, reconcile, and save all the sinners in the world, and to satisfy the justice of God for all the sins of all mankind, and to bring every one of them to everlasting glory. Now this fullness and sufficiency of the merit of Christ's death is the foundation for two things.

First, the universal proclamation of the gospel to all nations and the right it has to be preached to every creature (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16). Because the way of salvation it declares is wide enough for all to walk in. There is enough in the remedy it reveals to heal all their diseases and deliver them from all their evils. If there were a thousand worlds, the gospel of Christ could on this basis be preached to them all — there being enough in Christ to save them all, if they will draw virtue from Him by touching Him in faith, the only way to draw refreshment from this fountain of salvation. It is then entirely groundless when some object that preaching the gospel to all is needless and pointless if Christ did not die for all, and that it makes God call people to believe something that is not true — namely, that Christ died for them. First, because among the nations to which the gospel is sent there are some who will be saved ('I have many people there') who cannot be saved in the way God has appointed unless the gospel is preached to others as well as themselves. Second, because the structure and administration of the new covenant — by which all external distinctions and privileges of peoples, languages, and nations were abolished and removed — required the word of grace to be preached without distinction and all people everywhere to be called to repentance. Third, because when God calls people to believe, He does not first call them to believe that Christ died specifically for them, but that there is no other name under heaven given to people by which they may be saved, except Jesus Christ, through whom salvation is proclaimed. This one thing of which we speak — the sufficiency we have described — is a sufficient foundation and basis for all the general commands to preach the gospel to all people.

Second, gospel preachers in their particular congregations — being completely unaware of God's purpose and secret counsel, and also forbidden to pry into it (Deuteronomy 29) — may on this basis rightly call on every person to believe, with the assurance of salvation given to every individual who does so. They know and are fully persuaded of this: that there is enough in Christ's death to save every one who believes. They leave to God — as they are commanded — the question of on whom He will bestow faith and for whom in particular Christ died.

This is one principal point which, when well understood, will refute many of the groundless claims of our opponents, as will be shown in detail afterward.

A second thing to consider is the administration of the new covenant in the Gospel age, with the expansion and enlargement of the kingdom and dominion of Christ following His appearance in the flesh. Through this, all external distinctions having been removed, the barrier between Jews and Gentiles broken down, and the wall of separation demolished, the promise to Abraham that he would be heir of the world as the father of all who believe was now to be fully accomplished. This administration stands in sharp contrast to the arrangement that was limited to one people and family — God's special possession, all others excluded — and gives rise to many sweeping expressions in Scripture. These expressions are far from encompassing every individual person; they simply signal the removal of the restricting national qualifications that were previously in force. Considering the purpose for which these general expressions are used — and what they aim to convey — will make their nature clear, show how they are to be understood, and identify who is included in them. Since the only purpose is this enlarge-

ment of the visible kingdom of Christ to all nations in terms of right — and to many in terms of fact, God having elect among all those nations to be gathered in throughout the generations in which the means of grace are at work — it is clear that these expressions denote only a distribution of people across all differences, not a collective gathering of every single individual. The thing intended requires the one and not the other. This is why the objections raised against the particular nature of Christ's ransom and its restriction to the elect alone — drawn from the terms 'all,' 'all people,' 'all nations,' 'the world,' 'the whole world,' and the like — are all extremely weak and invalid. They stretch Scripture's general expressions beyond their aim and intent. The Holy Spirit uses them only to demonstrate the removal of all personal and national distinction, the breaking of all the narrow limits of the old covenant, the enlargement of Christ's kingdom beyond the borders of Judea and Jerusalem, the abolishing of all former restrictions, and the opening of a way for the elect among all peoples — called 'the fullness of the Gentiles' — to come in. There is now 'neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all' (Colossians 3:11). So the Lord promises to 'pour out My Spirit on all mankind' (Joel 2:28), which Peter interprets as fulfilled by the filling of the apostles with the Spirit's gifts, enabling them to preach to various nations (Acts 2:17). 'Having received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles' (Romans 1:5) — not the Jews only, but some among all nations. The Gospel being 'the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek' (verse 16) — intending, as to salvation, only the special people purchased by Christ, whom He

redeemed out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Revelation 5:9), where an evident distribution is given of what in other places is stated generally. The Gospel being commanded to be preached to all these nations (Matthew 28:19), so that those purchased and redeemed ones among them all might be brought home to God (John 11:52). This is what the apostle sets forth at length in Ephesians 2:14-17. In this sense — which we have explained — and no other, are those many passages to be understood that are usually pressed for universal grace and redemption, as will be shown in particular cases afterward.

Third, we must carefully distinguish between human duty and God's purpose, since there is no necessary connection between them. God's purpose and decree is not the standard by which our duty is measured, nor does our performance of duty in doing what we are commanded declare what God has purposed or decreed. This is especially to be seen and considered in the duty of Gospel ministers as they dispense the Word — in exhortations, invitations, commands, and warnings committed to them. All of these are ongoing declarations of our duty and express God's approval of the things being urged, along with the truth of the connection between one thing and another. But they are not declarations of God's counsel and purpose regarding individual persons in the ministry of the Word. A minister is not to inquire after, nor trouble himself about, those secrets of God's eternal mind — namely, whom He has purposed to save and for whom in particular He sent Christ to die. It is enough for them to search His revealed will and take their direction from there, from which they receive their commission. Therefore no inference may be drawn from the universal commands of the Word about things to God's purpose in Himself re-

garding persons. Ministers command and invite all to repent and believe, but they do not know in particular on whom God will bestow repentance leading to salvation, nor in whom He will bring about the work of faith with power. And when they make offers and tenders in God's name to all, they do not say to all: it is the purpose and intention of God that you should believe. Who gave them any such authority? Rather, they declare it to be His command, which makes obedience to it the duty of those who hear it. They do not declare His mind as to what He Himself will actually do in any particular case. The outward offer is such that from it every person may conclude his own duty — none can conclude God's purpose from it, though that purpose may be known upon the performance of that duty. The objection of those who claim that God has given Christ to all to whom He offers Christ in Gospel preaching is therefore groundless. For His offer in Gospel preaching is not a declaration to any individual — either of what God has done or of what He will do for that person — but of what that person ought to do if he would be pleasing to God and obtain the promised blessings.

From this the following will flow: first, that God always intends to save some among those to whom He sends the Gospel in its power. The ministers of the Gospel, being first, unacquainted with His particular purpose; second, bound to seek the good of all and every person as much as lies in them; third, expected to hope and think well of all — as is appropriate for them — may offer Jesus Christ with life and salvation in Him, even though the Lord has given His Son only to His elect.

Second, this offer is neither empty nor fruitless, since it declares their duty and what is acceptable to God if it is performed as He requires. If anyone asks what of God's mind and will is declared when people are commanded to believe who did not have Christ die for them, I answer: first, what they ought to do if they will do what is acceptable to God. Second, the sufficiency of salvation that is in Jesus Christ for all who believe in Him. Third, the certain, infallible, and unbreakable connection between faith and salvation — so that whoever performs the one will surely enjoy the other. For whoever comes to Christ, He will in no way turn away — of which more will be said later.

Fourth, the deep-rooted mistaken belief of the Jews — which for a time had a strong hold even on the apostles themselves — that salvation and deliverance through the Messiah, the promised Seed, belonged to themselves alone as the physical descendants of Abraham, must be recognized as the background of many sweeping expressions and expansive descriptions of the objects of redemption. These expressions, arising from this background, give no appearance of any unlimited universality. That the Jews were generally infected with this proud belief — that all the promises belonged only to them and theirs — is entirely clear. So when they saw crowds of Gentiles responding to Paul's preaching, they were filled with envy, contradicting him, blaspheming, and stirring up persecution against them (Acts 13:45, 50). The apostle again describes this of them in 1 Thessalonians 2:15-16: "They displease God and are hostile to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles so that they may be saved." That the apostles themselves had also deeply absorbed this view, inherited by tradition from their fathers, appears not only in their question about the restora-

tion of the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6), but most clearly in this: that even after receiving a commission to teach and baptize all nations (Matthew 28:19-20) and every creature (Mark 16), and being equipped with power from above to do so, they seem to have understood their commission as extending only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. For they went about and preached only to the Jews (Acts 11:19). And when the opposite was made clear and demonstrated to them, they glorified God, saying, 'Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life!' (Acts 11:18) — marveling at it as something previously unknown to them. No wonder people were not quickly or easily persuaded of this, it being the great mystery that had not been made known in earlier ages as it was then revealed to God's holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit — namely, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and members of the same body and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel (Ephesians 3:5-6). But now, this having been made known to them by the Spirit, and the time having come for the younger sister to be considered, the prodigal to be welcomed home, and Japheth to be brought to dwell in the tents of Shem, they labored by every means to root out the old error from the minds of their kinsmen, for whom they had a special concern. They also worked to remove any doubt from the mind of the eunuch that he was a dry tree, or from the Gentile that he was cut off from the people of God. To this end they used various sweeping expressions that stood in direct opposition to the former error, which was completely destructive to the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Hence the terms 'the world,' 'all people,' 'all nations,' 'every creature,' and the like, used in connection with redemption and the preaching of the Gospel — since these things were not restricted, as they had

supposed, to one certain nation and family, but extended to the whole company of God's people scattered in every region under heaven. These expressions are especially used by John, who lived to see the Lord's first coming in that fearful judgment and vengeance He executed upon the Jewish nation some forty years after His death, and is therefore frequent in asserting the benefit of the world through Christ, in opposition, as I said, to the Jewish nation. He gives us the interpretive key: 'He prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad' (John 11:51-52). Consistently with this he tells the believing Jews that Christ is not a propitiation for their sins only, but for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2) — that is, the people of God scattered throughout the whole world, not tied to any one nation, as they had vainly imagined. This sheds much light on the meaning of those places where the words 'world' and 'all' are used in connection with redemption. They do not denote a collective universality, but a general distribution of people of all kinds, in opposition to the mistaken belief described above.

Fifth, the extent, nature, and meaning of those general terms frequently used in Scripture without restriction to describe the objects of redemption through Christ must be carefully considered. The entire weight of the opposing case rests on these expressions. The chief — if not the only — argument for universal redemption is drawn from words that seem broad enough in meaning to support such a claim: 'the world,' 'the whole world,' 'all,' and the like. Once they fix on these terms, they cry victory as if the matter were settled: 'The world, the whole world, all, all people — who can argue with that?' Direct them to the context of the particular passages,

appeal to rules of interpretation, remind them of the circumstances and scope of the passage, the sense of the same words in other places, and the other guides the Lord has given us for understanding His mind in His Word — and they immediately cry out that the plain word and the letter are on their side, away with interpretation and comment, let them believe what the text plainly says. Little do they realize, blinded by attachment to their own view, that if they insist on this approach and refuse to allow interpretation according to the analogy of faith, they in one stroke confirm the senseless madness of the Anthropomorphites — who assigned a physical body, form, and shape to God who has none — and the equally senseless fiction of transubstantiation, along with various other highly destructive errors. Let them go on with such hollow arguments as long as they please. For truth's sake we will not be silent, and we hope to make it very easily apparent that the general terms used here give no support to any argument for universal redemption, whether absolute or conditional.

Two words are especially seized upon: first, 'the world'; second, 'all.' The particular passages in which they appear, and from which our opponents' arguments are drawn, we will consider afterward. For now we only show that the words themselves, according to their scriptural usage, do not necessarily carry any collective universality regarding those of whom they are affirmed. Being words of varied meanings, they must be interpreted according to the scope of the passage in which they occur and the subject matter Scripture treats in those places.

First, regarding the word 'world' — which in the New Testament is a term of highly varied meanings, as anyone familiar with Scripture well knows — I will briefly set out enough distinct

usages to show that from the bare use of a word so thoroughly ambiguous, no argument can be drawn until its meaning in the particular passage is determined.

The word 'world' may be taken: in its physical sense, for the created order or the habitable earth; collectively, for all people, for many, or for specific groups (whether good or evil); or as referring to worldly corruption or a worldly condition.

All these distinct usages of the word are established in the following observations.

The word 'world' in Scripture is generally used in four ways. First, for the world as container — broadly for the entire frame of heaven and earth with everything in them that God created in the beginning (Job 34:13; Acts 17:24; Ephesians 1:4); and more specifically, first for the heavens and everything belonging to them, distinct from the earth (Psalm 90:2), and second for the habitable earth, which is very frequent (Psalm 24:1; Psalm 98:7; Matthew 13:38; John 1:9; John 3:17, 19; John 6:14; John 17:11; 1 Timothy 1:15; 1 Timothy 6:7).

Second, for the world as contained — especially people in the world — and that either universally for all without exception (Romans 3:6; 3:19; 5:12), or indefinitely for people without restriction or expansion (John 7:4; Isaiah 13:11), or for many, which is the most common meaning (Matthew 18:7; John 4:42; John 12:19; John 16:8; John 17:21; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Revelation 13:3), or comparatively for a large portion of the world (Romans 1:8; Matthew 24:14; 26:13; Romans 10:18), or specifically for the inhabitants of the Roman Empire (Luke 2:1), or for people distinguished by their various conditions: first for the good — God's people either by des-

ignation or possession (Psalm 22:27; John 3:16; John 6:36, 51; Romans 4:13; 11:12, 15; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 1:6; 1 John 2:2), and second for the evil — wicked, rejected people of the world (Isaiah 13:11; John 7:7; John 14:17, 22; John 15:19; John 17:25; 1 Corinthians 6:2; 1 Corinthians 11:32; Hebrews 9:11; Hebrews 11:38; 2 Peter 2:5; 1 John 5:19; Revelation 13:3).

Third, for the world as corrupted — or that universal corruption found in all things within it (Galatians 1:4; 4:1, 4; 6:14; Ephesians 2:2; James 1:27; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17; 1 Corinthians 7:31, 33; Colossians 2:8; 2 Timothy 4:10; Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 1:20-21; 1 Corinthians 3:18-19).

Fourth, for a worldly condition or estate of people or things (Psalm 73:12; Luke 16:8; John 18:36; 1 John 4:5; and many other places).

Fifth, for the world as cursed and under the power of Satan (John 7:7; John 14:30; John 16:11, 33; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 6:12). The word has various other meanings in Scripture that are needless to list. I have noted these to expose the emptiness of the arguments some people raise — frightening unstable souls with Scripture's frequent mention of 'the world' in connection with redemption, as though some advantage could be drawn from it in support of the general ransom. Their greatest strength is nothing but sophisticated wordplay drawn from the ambiguity of an equivocal term, and their whole effort is likely to prove fruitless. Now, having shown that the word has various other meanings in Scripture, when I come to consider their objections that use the word for this purpose, I hope with God's help to show that in not one place where it is used in connection with redemption can it be taken to mean all and every person

in the world — as indeed it is in very few places otherwise. Regarding this word, then, our way will be clear if you add these observations to what has already been said.

First, as with other words, so with this one: Scripture often uses the same word in different senses within the same passage. Matthew 8:22 reads: 'Let the dead bury their own dead' — 'dead' in the first instance denoting those spiritually dead in sin, and in the second those who are physically dead through the separation of soul and body. So John 1:11: 'He came to His own' — all things He had made — and 'His own' people received Him not. So also John 3:6: 'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit' — 'Spirit' in the first place being the Almighty Spirit of God, and in the second a spiritual life of grace received from Him. Now in such passages, to argue that because a word has a certain meaning in one place it must have the same meaning in another would violently distort the mind of the Holy Spirit. So also the word 'world' is commonly varied in its meaning. Consider John 1:10: 'He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.' In the first instance it plainly means some portion of the habitable earth; in the second the entire frame of heaven and earth; and in the third some people living on the earth, namely unbelievers. So again, John 3:17: 'God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.' By 'the world' in the first instance we must understand that part of the habitable world where our Savior lived. In the second, all people in the world — as some suppose, and there is truth in this reading too, for our Savior did not come to condemn all people in the world: first because condemning anyone was not the primary aim of His coming; second because He came to save

His own people and thus not to condemn all. In the third, God's elect or believers living in the world in their various generations — those He intended to save, and none else, or else He failed in His purpose and Christ's effort was insufficient for what it was designed to accomplish.

Second, no argument can be taken from a phrase in Scripture in any particular place if in other places where it is used the meaning being pressed from that place is clearly denied — unless the scope of the passage or its subject matter compels it. For instance, God is said to love the world and send His Son, to be in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, and Christ to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. If the scope of the passages where these statements appear, or the subject matter they address, requires that 'world' mean every individual person, so let it be. But if not — if there is nothing in the passages themselves that forces this — why should 'world' there mean all and every person, more than in John 1:10 ('the world did not know Him'), which if taken of all without exception would mean no one believed in Christ, contrary to verse 12? Or more than in Luke 2:1 ('that all the world should be registered'), when only the chief inhabitants of the Roman Empire can be meant? Or in John 8:26 ('I speak to the world the things which I have heard from Him'), where He is addressing only the Jews to whom He was then speaking? Or in John 12:19 ('Look, the world has gone after Him!'), where 'the world' was nothing more than a great crowd from one small nation? Or in 1 John 5:19 ('The whole world lies in the power of the evil one'), from which believers are nonetheless exempted? Or in Revelation 13:3 ('The whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast'), which few would take to mean every individual person on earth? That 'all nations,'

an expression of equal breadth to 'the world,' is to be understood in the same way is clear from Romans 1:5; Revelation 18:3, 23; Psalm 118:10; 1 Chronicles 14:17; Jeremiah 27:7. It is plain that the words 'world,' 'all the world,' and 'the whole world,' when taken as referring to people in the world, usually and almost always denote only some or many people in the world — distinguished as good or bad, believers or unbelievers, elect or reprobate — by what is immediately affirmed of them in the various passages. I see no reason why they should be forced into any other meaning in the passages that are in dispute between us and our opponents. The particular passages we will consider afterward.

What we have said of the word 'world' applies equally to the word 'all,' on which much weight is placed and many groundless boasts are built. We have already stated that Scripture nowhere affirms that Christ died for 'all people' or gave Himself as a ransom for 'all people' — much less for every individual person. That He gave Himself as a ransom for all is expressly affirmed in 1 Timothy 2:6. But who this 'all' should be — whether all believers, all the elect, some of all kinds, or every one without exception — is in dispute. Our opponents affirm the last, and the main reason they give for their interpretation is the force of the word itself. For the circumstances of the passage, the analogy of faith, and other interpretive guides do not favor their reading at all, as we will show when we come to the particular passages they press. For now let us look at the word in its common scriptural usage and consider whether it always necessarily requires such an interpretation.

That the word 'all,' when used by anyone expressing themselves — and especially in Scripture — is to be taken either collectively for all without exception, or distributively for some of all

kinds excluding none, is clear enough that it needs no illustration. That it is sometimes used in the first sense, collectively for all, is granted and need not be proved. Those we oppose claim this is the word's only sense, though I would boldly say it is used in that sense not even once in ten occurrences throughout the whole of Scripture. That it is commonly and indeed frequently used in the latter sense — for some of all kinds, regarding whatever it is affirmed — a few examples from the many that could be given will make clear. So John 12:32: 'And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.' Who are these 'all'? Are they every individual person? Then every individual person is drawn to Christ, made a believer, truly converted, and will certainly be saved — for those the Father draws to Him, He will in no way turn away (John 6:37). 'All' then can here be no other than many, some of all kinds, no kind excluded — as the word is interpreted in Revelation 5:9: 'You purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.' These are the 'all' He draws to Himself. So also Luke 11:42, where our translators have rendered the phrase as 'all kinds of herbs' — taking the word distributively for herbs of every sort, not for every individual herb, which the Pharisees did not and could not tithe. In exactly the same sense the word is used in Luke 18:12: 'I pay tithes of all that I get' — which clearly cannot mean every individual item, as is obvious. Most evident also is this restricted meaning of the word in Acts 2:17: 'I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind' — whether this means every individual person, let everyone judge. In Acts 10:12 our translators render the phrase as 'all kinds of four-footed animals' — creatures of various sorts. In the same sense it must be understood in Romans 14:2: 'One person has faith that he may eat all things' —

that is, whatever he chooses among things that are fit to be eaten. Indeed, in the very chapter where our opponents so eagerly insist that 'all' means every individual person (though fruitlessly and falsely, as will be demonstrated) — namely 1 Timothy 2:4, where it is said that God desires all people to be saved — in that very chapter the word must be understood in the sense we give it: verse 8, 'Therefore I want the men in every place to pray' — which cannot mean every individual place in heaven, earth, and hell, as everyone agrees. No more does 'He healed all diseases' (Matthew 8:35) prove that He cured every disease of every person — it means only all kinds of diseases. Numerous other examples could be given to show that this is the most common and frequent meaning of 'all' in Scripture, and therefore from the bare word alone nothing can be inferred to require an absolute unlimited universality of every individual. The particular passages pressed in debate we will consider afterward. I will conclude this discussion of general scriptural expressions used in this matter with the following observations.

First, the word 'all' is certainly and unmistakably sometimes restricted to all of some kinds, even though the qualifying limitation is not expressly stated. So, for all believers: 1 Corinthians 15:22; Ephesians 4:10. Romans 5:18: 'So through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men' — the 'all people' who are actually so justified are no more and no fewer than those who are Christ's, that is, believers. For justification is certainly not apart from faith.

Second, the word 'all' is sometimes used for some of all kinds (Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 8:11; John 12:32; 1 Timothy 2:1-3) — made apparent by the mention of kings as one type of people in-

tended there. And I have no doubt it will be apparent to all that the word must be taken in one of these senses in every place where it is used in connection with redemption, as will be proved.

Third, let a careful comparison be made between the general expressions of the New Testament and the predictions of the Old, and they will be found to correspond and explain one another — the Lord affirming in the New that what He foretold in the Old has been accomplished. Now in the predictions and prophecies of the Old Testament — that all nations, all flesh, all peoples, all the ends and families of the earth, the world, the whole earth, the islands, shall be converted, look to Christ, come to the mountain of the Lord, and the like — no one doubts that only the elect of God among all nations are meant, knowing that in them alone those predictions find their true fulfillment. Why then should the same expressions in the Gospel — many of them aiming expressly to declare the fulfilling of the former — be stretched to a larger scope, so contrary to the mind of the Holy Spirit? In short: just as when the Lord is said to wipe tears from all faces it does not prevent the reprobate from being cast out into eternity where there is weeping and wailing, so when Christ is said to die for all, it does not prevent those reprobates from perishing eternally for their sins, without any effectual remedy being intended for them, though an offer is incidentally proposed to some of them.

Sixth, observe that Scripture often speaks of things and persons according to the appearance they present and the account taken of them by those observing — frequently speaking of people and to people according to the condition they appear to be in from outward appearances, which human judgment must proceed on, and not according to what they are in reality. So many are called

and said to be wise, just, and righteous in accordance with how they are regarded, even though the Lord knows them to be foolish sinners. So Jerusalem is called the holy city (Matthew 27:53) because it bore that reputation and appearance, when in reality it was a den of thieves. And 2 Chronicles 28:23 says of Ahaz that wicked king of Judah that he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus who had struck him — when in reality it was the Lord alone who struck him, and those idols to whom he sacrificed were stocks and stones, the work of human hands, which could in no way help themselves, much less strike their enemies. Yet the Holy Spirit uses an expression that answers to his idolatrous belief and says they struck him. Indeed, is it not said of Christ in John 5:18 that He had broken the Sabbath, when in fact He had only done so in the corrupt opinion of the blind Pharisees? Add to what has been said this equally undeniable truth: that many things which are proper and particular to the children of God are frequently attributed to those who share outward communion with them and partake of the same external privileges, though in reality they are strangers to the grace of the promise. Put these two observations together — which are entirely plain — and it will readily appear that those passages which seem to express a possibility of perishing and eternal destruction for those said to be redeemed by Christ's blood give no advantage at all to the opponents of the effectual redemption of God's elect. For such people may be said to be redeemed in terms of appearance, not reality — as Scripture speaks in various other cases.

Seventh, what is spoken according to charitable judgment on our part must not always be taken to correspond exactly to the truth regarding those of whom something is affirmed. For the

soundness of our judgment it is enough that we proceed according to the rules of judgment we have been given. What is beyond our knowledge — whether those we judge charitably are truly as we judge them — is not our concern. So the apostles in Scripture often write to people and call them holy, saints, even elect — but from this to conclude positively that they all were in fact so, we have no warrant. So Peter in 1 Peter 1:2 calls all the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia 'who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father' — yet that we have any warrant to conclude with certainty that all were such, no one would dare affirm. So Paul tells the Thessalonians — the whole church to whom he wrote — that he knew their election by God (1 Thessalonians 1:4), and in 2 Thessalonians 2:13 gives thanks that God had chosen them for salvation. Now did not Paul form this judgment about them by the rule of charity? — as he says elsewhere: 'It is only right for me to feel this way about you all' (Philippians 1:3). And can it, or ought it, therefore be concluded with certainty that they all were elected? If some of these were found to have fallen away from the Gospel and perished, would an argument from this be valid — that the elect may perish? Would we not immediately answer that they were said to be elected according to charitable judgment, not that they were so in fact? And why is that answer not equally sufficient and satisfying when given to the objection drawn from the perishing of those said to be redeemed — merely by the judgment of charity — as when it is given to the objection drawn from those said to be elected?

Eighth, the certain connection — according to God's purpose and will — between faith and salvation, which is frequently the thing conveyed in Gospel proposals, must be considered. The Lord has established in His counsel and revealed in His Word that there is an unbreakable bond between these two things, so that whoever believes will be saved (Mark 16:16). This is indeed the substance of the Gospel in its outward proclamation. This is God's testimony that eternal life is in His Son — which whoever believes sets his seal to the truth that God is faithful; he who does not believe does what he can to make God a liar (1 John 5:9-11). Now this connection between the means and the end, faith and life, is the only thing signified and presented to countless hearers to whom the Gospel is preached. All the commands, offers, and promises made to them declare no more of God's will than this: that believers will certainly be saved. This is an undeniable divine truth and a sufficient object for supernatural faith to rest upon. And not being embraced, it is a sufficient basis for condemnation: 'Unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins' (John 8:24). It is a vain imagination of some that when the command and promise of believing are extended to any person — even one of those who will certainly perish — the Lord has a conditional will for their salvation and intends that they should be saved if they believe. When in fact the condition lies not at all in God's will — which is always absolute — but only between the things proposed to them, as was declared before. Those who with great fanfare present the crumbled remains of an old Arminian argument — that as God's offer is, so is His intention, and since He calls all to believe and be saved, He therefore intends it for all — only expose their own ignorance. For first, God does not offer life to all people upon the condition of

faith — He passes by a great part of humanity without making any such offer to them at all. Second, if by God's offer they mean His command and promise — who told them that these things declare His will and purpose or intention? He commanded Pharaoh to let His people go, but did He intend that Pharaoh would actually do so according to His command? Had He not foretold that He would order things so that Pharaoh would not let them go? God's commands and promises reveal our duty, not His purpose — what God would have us do, not what He will do. His promises, as applied to particular persons, declare His mind to those persons; but as indefinitely proposed, they reveal no other intention of God than what we have already shown — His certain purpose to connect faith and salvation infallibly. Third, if the offer is universal and God's intention corresponds to it — that is, He intends the salvation of those to whom the offer on condition of faith is made — then first, what becomes of election and reprobation? Neither can stand alongside a universal purpose of saving all. Second, if He intends it, why is it not accomplished? Does He fail in His purpose? They say He intended it only conditionally, and since the condition is not fulfilled, He does not fail in His purpose even though the thing is not given. But did the Lord foreknow whether the condition would be fulfilled by those to whom the proposal was made or not? If not, where is His foreknowledge, His omniscience? If He did foreknow, how can He be said to intend salvation for those of whom He certainly knew they would never fulfill the condition — and moreover knew this with the circumstance that the condition was not attainable without His granting it, and that He had determined not to grant it? Would they ascribe to a wise man such a will and purpose as they ignorantly and presumptuously ascribe to the

only wise God — namely, that He should intend to have something done upon the performance of a condition He knew full well could never be performed without Him, and He had fully resolved never to bring about? This then is the main thing declared and set out in the proclamation of the Gospel, especially concerning unbelievers: the firm connection between the duty of faith assigned and the benefit of life promised — a connection of universal scope, grounded upon the complete sufficiency of Christ's death for all who will believe.

Ninth, the mixed distribution of the elect and reprobate, believers and unbelievers, according to God's purpose and mind, throughout the whole world and in its various places — in all or most individual congregations — is another reason why a tender of the blood of Jesus Christ is extended to those for whom it was never shed, as is evident in the event from how those proposals so often prove ineffective. The ministers of the Gospel, who are stewards of the mysteries of Christ and who have been entrusted with the message of reconciliation, are acquainted only with what has been revealed — the Lord keeping His purposes and intentions toward particular persons locked in the secret of His own heart, not to be searched out. They are therefore bound to warn and admonish all people to whom they are sent. They issue the same commands, present the same promises, and offer Jesus Christ in the same way to all, so that the elect — whom they cannot identify except by the outcome — may believe, while the rest are hardened. These things being so ordered by Him who has supreme authority over all — first, that there would be such a mixture of elect and reprobate, of wheat and weeds, until the end of the world; and second, that Christ and reconciliation through Him would be

preached by people unacquainted with His eternal distinguishing purposes — two other things follow necessarily. First, that the promises must have a kind of unrestricted generality, to suit this manner of dispensation. Second, that they must be extended to those toward whom the Lord never intended the good things promised, those people having a share in this proposal by virtue of being mixed in this world with God's elect. So from the general presentation of Christ in the promises, nothing can be concluded about His dying for all to whom it is presented, since the presentation has a different origin and purpose. In summary: the message of reconciliation being committed to people unacquainted with God's distinguishing counsels, to be preached to people of various and mixed conditions in respect of His purpose, and the way He has determined to bring His own home to Himself being by exhortations, appeals, promises, and like means suited to the reasonable nature of all who receive the Word — which also serves other purposes toward the rest, such as conviction, restraint, hardening, and the removal of excuse — it necessarily follows that the proposal and offer must be made to some for whom, in respect of God's purpose, it was never intentionally designed. Only, as a conclusion, observe these two things: first, that the offer itself neither is nor ever was absolutely universal to all, but only without restriction as to outward differences. Second, that Christ is not to be received without faith, and God gives faith to whom He pleases; it is therefore clear that He never intends Christ for those on whom He will not bestow faith.

Tenth, the faith commanded and required in the Gospel has various acts and different degrees, which it exercises in an orderly way according to the natural sequence in which its objects are pre-

sented. This is very helpful in the matter at hand. Our opponents claim that if Christ did not die for all, then those for whom He did not die are pointlessly called to believe, since there is no proper object of faith for countless people given that Christ did not die for them. As though the Gospel, from the very beginning, proclaimed this doctrine: that Christ died for every person, elect and reprobate alike. Or as though the first thing anyone living under the means of grace is called to believe were that Christ died for him individually. Both of these are plainly false, as I hope will be made clear to all by the end of our discussion. For now I will only indicate something of what I said before concerning the order of the several acts of faith, by which it will appear that no one in the world is called or invited to believe without having a sufficient object for faith to rest on — truth enough for its foundation and scope enough for its fullest exercise.

First, the first thing the Gospel requires sinners to believe — and which it urges and commands them to believe — is that salvation is not to be found in themselves, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and not by the works of the law, by which no living person can be justified. Here is a saving Gospel truth for sinners to believe, on which the apostle dwells throughout Romans chapters 1, 2, and 3, to prepare the way for justification through Christ. Now how many countless people are there to whom the Gospel is preached who never even come this far — who never believe so much as this — among whom one may count nearly the entire nation of the Jews, as is evident from Romans 9 and 10. Contempt of this object of faith is the sin of unbelief.

Second, the Gospel requires faith that salvation is to be found in the promised Seed — in Him who was appointed to be the author of salvation for those who believe. And here also, at this point, some millions of the great company of outwardly called people fall away and never truly believe that God has provided a way for saving sinners.

Third, that Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified by the Jews was this promised Savior, and that there is no other name under heaven given among people by which we must be saved besides His. This was the main issue that caused the Jews to break away, refusing to accept Christ as the Savior of humanity and instead treating Him as an enemy of God — and they are therefore so often charged with unbelief and condemnable faithlessness. The question between Christ and them was not whether He died for them all or not, but whether He was the promised Messiah — which they denied, and they perished in their unbelief. Before these three acts of faith are performed, it is pointless to urge the soul to climb the highest steps while bypassing all the foundational ones.

Fourth, the Gospel requires a resting on this Christ — now known and believed to be the promised Redeemer — as an all-sufficient Savior, in whom there is abundant redemption, who is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God through Him, and who can carry the burden of all weary and burdened souls who come to Him by faith. In this presentation there is a certain and infallible truth grounded on the overflowing sufficiency of Christ's offering in itself for whoever — fewer or more — it may have been intended. Now much self-knowledge, much conviction, and a deep sense of sin, God's justice, and free grace is required for this act of faith to be exercised. Good Lord — how many thousands of poor

souls within the visible church are never brought to it! The truth is, without the help of God's Spirit none of those three prior acts, much less this last one, can be performed — and that Spirit works freely, when, how, and in whom He pleases.

Fifth, with these things firmly established in the soul — and not before — each person individually is called to believe in the effective power of the redemption that is in the blood of Jesus toward his own soul in particular. Everyone may do this with certainty in whom God's free grace has worked the prior acts of faith and also works this one — without either doubt or fear that there is no proper object to believe. For certainly Christ died for every one in whose hearts the Lord by His almighty power effectively works the faith to lay hold on Him and trust in Him, according to that orderly presentation held out in the Gospel. Now according to this order — as some have observed — the articles of our faith are arranged in the Apostles' Creed, that ancient summary of the Christian faith, with the forgiveness of our sins and eternal life being proposed to be believed in the last place. So it is empty foolishness to cry out that the object of faith is nullified if Christ did not die for all, since there is absolute truth in everything anyone is called to believe according to the Gospel's order.

And so I have set out the general foundations of those answers we will give to the following objections. Applying them to particular cases will be a straightforward task, as I hope will be made plain to all.

CHAPTER 2



We now come to the objections with which the doctrine we have clearly confirmed from God's Word is commonly attacked with great noise and argument. I must give three warnings about these before I present them.

The first is this: for my own part I would rather they were never brought to light in opposition to God's truth, which they appear to attack. If it were my choice, I would not raise a single one of them — not because there is any serious difficulty in them that would make answering them burdensome, but only because I have no desire to give any breath or visibility to what opposes God's truth. But because in these days of widespread error most of them have already been placed before readers by those lying in wait to deceive, or are likely to be, I will show you the poison and also equip you with an antidote against the venom of such false teachers as our times are full of.

Second, I ask you: when you hear an objection, do not be swept away by the sound of words or allow it to make an impression on your mind. Remember how many demonstrations and countless Scripture passages have confirmed the truth these objections oppose. Hold your judgment until the passages have been carefully

weighed, the arguments considered, and the answers set out — and then may the Lord guide you to test all things and hold fast what is good.

Third, observe carefully what actually touches the heart of the controversy and the real point of difference, setting aside all other rhetorical flourishes and empty words as having no weight or importance.

Now the objections raised against the truth we maintain are of two kinds: the first drawn from Scripture misused, the other from reason abused. We begin with the first. All the Scripture passages that might seem in any way to contradict our position are grouped by our strongest opponents under three headings: first, passages that say Christ died for the world, or otherwise mention the word 'world' in the context of redemption; second, those that mention 'all' and 'every man' either in the work of Christ's dying for them or where God is said to will their salvation; third, those that say Christ bought or died for some who perish. From these they construct three main arguments on which they heavily rely, all of which we will address in order. The first is taken from the word 'world' and is put forward by them as follows.

He who was given out of the love with which God loved the world (John 3:16), who gave Himself for the life of the world (John 6:51), and who was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2) — to which add John 1:29; John 4:42; 2 Corinthians 5:19 — was given and died for every person in the world. But the first is true of Christ as the cited passages show. Therefore He died for all and every one.

Granting them the freedom to make this claim, we flatly deny the step from 'the world' to 'all and every one' and are prepared to demonstrate why we are right to do so. They attempt to prove this step in two ways: first by reasoning about the meaning of the word, and second by examining the particular passages cited. We will test both.

First, if they wish to prove it by reasoning, the argument must take this form:

The whole world contains all and every person in the world. Christ died for the whole world. Therefore Christ died for all and every person.

This syllogism obviously contains four terms arising from the ambiguity of the word 'world,' and therefore has no valid middle term on which the conclusion can rest. The word 'world' in the first premise is taken to mean the world as a container, and in the second premise the world as what is contained — the people in the world — which is too obvious to need proof. So unless you make the conclusion 'therefore Christ died for the container of all people in the world' and claim in the premise that Christ died for the world as a physical container — which is absurd — this syllogism is logically false. If then any proof is to be drawn from the word 'world,' it must come not from the physical thing but from the meaning of the word in Scripture, argued as follows:

The word 'world' in Scripture means all and every person in the world. But Christ is said to die for the world. Therefore He died for all and every one.

The first premise about the meaning of the word 'world' is either universal — claiming this is its meaning in all places — or particular, claiming this is its meaning in only some places. If universal, the premise is plainly false as was shown earlier. If particular, then the argument must be constructed as follows:

In some places in Scripture the word 'world' means all and every person in the world of all ages, times, and conditions.

But Christ is said to die for the world. Therefore He died for all and every person.

That this syllogism is no better than the previous one is evident — a universal conclusion is being drawn from a particular premise. Now with the first premise rightly stated, I have one question about the second premise: is it claimed that Christ is said to have died for the world in every place where His death is mentioned, or only in some? If in every place, that is plainly false, as has already been shown by the many Scripture passages that restrict Christ's death to His elect, His sheep, His church — passages which far outnumber these. If only in some, then the argument must run as follows:

In some few places of Scripture the word 'world' means all and every person in the world. But in some few places Christ is said to die for the world. Therefore He died for all and every person.

This argument is so weak, confused, and logically invalid that it should be apparent to anyone. And yet from the word 'world' itself it cannot be made any stronger. It draws a universal conclusion from particular premises, and besides obviously contains four terms in the syllogism — unless the 'some places' in the first

premise are proved to be the very same 'some places' in the second premise, which is precisely what is in question. So if any force is to be drawn from this word, it must be argued in this form:

If the word 'world' means all and every person in those places where Christ is said to die for the world, then Christ died for all and every person. But the word 'world' in all those places where Christ is said to die for the world does mean all and every person in the world. Therefore Christ died for them all.

First, there is only one place where it is said that Christ gave His life for the world or died for it in a way that holds out our Savior's intention. All the other passages seem only to set forth the sufficiency of His offering for all — which we also affirm. Second, we flatly deny the second premise and invite examination of all those particular passages in which such mention is made.

I have thus called this argument to account and measured it, so that its supposed great strength might be seen for what it is — which is in fact great weakness. Those who seize on the word 'world' and immediately run with it as though the case for universal redemption is settled — when pressed to articulate and demonstrate the strength of their reasoning, they know nothing to say but 'the world' and 'the whole world,' understanding neither what they are saying nor what they are affirming. A weaker argument, I dare say, was never produced by reasonable people in so serious a cause. This will be further shown by examining the specific passages brought forward in support of it, which we will take in order.

The first passage we address is the one our opponents put forward first and rely on heavily. And yet, despite their confident claims, there are many who think that very text is just as well

suiting to overturn their entire position as Goliath's own sword was suited to cut off his head — many unanswerable arguments against universal redemption being easily drawn from the words of the text itself. May the great and peaceable King of His church guide us to uphold the truth concerning this contested passage. The passage is John 3:16: 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.'

The universalists greatly boast in this passage, and yet we are persuaded they have so little justification for doing so that we do not doubt, with the Lord's help, to show that it is destructive to their entire case. To this end I will briefly give you two readings of the words: the first expressing their interpretation, the second ours. Our opponents explain the words as follows: 'God so loved' — had such a natural inclination and tendency toward the good of — 'the world' — Adam with all and every one of his descendants of all ages, times, and conditions — 'that He gave His only begotten Son,' causing Him to become incarnate in the fullness of time, 'to die' — not with a purpose to save anyone in particular, but 'that whoever' — whatever persons among those toward whom He had this inclination — 'believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life,' should receive this result: to escape death and hell and live forever. In this explanation of the passage, the following things are to be noted.

First, what that love is which was the cause of sending or giving Christ — which they make to be a natural inclination toward the good of all.

Second, who the objects of this love are — all and every person of all generations.

Third, what this giving consists of — on which I cannot determine whether they mean by it the appointment of Christ as a Savior or His actual coming in the flesh to accomplish His ministry.

Fourth, 'whoever' — they take this as distributive of the persons in the world, and therefore not intended to restrict to some.

Fifth, that eternal life is the fruit obtained by believers, but not the end God intended.

Now look in the second place at what we believe to be the mind of God in these words, whose purpose we take to be the exaltation and declaration of God's free love to lost sinners in sending Christ to procure for them eternal redemption, as may be seen in the following reading.

'God' — the Father — 'so loved' — had such a special and surpassing love, being an unchangeable purpose and act of His will concerning their salvation, toward — 'the world' — miserable, sinful, lost people of all kinds, not only Jews but Gentiles also, whom He peculiarly loved — 'that' — intending their salvation as the last words show, for the praise of His glorious grace — 'He gave' — prepared a way to prevent their everlasting ruin by appointing and sending — 'His only begotten Son' — to be an all-sufficient Savior to all who look to Him — 'that whoever believes in Him' — all believers without distinction, and only they — 'should not perish but have eternal life' — and so be effectively brought to receive those glorious things through Him that the Lord in His free love had designed for them. In this expanded reading of the words, which we believe reflects the mind of the Holy Spirit, these things are to be noted.

First, what we understand by the love of God here — that act of His will which was the cause of sending His Son Jesus Christ, being the highest act of love and favor toward the creature. For love is willing good to another, and God never willed greater good to the creature than in appointing His Son for their redemption. I should note, however, that I do not make the purpose of sending or giving Christ absolutely subordinate to God's love to His elect, as though the one were the end of the other in an absolute sense. Rather, both are equally directed to the same supreme end — the manifestation of God's glory through mercy combined with justice. But in terms of our understanding of the relationship they bear to each other: this love is, we say, the greatest there is.

Second, by 'the world' we understand the elect of God only — though not considered in this place as such, but under a description that, being true of them, serves to further exalt God's love toward them, which is the purpose here. And this is as they are poor, miserable, lost creatures in the world, of the world, scattered throughout all places of the world, not restricted to Jews or Greeks, but dispersed among every nation, people, and language under heaven.

Third, 'that whoever believes' is for us a declaration of God's intention in sending or giving His Son, and does not distribute the objects of God's love but directs us to the persons whose good was intended — that love being an unchangeable purpose of the greatest good.

Fourth, 'should not perish but have eternal life' expresses the specific aim and intention of God in this matter, which is the certain salvation of believers through Christ. This, in general, is the interpretation of the words we hold. It yields several arguments,

each sufficient on its own to overthrow the general ransom. To make these more clearly grounded and convincing, we will lay out and compare the several words and expressions in this passage about whose meaning we differ, with the reasons for rejecting one reading and accepting the other.

First, the first point of difference in interpreting this passage concerns the cause of sending Christ, here called 'love.' Second, the second concerns the object of this love, here called 'the world.' Third, the concern is about God's intention in sending His Son, said to be that believers might be saved.

On the first point: by 'love' in this passage our opponents agree that a natural affection and tendency in God toward the good of creatures lost in sin generally is meant — which moved Him to find some way by which it might possibly be remedied.

We on the contrary hold that 'love' here means not a natural inclination or tendency, but an act of His will — which is where we believe His love is grounded — and an eternal purpose to do good to humanity, being the most surpassing and excellent act of God's love toward the creature.

So that both interpretations may be weighed to see which is most consistent with the mind of the Holy Spirit, I will first give some of the reasons by which we reject the other interpretation, and then the reasons by which we confirm our own.

First, if no natural affection by which God would necessarily be drawn to anything outside Himself can or ought to be attributed to God, then no such thing is here meant by the word 'love' — for what is not in God at all cannot be intended here. But that there

neither is nor can be any such natural affection in God is most clear, and can be shown by many demonstrations, of which I will briefly note a few.

First, nothing that involves any imperfection is to be attributed to Almighty God. He is the all-sufficient God; His work is perfect. But a natural affection in God toward the good and salvation of all — an affection that is never completed nor fulfilled — carries with it a great deal of imperfection and weakness. And not only that, but it must also be profoundly damaging to the absolute blessedness and happiness of Almighty God. For however much anything falls short of achieving that toward which it reaches with any natural or voluntary desire, so much does it fall short of blessedness and happiness. Therefore, without impairing the infinite blessedness of the ever-blessed God, no natural affection toward anything that will never be accomplished can be attributed to Him — such as this general love for all is supposed to be.

Second, if the Lord has a natural affection for all — loving them to the point of sending His Son to die for them — how is it that this affection never reaches its fulfillment? Why is it hindered and does not produce its effects? Why does the Lord not engage His power to fulfill His own desire? They say it does not seem good to His infinite wisdom to do so. Then there is an affection in God toward something which in His wisdom He cannot pursue — and among ordinary human beings, such a thing would be called a foolish and disordered affection.

Third, no affection or natural tendency toward good is to be attributed to God that Scripture nowhere assigns to Him and that is contrary to what Scripture does assign to Him. Now Scripture nowhere assigns to God any natural affection by which He would

be naturally inclined toward the good of the creature — the passage clearly proving it has yet to be produced. And that it is contrary to what Scripture assigns to Him is evident: for Scripture describes Him as free in showing mercy, every act of it being performed freely, even as He pleases — 'for He has mercy on whom He desires to have mercy.' Now if every act of mercy shown to anyone proceeds from the free and distinguishing will of God, as is plain, then there can certainly be no such natural affection in Him. And truly, if the Lord were to show mercy and be moved toward the creature not merely by His own distinguishing will, but were naturally moved to show mercy to the miserable: first, He would be no more merciful to human beings than to demons; and second, no more so to those who are saved than to those who are condemned — for what is natural must operate equally in all cases, and what is natural to God must be eternal. Far more compelling reasons are offered by our theologians for the denial of this natural affection in God, in their response to the Arminian distinction of God's antecedent and consequent will, to which the scholarly reader may turn for fuller treatment. So the love mentioned in this passage is not a natural affection toward all in general — which does not exist.

Second, the love here is the special love of God to His elect, as we affirm. The love here described is absolutely the most outstanding and surpassing love God ever showed or bore toward any miserable creature. Our Savior's clear intention is to set it forth in this way, as is evident from the emphatic expressions used. The words 'so' and 'that' indicate nothing less, pointing to something especially remarkable in what is being affirmed beyond anything else of its kind. Commentators commonly lay emphasis on almost every

individual word of the verse in exalting and displaying the love described here. 'So' — that is, to such a degree, to such a remarkable and astonishing height. 'God' — the glorious, all-sufficient God who could have displayed His justice for eternity in the condemnation of all sinners and had no need of them as participants in His blessedness. 'Loved' — with such an earnest and intense affection consisting in an eternal, unchangeable act and purpose of His will for the bestowal of the highest good — the choicest and most powerful love. 'The world' — people in the world, of the world, exposed to the sins and miseries of the world, lying in their own blood, having nothing to commend them in His eyes. 'That He gave' — He did not, as when He first made the whole world, merely speak the word and have it done, but went further and undertook a far greater and longer work. 'His Son' — not some favored or pleasing creature, not sun, moon, or stars, not the rich treasure of His creation — all too inadequate to express this love — but His Son. 'Begotten Son' — and not Son merely by virtue of some close relationship and filial obedience, as angels are called sons of God, for it was not an angel He gave — which would still have been an expression of intense love — nor any son by adoption as believers are sons of God, but His begotten Son, begotten of His own person from eternity. 'His only begotten Son' — not one of many sons, but the One who was His only begotten Son, always in His bosom — His Isaac — He gave Him. And how could the infinite wisdom of God make or give any higher testimony of His love? Especially when we add what is clearly implied here though the time had not yet come to state it openly — that is, to what He gave His Son, His only one: not first to be a king and worshiped, but 'He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all' (Romans

8:32). And as a final point, look at His design and purpose in the whole matter, and you will find that it was so that believers — those He thus loved — might not perish, that is, not undergo the utmost misery and wrath for eternity that they had deserved, but have eternal life, eternal glory with Himself, which they could in no way attain on their own. You will easily grant that greater love has no one than this. Now if the love here described is the greatest, highest, and chief of all, it certainly cannot be that common affection toward all that we discussed earlier. For the love by which people are actually and eternally saved is greater than any love that may coexist with those same people perishing for eternity.

Second, Scripture positively presents this very love as the chief act of God's love and what He most wants us to take notice of. Romans 5:8: 'But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' And fully in 1 John 4:9-11: 'By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' In both places the supremacy of this love is described in deeply emphatic terms to believers — terms that cannot in any way be applied to a natural inclination toward the good of all.

Third, since all love in God is nothing but willing good to those who are loved, those are certainly the objects of His love to whom He intends the good that is the fruit and effect of that love. But the fruit of this love — not perishing and obtaining eternal life through Christ — comes to and is given to only the elect, the believers. Therefore they are certainly the object of this love, and they alone — which was the point we had to establish.

Fourth, the love that is the cause of giving Christ is also always the cause of bestowing all other good things. Romans 8: 'He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?' Therefore, if the love mentioned there is the cause of sending Christ — as it is — it must also cause all other things to be given along with Him. And so it can only be toward those on whom those things are bestowed — who are only the elect, only believers. Who else receives grace here or glory hereafter?

Fifth, the word used here means to love in such a way as to rest in that love — which is difficult to reconcile with hatred and an eternal purpose of not bestowing effectual grace, as the Lord has toward some. Now let the Christian reader judge whether the love of God mentioned in this passage means a natural inclination in God toward the good of all — both elect and reprobate — or the particular love of God to His elect, being the source of the greatest good ever bestowed on human beings. This is the first point of difference in the interpretation of these words.

Second, the second point of controversy is the object of this love, expressed by the word 'world.' Our opponents would have it mean all and every person. We hold it to mean the elect of God scattered throughout the world, with an implicit contrast to the nation of the Jews, who alone — excluding all other nations, apart from a few converts, before Christ's actual coming in the flesh — had all the benefits of the promises granted to them (Romans 9:4). Now all nations were to have an equal share in this privilege. To support the universalist reading of the word, nothing of real weight that I could ever find is brought forward except the word itself. For neither the love described at the beginning nor the goal pointed to

at the end can possibly agree with the meaning they impose on the middle word. Besides, we have already explained at length how weak an inference from the word 'world' is — given its ambiguous and remarkably varied meanings in Scripture.

I find three weak attempts in the leading advocates of this position to prove that the word 'world' does not mean the elect. We might rightly have expected some reasons to prove that it means all and every person in the world — which was their own assertion. But of this there is complete silence, since they are doubtless aware of their inability to make that case. Instead, as I said, they bring three supposed arguments to disprove something no one set out to prove — namely, that 'the world' here means the elect considered as such. For though we believe the persons directly in view here — people in and of the world — are all and only God's elect, we do not say they are considered as such in this passage, but rather under another description, as people scattered over all the world who are in themselves subject to misery and sin. So anyone who wishes to oppose our reading of this passage must either first prove that 'the world' here necessarily means all and every person in the world, or second that it cannot be taken as referring broadly to people in the world who happen to be those God has elected, though they are not here described in those terms. All the empty arguments some people make with these words — substituting the word 'elect' for 'world' and then manufacturing absurd conclusions — are entirely beside the point. We further deny that substituting the word 'elect' into the text leads to any absurdity or untruth. Suppose we were to read it as: 'God so loved the elect that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish' — what problem follows? They say: that some of the elect, whom God so loved

as to send His Son for, might perish. Why so? Because it says that whoever of them believes in Him should not perish — implying, they claim, that some might not believe. But where is any such implication? God designs the salvation of all those for whom He sends His Son — He says so in plain words — and certainly all who will be saved will believe. But they say the word 'whoever' distributes the world into those who believe and those who do not. First: if 'whoever' is distributive, then it is also restrictive — it limits God's love as intending salvation to some and not others, to one part of the distribution and not the other. And if it does not restrict God's love intending the salvation of some, then it does not distribute the object of that love. And if it does restrict it, then not everyone is included in the love that moved God to give His Son. Second: I deny that 'whoever' here distributes the object of God's love; it only declares His end and aim in giving Christ in pursuit of that love — namely, that all believers might be saved. So the meaning is: God so loved His elect throughout the world that He gave His Son with this intention, that through Him believers might be saved. And this is all that is objected from this passage to disprove our interpretation — along with a few trivial quibbles.

First, our first reason comes from what was proved earlier about the nature of the love which is here said to have the world as its object — love which cannot extend to all and every person in the world, as everyone will admit. Now 'the world' here is beloved with that love which we have described and shown to be intended here — a love that is first the most surpassing and remarkable, second an eternal act of God's will, third the cause of sending Christ, fourth the cause of giving all good things in and with Him, and

fifth an assured source and spring of salvation to all who are loved with it. So the world beloved with this love cannot possibly be all and every person in the world.

Second, the word 'world' in the next verse — which carries the sense of this one forward and is a continuation of the same matter, being a disclosure of God's intention in giving His Son — must mean the elect and believers, or at least only those who in the end are saved. Therefore it means the same in this verse. It is true that the word 'world' appears three times in that verse with varying meanings, which is a device not unusual in Scripture as was explained earlier. The last occurrence is what connects back to this verse and carries the same meaning as 'the world' in verse 16: 'that the world through Him might be saved' — that it should be saved. This shows the aim, purpose, and intention of God toward the world He so loved — namely, its salvation. Now if this is understood of anyone besides believers, God fails to accomplish His aim and intention — which we dare not grant.

Third, it is not unusual in Scripture to call God's chosen people 'the world,' as well as 'all flesh,' 'all nations,' 'all families of the earth,' and similar broad expressions. There is no surprise, then, if they are so called here, the intention of the passage being to exalt and magnify God's love toward them. So they are called where Christ is said to be their Savior (John 4:42) — which He certainly is only of those who are actually saved. A Savior of people who are not saved is a strange concept. In John 6:51, where He is said to give Himself for their life — and clearly in verse 33, He gives life to the world — whether this is anyone other than His elect, let everyone judge. For Christ Himself affirms that He gives life only to His sheep and that those to whom He gives life shall never perish

(John 10:27-28). So Romans 4:13: Abraham is said by faith to be heir of the world, and in verse 11 he is called the father of all who believe. And Romans 11:12: the fall of the Jews is said to be the riches of the world — a world comprising only believers of all kinds throughout the world, as the apostle affirmed that the Gospel bore fruit in all the world (Colossians 1:6). This is that world which God reconciles to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them (2 Corinthians 5:19) — an act attended with blessedness for all those to whom that non-imputation belongs (Romans 4). There are clear reasons why they receive this designation: first, to distinguish the objects of God's love from angelic nature, which utterly perished in every fallen individual — as Scripture also carefully specifies in so many words (Hebrews 2:16); second, to overthrow and reject the boasting of the Jews, as though all the means of grace and all intended benefits were reserved for them; third, to mark the great contrast between the old administration of the covenant — restricted to one people, family, and nation — and the new, in which all boundaries having been broken down, the fullness of the Gentiles and the remotest parts of the earth were to be brought under the scepter of Christ; fourth, to reveal the condition of the elect themselves who are so loved, for a declaration of God's free grace toward them — they being stripped of every qualification except those that describe them as earthly, lost, miserable, and corrupted. So at the very least this much may easily be established: that from the word itself, nothing can justly be raised against our reading of this passage.

Fourth, if every individual in the world is intended, why does the Lord not reveal Jesus Christ to every one He so loved? It is a strange thing that the Lord should so love people as to give His

only begotten Son for them, and yet not once by any means communicate this love to them — as He does not to countless millions. That He should love them and yet so order things in His wise providence that this love should be entirely vain and fruitless. Love them, and yet determine that they shall receive no benefit from His love — even though His love is a willing of the greatest good to them.

Fifth, unless you are willing to grant: first, that some are both loved and hated by God from eternity; second, that God's love toward countless millions is fruitless and vain; third, that the Son of God is given for those who never hear a word of Him and who are given no power to believe in Him; fourth, that God is changeable in His love, or else still loves those who are in hell; fifth, that He does not give all things to those to whom He gives His Son, contrary to Romans 8:32; sixth, that He does not certainly foreknow who will believe and be saved — unless all these blasphemies and absurdities are conceded, it cannot be maintained that 'the world' here means every single individual of humanity. It means only people in general scattered throughout the world — who are the elect.

Third, the third point of difference about these words concerns the means by which the Father's love — whose object is said to be the world — is brought to them. This means is believing: 'that whoever believes,' or 'that every believer.' We take the intention of these words to be the designating and manifesting of the way by which God's elect come to participate in the fruits of the love here described — namely, by faith in Christ, God having appointed faith as the only way by which He will communicate to us the life that is

in His Son. Something was said before, having shown that the term 'whoever' does not distribute the object of God's love among all individuals. To that we may add the following reasons.

If the object is restricted here, so that only some of those for whose sake Christ was sent actually believe and are saved, then this restriction depends either on God's will or on the persons themselves. If it depends on the persons themselves, then they make themselves to differ from others — contrary to 1 Corinthians 4:7. If it depends on God's will, then you make the sense of the passage to be: God so loved all, that only some of them should share in the fruits of His love.

Since the words 'that whoever believes' expressly point to God's aim and intention in this matter: if they do restrict the objects of His love, then the salvation of believers is admittedly God's aim — distinguished from others. And if so, the general ransom is an empty phrase with no grounding in God's purpose, His intention in giving His Son being directed only to the salvation of believers.

These words then — 'whoever believes' — contain a designation of the means by which the Lord will bring us to share in life through His Son whom He gave for us; and the following words about having eternal life set out the whole counsel of God in this matter, directed toward His own glory. From this it follows:

That God did not give His Son for those who never believe; much less for those who never hear of Him, and are therefore unavoidably without the means of faith; nor for those on whom He has determined not to bestow the effectual grace by which they might believe.

Let the reader weigh everything, test everything — especially whether the love of God is only a general affection and a natural goodwill toward all, which can stand alongside the perishing of all who are so loved; or whether it is the particular and transcendent love of the Father toward His elect, as set out before. Then determine which has the firmer and stronger foundation in these words of our Savior: a general ransom, fruitless in respect of most for whom it was paid, or the effectual redemption of the elect alone.

CHAPTER 3



Next to the passage just considered, the one urged with the most confidence and pressed with the most persistence in defense of the general ransom is 1 John 2:1-2: 'My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.' The weight of the whole argument rests on this: that the apostle affirms Christ to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world — which they say plainly means all and every person in the world, and they argue this:

First, from the words themselves without any distortion: for what can 'the whole world' mean but all people in the world?

Second, from the contrast made between 'world' and 'believers' — all believers being included in the first part of the apostle's statement that Christ is a propitiation for our sins, and therefore by 'the world' set in contrast to them, all others are meant.

Before coming to the fuller clarification of the mind of the Holy Spirit in these words, I should note that I could answer the objection from this passage very briefly, yet so solidly as to cut off all the

quibbling responses of our opponents — namely, that just as 'the world' in other places refers to people living in the world, so 'the whole world' in this passage can mean nothing other than people living throughout the whole world, in all its parts and regions, as opposed to the inhabitants of any one nation, place, or country, as the redeemed of Christ are described (Revelation 5:9). But because they so greatly rely on this passage, I will with God's help open its meaning so clearly that it will be evident to all how little reason they have to place any confidence in their forced interpretation of it.

To understand this passage properly, three things must be considered: first, to whom the apostle is writing; second, what his purpose and aim is in this particular place; third, the meaning of the two expressions — Christ being a propitiation, and the whole world. Having done this, in line with the rule of faith, the context of this and parallel passages, and the use of the words themselves, we will clearly demonstrate by straightforward reasons that the text cannot be understood in the way it is pressed for universal redemption.

First, identifying those to whom the epistle was specifically directed will shed some light on the apostle's meaning. Although this and all other parts of divine Scripture were given for the use, benefit, and direction of the whole church, it is evident that many parts were directed to particular churches and persons. Now though we have nothing expressly naming those to whom this epistle was primarily directed, yet by clear and reasonable deduction it can be shown with strong probability that it was intended for the Jews or believers of the circumcision. First, John was in a particular way a minister and apostle to the Jews, and therefore they were the most

immediate and fitting objects of his care — James, Cephas, and John gave Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, with the understanding that Paul and Barnabas would go to the Gentiles while they went to the circumcision (Galatians 2:9). Now just as Peter and James, in carrying out their apostleship to them, wrote epistles to them in their dispersion (James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1), as Paul did to all the chief churches among the Gentiles he had planted — so it is more than probable that John, in writing this epistle, directed it primarily and in the first place to those who were primarily and most directly the objects of his care and apostolic ministry.

Second, he frequently indicates that those to whom he wrote were among those who had heard and received the word from the beginning, as noted twice in this chapter (verse 7): 'That commandment which you heard from the beginning.' Now that the proclamation of the gospel had its beginning among the Jews, and first reached them before the conversion of any of the Gentiles — which was a mystery for a season — is clear from the account in Acts (chapters 1-6, 12). 'To the Jew first and also to the Greek' was the divinely appointed order (Romans 1:16-17).

Third, the contrast the apostle makes between 'us' and 'the world' in this very passage is sufficient to show to whom he was writing. As a Jew, he counts himself among the believing Jews to whom he wrote, setting himself together with them in contrast to the rest of believers throughout the world. This is a pattern of speech common to this apostle — and how it is to be understood is explained in his Gospel at John 11:51-52.

Fourth, his frequent references and warnings about false teachers, deceivers, and antichrists — who in those early days were, if not all of them, at least for the most part, from among the

circumcision — clearly indicates that those people were the primary intended audience of this epistle. He is a propitiation for our sins — that is, the sins of us who are believing Jews — and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world: that is, the children of God scattered throughout the world, of whatever nation, people, language, or tongue they may be. So what we have here is not a contrast between the effective salvation of all believers and a redemption limited only to Jewish believers — but rather between Jewish believers and all other believers and children of God throughout the whole world.

The apostle's aim being to bring consolation to believers in their failures, he can only speak of them; and if he were to extend what he says — that Christ is a propitiation — to all and every person, I cannot see how this would possibly serve the stated purpose, or bring any consolation to believers. For what comfort can come to them from being told that Christ died for countless people who will be condemned? The children's bread must not be thrown to dogs.

The meaning and significance of the word 'propitiation' — which Christ is said to be for us and for the whole world — must next be considered. The word propitiation refers to what was done or foreshadowed by the mercy seat: to appease, pacify, and reconcile God in terms of turning away His anger for sin. Christ is said to be the mercy seat because it was placed upon the Ark and covered it, with God thereby declaring Himself to be pacified or reconciled, the cause of anger and enmity being covered. Whether God can reasonably be said to be a propitiation for the whole world, if that means all and every person — are the sins of every one expi-

ated? Is God reconciled to every one? Is every sinner pardoned? — let all who are able judge. Doubtless all these things are true of every believer, and of no one else in the world.

Fourth, let us consider the phrase 'the whole world.' I will not here fully explain how the word 'world' carries various meanings in Scripture, partly because I have already done so to some extent, and partly because it is not so much the word itself that is pressed here but only its combination with the general modifier 'whole' — the whole world. Concerning this expression I say:

First, although this expression, along with its equivalent 'all the world,' appears seven or eight times in the New Testament, it cannot be shown clearly and unmistakably that it ever means all and every person in the world. Unless some circumstance in this particular passage requires that meaning — which it does not — it is a plain distortion of the words to force that interpretation on them. Let us briefly review the relevant passages. Revelation 3:10: 'I will keep you from the hour of testing which is about to come upon the whole world' — where it cannot mean all and every person, because some are promised to be preserved from what is said to come upon it. Colossians 1:6: 'which has come to you, just as in all the world' — where first, all and every person cannot be meant, for they had not all received the gospel at that time; and second, only believers living throughout the world are meant, because the gospel is said to bear fruit in those to whom it comes, and there is no genuine gospel fruit without faith and repentance. Romans 1:8: 'your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world' — did every person in the world hear and speak of the Roman believers' faith? Luke 2:1: 'Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth' —

which yet applied only to the Roman Empire, far short of including every single person in the world. If then the expression itself does not inherently convey such universality as is claimed, unless the subject matter and context of the passage require it — and neither does so here — there is no basis for pressing such an interpretation on it. Rather we may conclude that 'all the world' and 'the whole world,' being taken in other places to mean broadly people of all kinds throughout the world, are to be understood the same way here.

Second, 'the whole world' can mean no more than 'all nations,' 'all the families of the earth,' 'all flesh,' 'all people,' 'all the ends of the world' — these expressions are surely equivalent to and as broad as 'the whole world.' But all these expressions we find frequently meaning only believers, yet believers of all kinds throughout the world. 'All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God' (Psalm 98:3). 'All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will worship before You' (Psalm 22:27). 'All nations will serve Him' (Psalm 72:11). These general expressions refer only to believers from all the various nations of the world. So also Joel 2:28: 'I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind' — repeated in Acts 2:17 and Luke 3:6: 'All flesh will see the salvation of God.' Believers are called all nations (Isaiah 2:2; 66:18), even all people (Titus 2:11), for to them alone the grace of God that brings salvation is revealed. If believers, the children of God, are in scriptural language called 'all flesh,' 'all nations,' 'all families,' 'all the ends of the world,' 'all people' — why not also 'the whole world'? Third, 'the whole world' sometimes refers to the worse part of the world (Revelation 12:9: 'the devil who deceives the whole world' — meaning the wicked in the world;

1 John 5:19: 'the whole world lies in the power of the evil one' — where the whole world is set in contrast to those who are of God). Why may it not by similar usage also refer to the better part? With this established, it is clear that nothing in the words themselves requires anyone to understand all and every person in the world to be meant — but rather believers, even all who did or would believe throughout the whole world, in contrast only to believers of the Jewish nation.

This passage treats not of Christ's ransom in terms of its obtaining but of its application: for it affirms Christ to be by His death what He is only by faith, as was shown from Romans 3:25. And also from application alone does consolation arise. Now no one has ever said that the application of Christ's death is universal: therefore this passage cannot have reference to all and every person.

Second, Christ is here said to be a propitiation only for those intended in the passage, which is evident. But only believers are intended here; for the purpose is to give them consolation in their failures, in which case consolation belongs to them alone. Therefore it is believers only — though of all kinds, times, places, and conditions — for whom Christ is said to be a propitiation.

Third, this kind of phrase and expression in other passages cannot possibly be extended to include all and every person, as was evident from the passages cited earlier. Add to these Matthew 3:5: 'Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan' — among whom nonetheless the Pharisees rejected his baptism. Why then should it be understood that way here, especially when all the circumstances point against such a reading?

Fourth, the clearest parallel passages in Scripture are contrary to the meaning being imposed on this text. See Colossians 1:6 and John 11:52.

Fifth, if the words are to be understood as referring to every individual in the world, then the whole assertion becomes useless for its chief intended purpose, which is to give comfort to believers. For what comfort can any believer draw from the fact that Christ was a propitiation for those who perish? To say He was a sufficient propitiation for them, though not an effective one, would give no more comfort than it would have given Jacob and his sons to hear from Joseph that he had grain enough to sustain them — with no assurance that he would actually do so. The whole world in this passage therefore is the whole people of God, set over against the Jewish nation, scattered throughout the whole world, of whatever nation, family, tongue, or lineage — some of all kinds, not all of every kind. So this passage provides nothing in support of general redemption.

There are a few objections commonly raised against our reading of this passage by the apostle; but they are all either anticipated or resolved in the explanation itself, so naming one or two will be sufficient.

Objection 1: The apostle's purpose is to comfort all who have fears and doubts; but everyone in the world may have fears and doubts; therefore he presents this truth so that all may be comforted.

Answer: The 'all' who may have fears and doubts, in the matter of consolation, must necessarily be limited to believers, as was stated before.

Objection 2: All believers are included in the first part — 'for our sins'; and therefore in the expansion of the assertion, by adding 'for the sins of the whole world,' all others are intended.

Answer: In the first part, only the believing Jews are intended, of whom John was one; and the addition does not extend the propitiation of Christ to those other than believers, but only to other believers. Even granting that the first part included all believers then living, the expansion by analogy can only refer to those who would believe in later ages and more distant places than the name of Christ had yet reached — all those who, according to our Savior's prayer in John 17, would believe in His name to the end of the world. And so the two main passages cited in support of the first argument have been defended from the false interpretations and forced readings of our opponents; the rest will be cleared up easily.

The next passage pressed in the argument is John 6:51, where our Savior declares that He will give His flesh for the life of the world. This giving of Himself was the consecrating and offering up of Himself as an acceptable sacrifice for the sins of those for whom He suffered — His intention being that those for whom He so offered Himself in dying might thereby have eternal life. Because this was not for the Jews only but for all the elect of God everywhere, He calls them 'the world.' That 'the world' here cannot mean every individual who ever lived or would live is as plain as anything could be, for it is made the object of Christ's intention to purchase and bestow life and salvation for them. Who can imagine that Christ in His offering intended to purchase life and salvation for all whom He knew to have been condemned many ages before, the irreversible decree of wrath already having gone out against

them? So that even if we had no other passage to show that 'world' does not always mean all people but only some of all kinds — as God's elect are — this one passage produced by our opponents would be sufficient.

Several other passages are produced by T.M. in chapter 14 of *The Universality of Free Grace* for the same claimed purpose; that entire chapter will be briefly considered.

The first he presses is 2 Corinthians 5:19: 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them.'

Answer: Those called 'the world' in verse 19 are called 'us' in verse 18: 'He reconciled us to Himself through Christ.' They are further described in verse 21 as those for whom Christ was made sin and who are made the righteousness of God in Him — things that cannot be true of every person in the world. God's reconciling the world to Himself consists in, or necessarily entails, a non-imputation of sin to them, further defined as an imputation of Christ's righteousness. This is the blessedness of justification in Christ (Romans 4:7), so the whole world that God in Christ reconciles to Himself is a blessed, justified world — not all and every one of the sons of men, the greater part of whom lie in wickedness. Moreover, 'God in Christ reconciling' expresses an actual act of reconciliation: if absolute, why are not all actually and completely reconciled, pardoned, and justified? If conditional, what is that condition? If faith, then the meaning would be that God reconciled an unbelieving world on condition that it believe — which is circular. The world here, then, is only the world of blessed, pardoned believers, who are made the righteousness of God in Christ.

What T.M. offers to enforce the opposite reading of the word amounts, in many words, to very little. He spends much time proving a twofold reconciliation in the text — first of God to us through Christ, second of us to God through the Spirit — which we also grant, though we do not separate them but regard them as successive parts of the same reconciliation. The former is the pattern of the latter: whoever God is reconciled to in and through Christ will certainly be reconciled to God through the Spirit. And as the pattern, so it is the chief motive toward the latter, being the content of the Gospel message by which it is brought about. So the affirmation of this twofold reconciliation actually confirms our view that 'the world' can refer only to the elect in this passage.

He draws further support from the context to strengthen his reading: those called 'the world' here are called 'men' (verse 11), men who must appear before the judgment seat of Christ (verse 10), who were dead (verse 14), and who ought to live to Christ (verse 15) — therefore all people. But one more thing must be done for the case to be his: he must prove that God's elect are not people, that they need not appear before the judgment seat, that they were not dead, and that they ought not to live to Christ. He adds further that of these some are reconciled to God (verse 18).

Answer: It is completely false that there is any limitation or restriction of reconciliation to some of those under discussion — it is in fact clearly extended to all of them. There is not a word in the text about some remaining unreconciled, nor can the slightest color for such an assertion be wrested from it.

A second passage he presses is John 1:9: 'There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.' This world (he says) is the world of humanity made by Christ, which

was His own through creation, mercy, and purchase, yet received Him not (verses 3-4) — therefore it is clear that Christ died for all.

Answer: By 'the world' here is meant not people in the world, whether all or some, but the habitable earth — the phrase 'coming into the world' cannot possibly be understood otherwise; it simply means 'being born, and coming to breathe the common air.' Among the interpretations of this passage, the one most consistent with the apostle's argument refers the word 'coming' to 'light' and not to 'man,' so that the words should be rendered: 'that was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man' — as in John 3:19 and John 12:46. So nothing can be extracted from the word 'world' here in support of universal grace or ransom. The whole weight must rest on the words 'every man' — which T.M. does not press. Christ, coming into the world, is said to enlighten every person, partly because every one who has any light has it from Him, and partly because He is the only true light, so that He enlightens everyone who is enlightened — which is all the text affirms; but whether every single person before and after His incarnation was actually enlightened with knowledge of Christ, let Scripture, experience, and reason determine.

A third passage is John 1:29: 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.' And this (he says) is spoken of the world in general.

Answer: Even if it were spoken of the world in general, nothing could from that be inferred regarding a universality of individuals. That Christ takes away, bears, purges, and pardons the sin of the world is most certain; but that He takes it away from, bears it for, and purges it out of every individual in the world is not in the slightest suggested by the text and is in itself plainly false.

John 3:17 is next pressed: 'God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.'

Answer: There is a notable variation in the use of 'world' in this passage. By 'the world' in the first instance, that part of the world where our Savior lived has the name of the whole assigned to it; in the second, you may take it for all and every person if you like, since the primary aim of our Savior's coming was not to condemn anyone but to save His own. In the third instance, those only are intended whom God sent His Son with the express purpose of saving. That these are not all people but only believers from among Jews and Gentiles throughout the world is clear: first, because not all are saved, and the Lord has said His purpose will stand; second, because most people at that very moment were already condemned — did He send His Son that they might be saved?; third, because Christ was appointed for the fall of some (Luke 1). The saved world is the people of God scattered abroad throughout the world.

John 4:42 and 1 John 4:14, along with John 6:51 (which was considered before), are also cited by T.M., in all of which passages Christ is called the Savior of the world.

Answer: Christ is said to be the Savior of the world either because there is no other Savior for anyone in the world and He saves all who are saved — the people of God, not the Jews only, spread throughout the world — or because He actually saves every individual in the world. If the latter, Mr. More has won; if the former, we are still where we were. The passages John 3:16, 18 and 1 John

2:1-2 have already been addressed; other texts are cited but so forcibly wrested and strangely distorted that I will not try the reader's patience by repeating them.

And this is our defense and answer to the first major argument of our opponents, and our explanation of all the Scripture passages they have forced to support it — the whole of their strength resting on the ambiguity of one word. Let the Christian reader test everything and hold fast to what is good.

CHAPTER 4



The second argument our opponents promote with no less confidence than the first is drawn from those Scripture passages that mention 'all men' and 'every man' in connection with redemption. The chief passages relied upon are 1 Timothy 2:4-6, 2 Peter 3:9, Hebrews 2:9, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 1 Corinthians 15:22, and Romans 5:18.

Regarding the use and meaning of the word 'all' in Scripture, so much has already been said by many others that it would be unnecessary for me to dwell on it. No argumentative force can be drawn from the word itself; so I will focus on examining the particular passages cited and the objections raised from them.

The first and chief passage is 1 Timothy 2:4-6: 'who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.'

If God desires all people to be saved, then Christ died for all; but God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth: therefore Christ died for all people.

Reply: the entire force of this argument rests on the ambiguity of the word 'all,' which carries various meanings and must be interpreted according to the subject matter at hand, and so may be granted or denied depending on how the word is being used. That 'all' or 'all people' does not always mean every single person who ever lived, lives, or will live can be shown by nearly five hundred examples from Scripture. Taking then 'all' and 'all people' distributively — meaning some of all kinds — we grant the whole argument. Taking them collectively — meaning every one of all kinds — we deny the second premise: namely, that God desires every single person to be saved.

God's will is commonly distinguished into His will of intention and His will of command. If they say He wills this by His will of command — requiring, approving — then the sense of the words is: God commands all people to use the means by which they may attain the end, which is salvation. Now if this is how God desires the salvation of the 'all people' mentioned here, then certainly those 'all' can be no more than those to whom He grants and reveals the means of grace. Moreover, taking God's desiring the salvation of people in this sense, we deny that it follows that Christ died for as many as God thus wills should be saved.

Second, if God's will here is taken as His effectual will — the will of His purpose and good pleasure — then it must certainly be fulfilled, and all those God desires to be saved will indeed be saved. If then 'all' here is to be understood as all people without exception, one of two things must necessarily follow: either God fails in His purpose and intention, or all people without exception will be

saved. He does whatever He pleases in heaven and on earth (Psalm 115), and acts according to His will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth (Daniel 4:35).

By 'all people' the apostle here means all kinds of people, generally considered, living under the Gospel, or in these latter times under the expanded administration of the means of grace. The context of the apostle's discussion — treating the breadth, enlargement, and reach of grace in its outward administration under the Gospel — does not allow this to be denied. We say then that by 'all people' only people of all kinds are meant, consistent with the apostle's purpose, which was to show that all external distinctions among people have now been removed.

First, the word 'all' in Scripture most commonly carries this meaning — that is, many of all kinds — and there is nothing in the subject matter that should push toward another reading, especially toward a universal collection of every individual. We therefore hold it right to stick with the most common sense and meaning of the word.

Second, Paul himself plainly leads us to this interpretation: for after he commands us to pray for all, because the Lord desires all to be saved, he expressly shows that by 'all people' he means people of all kinds, ranks, conditions, and positions — by distributing those 'all' into several categories and expressly naming some of them, such as kings and all who are in authority. Pray for all people, he says — that is, all kinds of people, such as rulers and all in authority, the time now having come when, without the distinctions formerly observed, the Lord will save some of all kinds and nations.

Third, we are bound to pray for all whom God desires to be saved. But we are not to pray for every single individual — for we know that some are reprobate and have sinned a sin unto death, concerning whom we are expressly warned not to pray for them.

Fourth, all those God desires to be saved will be saved — we dare not deny this, for who has resisted His will? Since it is certain that not all will be saved, it cannot be that every person without exception is intended in this passage.

Fifth, God desires no more to be saved than He desires to come to the knowledge of the truth. But it is not God's will that all and every person in all ages should come to the knowledge of the truth. He allowed the Gentiles in former ages to walk in their own ways and overlooked the times of their ignorance (Acts 17:30), hiding the mystery of salvation from those earlier ages (Colossians 1:26). It is then evident that God does not will that every single person in the world in all ages and times should come to the knowledge of the truth, but only all kinds of people without distinction — and therefore only they are intended here.

These and similar reasons, which compel us to understand 'all people' as meaning only people of all kinds, also apply equally to the word 'all' in verse 6, where Christ is said to give Himself a ransom for all. The paying and accepting of a ransom implies a substitution and the freeing of all those for whom the ransom is paid and accepted. By 'all' then, only the redeemed and ransomed of Jesus Christ can be meant — those brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God — as some of all kinds are expressly said to be (Revelation 5:9), while it is openly acknowledged to be false that all people in the world universally are so.

Our answer to the objection — whose strength rests on nothing more than a fallacy from the ambiguous meaning of the word 'all' — is straightforward: if by 'all people' you mean the 'all' in the text, that is, all kinds of people, we grant the whole claim and agree that Christ died for all; but if by 'all people' you mean every individual without exception, we flatly deny the premise, having sufficiently proved that no such 'all' exists in the text.

T.M. in his 'Universality of Grace' devotes an entire chapter to pressing this objection; it is also one of the two passages he lays as the foundation for his whole case, and to which he always retreats when pressed. I had therefore intended to address that chapter at length, but on reflection I laid that aside, and for three reasons.

First, because I had no desire to repeat what has already been done, especially since the matter itself scarcely deserves to be engaged with at all. The learned work of Master Rutherford on the death of Christ and the drawing of sinners thereby came to my hand, in which he fully answers that chapter of Master M.'s book, and to that I direct the reader.

Second, I find that he has not once attempted to engage with any of the reasons and arguments by which we establish our reply to the objection from this passage and prove beyond question that 'all people' means only people of all kinds.

Third, because setting aside his bare assertions by which he attempts to strengthen his argument from and interpretation of this passage, what remains is a weak fallacy running through the whole. The force of all his arguments comes down to this: that by 'all we are to pray for' is not meant only all who are present believers — which no one in their right mind would affirm; but to con-

clude from this that because they are not only all present believers, they must therefore be every individual in humanity, is not a sober argument.

2 Peter 3:9: 'The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.' The will of God for salvation is here stated both negatively — that He does not want any to perish — and positively — that He wants all to come to repentance. Now since there is no coming to repentance, and no escaping destruction, except through the blood of Christ, it appears that that blood was shed for all.

Reply: It is a principle in interpreting Scripture that indefinite and general expressions are to be understood in proportion to the things they are being said about. Consider therefore whom the apostle is speaking of here: 'The Lord is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish.' Does not plain reading teach us that 'you' is to be read in the following clauses as well: 'not wishing for any of you to perish, but for all of you to come to repentance'? Now who are these the apostle is addressing? Those who had received great and precious promises (chapter 1:4), whom he calls brethren (chapter 3:1), whom he sets in contrast to the mockers of the last days (verse 3), whom the Lord has in view in the timing of these days, and who are described as elect (Matthew 24). To argue that because God wishes none of these to perish but all of them to come to repentance, therefore He has the same will toward every single person in the world — even those to whom He never makes His will known, whom He never calls to repentance, who never once

hear of His way of salvation — falls not far short of extreme foolishness. The text is clear: it is all, and only, the elect whom He does not wish to perish.

Hebrews 2:9: 'But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.'

Reply: That 'for everyone' here is used for 'for all' by a change in grammatical number is universally acknowledged. The whole question is who these 'all' are — whether all people without exception, or only all those the apostle is there treating of. That 'every man' is commonly used in Scripture to refer to people under some restriction cannot be denied — as in Colossians 1:28, 'admonishing every man and teaching every man,' meaning all those to whom he preached the Gospel. I have frequently encountered this passage produced in support of universal redemption, but never once found any attempt from the text itself to prove that 'all' here means every individual — even though those who cite it know full well that the ordinary meaning of the word works against their purpose. Mr. M. spends an entire chapter on this passage, but with a great many smooth words he does nothing but beg the question at great length — and however earnestly he pleads, we cannot consent.

First, to taste death is to drink the cup due to sinners; certainly for everyone our Savior tasted it, He left not one drop for them to drink afterward. He tasted or underwent death in their place, so that the cup might pass from them that did not pass from Him.

Now the cup of death passes only from the elect, from believers — for everyone our Savior tasted death for, He swallowed it up in victory.

Second, there is a clear and evident reason why the apostle here calls those for whom Christ died 'all' — namely, that he was writing to the Hebrews, who were deeply infected with the erroneous belief that all the benefits purchased by the Messiah belonged exclusively to their nation, to the exclusion of all others. To uproot this dangerous opinion it was fitting for the apostle to describe the breadth of free grace under the Gospel and to set forth the universality of God's elect spread throughout the world.

Third, the description given in the same passage of the 'all' for whom Christ tasted death by the grace of God does not fit all and every person, but only God's elect. For in verse 10 they are called 'many sons to be brought to glory'; in verse 11, 'those who are sanctified, His brothers, the children whom God gave Him'; in verse 13, those 'delivered from the bondage of death' (verse 15) — none of which can be said of those who are born, live, and die as children of the wicked one. Christ is not the captain or author of salvation, as He is called here, to any but those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9). Righteousness comes through Him 'to all and upon all those who believe' (Romans 3:22). For these and similar reasons we cannot accept our opponents' interpretation, being fully persuaded that by 'everyone' here is meant all and only God's elect, in whose place Christ by the grace of God tasted death.

Another passage is 2 Corinthians 5:14-15: 'For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again

on their behalf.' They say: in verse 14 there are two 'alls' that must both be of equal extent — if 'all' died, then Christ died for 'all,' that is, for as many as were dead; and again, He died for 'all' who should live to Him, but living to Him is the duty of every person in the world, and therefore He died for them all. Furthermore, they say that 'all' means every individual is clear from verse 10 where it states that all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, from which no one is exempted.

In reply: first, even taking the words as some of our opponents take them, the apostle's argument does not show that the two 'alls' of verse 14 are of equal extent. He does not say Christ died for all who were dead, but only that all were dead for whom Christ died — which proves no more than this: all those for whom Christ died were dead with the kind of death he is speaking of. The scope of the 'all' is determined by the first use, not the latter. The apostle affirms that as many are dead as Christ died for, not that Christ died for as many as were dead. So the 'all' that were dead gives no indication of the extent of the 'all' that Christ died for, since it is simply defined by the first. Second, we deny that every person in the world is morally bound to live to Christ by virtue of a command — only those to whom Christ is revealed are bound to live to Him, and in truth only those who live by Him and have spiritual life in and with Him. Third, it is true that all and every person must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, since He is appointed as judge of the world — but that they are meant in verse 10 of this chapter is not true; the apostle speaks of 'all of us,' all believers and especially all preachers of the Gospel, neither of which means all people. So despite all that has been said, it does not appear that by 'all' here is meant anyone but God's elect and all believers.

First, the resurrection of Christ is here joined with His death — He died for them and rose again. Now for everyone Christ rises, He rises for their justification (Romans 4:25), and they must be justified (Romans 8:34); our opponents themselves have always acknowledged that the fruits of Christ's resurrection are specific to believers.

Second, the apostle speaks only of those who by virtue of Christ's death live to Him (verse 15), who are new creatures (verse 17), to whom the Lord does not count their sins (verse 19), who become the righteousness of God in Christ (verse 21) — which applies only to believers, not to all.

Third, the Greek article attached to 'all' clearly restricts that 'all' to all of a particular group — 'then were they all dead': which 'all'? All these believers of whom he speaks, as discussed above.

Fourth, all those the apostle is addressing are proved to be dead because Christ died for them: 'if one died for all, therefore all died' — what death is spoken of here? Not natural death but spiritual — and specifically not the death that is in sin, but the death that is to sin. Even the leading champions of the Arminian cause, such as Vorstius and Grotius on this passage, are convinced by the evidence of the text to acknowledge that it is a death to sin by virtue of Christ's death that is spoken of here. It is apparent from the text itself: the apostle's aim is to show that those for whom Christ died are so dead to sin that they should no longer live to it but to Him who died for them — the same subject he addresses at greater length in Romans 6:5, where we are said to be dead to sin by being joined to the likeness of Christ's death. These words then

— 'if Christ died for all, then all died' — concern the death to sin of those for whom Christ died; and what does this have to do with a general ransom?

Fifth, the apostle speaks of Christ's death in terms of its application: he focuses on its effectiveness toward those for whom He died, in causing them to live to Him. No one has ever claimed that Christ died for all in terms of application. Then we must live to Him — yes, live with Him forever — if there is any virtue or power in His applied offering for that purpose. In short, this passage mentions Christ dying for no one but those who are dead to sin and live to Him.

A fifth passage pressed in support of universal redemption from the word 'all' is 1 Corinthians 15:22: 'For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.'

Reply: Since there is another passage to be considered later that contains the full force of the argument usually drawn from these words, I need not say much about this one. Those Paul speaks of in this chapter are called 'all'; these are those who are joined to Christ, united to Him as members to the head, receiving a glorious resurrection by virtue of His. That Paul in this whole chapter is speaking about the resurrection of believers is clear from the arguments he uses to confirm it, which are drawn from Christ's resurrection, the hope, faith, practices, and expected rewards of Christians — all of which would have been absurd if held out to the world at large to prove the general resurrection of the dead. All who will be made alive by virtue of Christ's resurrection are all those who share in the nature of Christ, who in verse 23 are expressly called 'those who are Christ's'; and certainly Christ is not the firstfruits of the condemned. Lastly, even granting everything

that could be desired — namely the universal extent of 'all' in both clauses — I am still unable to see how this produces any argument for a general ransom.

Romans 5:18 is the last passage of this kind pressed in support: 'So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.' It is enough to observe briefly that by 'all men' in the latter clause only those can be meant to whom the free gift actually comes in justification of life — those who in verse 17 are said to receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, and so reign in life through Christ. Some do not believe; not all people have faith; on some the wrath of God remains (John 3:36) — and on these surely grace does not reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Verse 14: Adam is called the type and figure of the one to come — not a deliberately instituted type appointed for that purpose alone, but one in whom there was a resemblance to Jesus Christ. The apostle develops this resemblance to show a similar — though not equal — effectiveness of the wrongdoing and transgression of the one in condemning all those in whose place he was a public representative, and of the righteousness and death of the other in absolving and saving all those of whom He was the spiritual head. That those in the latter group were every single one of the former is not mentioned in the slightest. The comparison is to be understood entirely in terms of effectiveness, not in terms of its extent — though the 'all' of Adam is called his 'many,' and the 'many' of Christ is called His 'all,' which is indeed what they are — all the seed that was given to Him.

T.M. in his 'Universality of Free Grace,' chapter 8, presents the apostle's comparison between Adam and Christ as one of the main foundations of his universal redemption, claiming it consists of four things.

First, that Adam in his first sin and transgression was a public representative in the place of all mankind, by virtue of the covenant between God and him, so that whatever he did there, all were equally sharers with him; and so also was Christ a public representative in His obedience and death, standing in the place of all mankind — every descendant of Adam — represented by Him.

Reply: Regarding Adam, we grant that he was a public representative for all his descendants who would proceed from him by natural generation, and that Christ also was a public representative for His own, prefigured by Adam. But that Christ in His obedience, death, and sacrifice was a public representative standing in the place of all and every person in the world — including reprobate persons hated by God from eternity, those He never knew, those for whom in the days of His flesh He thanked His Father for hiding the mysteries of salvation from them, whom He refused to pray for, the great majority of whom were already condemned in hell — this is to us so monstrous an assertion that it cannot be grasped without horror. That any should perish in whose place the Son of God appeared before His Father with His perfect obedience, that any of those for whom He is Mediator and Advocate should be torn from His arms — His satisfaction and intercession on their behalf being rejected — is a doctrine that those who value the honor and testimony of the Lord Jesus will scarcely be willing to own.

First, He did not stand only in the place of the elect, because Adam did not forfeit election, having never been entrusted with it. Second, if He did not stand in the place of all, then He would have fallen short of His type. Third, it is said He was to restore all people lost through Adam (Hebrews 2:9). Fourth, He took on flesh, was subjected to mortality, came under the law, and bore the sins of humanity. Fifth, He did this in the place of all mankind once given to Him (Romans 14:9; Philippians 2:8, 11). Sixth, He is called the last Adam. Seventh, He is said to be a public representative in the place of all since the first Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45, 47; 1 Timothy 2:5; Romans 5).

Reply: Surely a weaker conclusion was never built on more unstable and shaky premises, nor God's Word more boldly twisted for the maintenance of any error. To the first: though Adam did not forfeit election, yet in him all the elect were lost — those whom Christ came to seek, whom He found, and in whose place He was a public representative. To the second: Christ is nowhere compared to Adam in terms of the extent of the object of His death, but only in terms of the effectiveness of His obedience. To the third: the third claim is a false assertion — see our earlier examination of Hebrews 2:9. To the fourth: He took on flesh because the children shared in it — it was necessary for saving His elect. To the fifth: no such thing is affirmed anywhere in the entire Word of God, that all the sons of men were given to Christ to redeem; Christ Himself states the opposite plainly in John 17:6, 9. To the sixth: He is called the last Adam in terms of the effectiveness of His death in justifying the seed given to Him, which does not prove that He stood in the place of all those to whom His death was never known and in no way profitable. To the seventh: that He was a public rep-

representative is granted; that He was so in the place of all is not proved by what has been put forward. Another strange assertion is that the goal of Christ's death was His presenting Himself alive and just before His Father — as though that were the ultimate purpose — whereas the Holy Spirit expressly states that He loved His church and gave Himself for it, so that He might present it to Himself as a glorious church (Ephesians 5:25-27).

The further parallels he draws between Adam and Christ have no bearing on the matter at hand — namely, that Christ was a public representative, in His obedience, in the place of all and every person involved in Adam's disobedience. They are a confused mixture of some truths and various serious errors, and I will only give the reader a sample of some of them so he may judge the rest.

First, in the second part of his parallel he claims that when Christ completed His obedience in dying and rising, it was accepted by God on Christ's behalf as the death, resurrection, sacrifice, satisfaction, and redemption of all — that is, all and every person. Now that the death of Christ should be accepted before God as the death of all, and yet the great majority of these 'all' be condemned to eternal death in their own persons by that same righteous God; that all and every person should rise in and with Jesus Christ, and yet most continue dead in their sins and die for sin eternally; that satisfaction should be made and accepted for those who are never relieved of a penny of their debt; that all the reprobate — Cain, Pharaoh, Ahab, and the rest — who were actually condemned in hell when Christ died and rose, should be counted by God as having died and risen with Christ: such senseless contradictions and offensive claims, pushed on Christians without the slightest evidence, are enough to leave anyone astonished.

Second, in the third of his parallels he goes one step further, claiming that as by Adam's sin all his descendants were deprived of life, so by the effectiveness of Christ's obedience all people without exception are redeemed, restored, made righteous, and justified freely — dishonestly distorting Romans 3:22 by cutting off the following words 'and upon all who believe.' What remains then but that all should also be saved? That people should be restored and yet remain lost; that they should be made righteous and yet remain utterly wicked; that they should be freely justified by God's grace and yet always lie under the condemning sentence of His law — these claims are not only thoroughly contrary to the Gospel, but so utterly contradictory to one another that no amount of Mr. More's subsequent qualifications can heal their mutual contradictions. I will now step slightly outside the rules of formal disputation and offer a few reasons to show that Christ in His obedience to death was not a public representative in the place of all and every person in the world.

First, the seed of the woman was not to be a public representative in the place of the seed of the serpent. Jesus Christ is the seed of the woman; all the reprobate are the seed of the serpent. Therefore Jesus Christ was not, in His offering and suffering, a public representative in their place.

Second, Christ as a public representative stands in for only those for whose sake He dedicated Himself to that office and role in which He was such a representative. But by His own testimony in John 17:19, He dedicated Himself only for those given to Him out of the world, and not for all and every person. Therefore He was not a public representative in the place of all.

Third, Christ was a surety as He was a public representative (Hebrews 7:22), but He was not a surety for all: first, not all are part of the covenant of which He was the guarantor; second, no one for whom Christ is a surety can perish unless He is unable to pay the debt. Therefore He was not a public representative in the place of all.

Fourth, for those He was a public representative for, He suffered in their place and made satisfaction for them (Isaiah 53); but He did not suffer in the place of all, nor make satisfaction for all — for some must suffer for themselves, which makes plain that Christ did not suffer for them (Romans 8:33-34), and God's justice demands satisfaction from them personally, down to the last cent.

Fifth, Jesus Christ as a public representative did nothing in vain with respect to any for whom He was a public representative; but many things Christ performed as a public representative were entirely vain and without fruit with respect to the great majority of humanity, who were incapable of receiving any benefit from anything He did — namely, all those already condemned at the time. In their case, redemption, reconciliation, satisfaction, and the like could only have been empty words.

Sixth, if God was well pleased with His Son in what He did as a public representative in representing others — as He was (Ephesians 5:2) — then He must also be well pleased with those He represented, either absolutely or conditionally. But with many of the sons of men, God was not well pleased — in His Son's representation of them — either absolutely or conditionally: that is, with Cain, Pharaoh, Saul, Ahab, and others who were already dead and condemned. Therefore Christ did not as a public representative stand in for all.

Seventh, for supporting testimonies, see John 17:9; Matthew 20:28; Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 10:45; Hebrews 6:20; Isaiah 53:12; John 10:15; Hebrews 13:20; Matthew 1:21; Hebrews 2:17; John 11:51-52; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:2, 23-25; Romans 8:33-34.

CHAPTER 5



I come next to the third and last argument drawn from Scripture by which the Arminians strive to maintain their idea of universal redemption; it is taken from passages that seem to speak of some perishing for whom Christ died. Who could believe that this view serves to comfort poor souls, when its strongest defense rests on treating the precious blood of the Lamb as worthless? I am persuaded that His blood was not so valueless in the eyes of His Father as to be poured out in vain for any single soul.

If Christ died for the reprobate and those who perish, then He died for all and every person; for He confessedly died for the elect and those who are saved; but He also died for the reprobate and those who perish; therefore Christ died for all.

Reply: We flatly deny that Christ, by the command of His Father and with the intention of making satisfaction for sins, laid down His life for the reprobate and those who perish.

This they attempt to prove from Romans 14:15, 1 Corinthians 8:11, 2 Peter 2:1, Hebrews 10:29. The first is Romans 14:15: 'For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.'

Reply: The apostle exhorts mature and sound believers to use their Christian freedom with such moderation that they do not trouble the conscience of weaker believers — who were also believers, professing Christians, called saints, elect believers, redeemed and thus regarded charitably as such — and thereby give them occasion to stumble and fall away from the Gospel. This passage makes no mention at all of anyone perishing for whom Christ died; others are simply commanded not to do that which directly moves toward destroying a weak brother by troubling him with their unloving behavior. May a person not be urged to avoid attempting something that, even if he did attempt it, he could not actually accomplish?

A second passage is 1 Corinthians 8:10-11: 'For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died.' A brother is said to be ruined for whom Christ died — I cannot understand this to mean eternal destruction and condemnation. Every time we sin, as far as it goes, we are ruined and destroyed; so it was for the one eating things offered to idols. But we deny that God always punishes sin with damnation in every person who sins. The person described as a brother is a believer; we are brothers and sisters only through faith, by which we come to have one Father. That a true believer cannot finally and permanently perish can easily be proved — and therefore the one who does finally perish was plainly never truly one of them. As he is called a brother, so Christ is said to have died

for him — according to the charitable judgment Scripture allows us to extend to others. We cannot regard a person as a brother and not esteem that Christ died for him.

The next passage much relied upon is 2 Peter 2:1: 'But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.' Everything in this passage, as regards any proof of the matter at hand, is extremely obscure, uncertain, and doubtful. Uncertain: whether by 'the Master' is meant the Lord Christ — the word in the original is rarely if ever applied to Him. Uncertain: whether the purchase or buying of these false teachers refers to the eternal redemption through Christ's blood, or to a deliverance by God's goodness from the corruption of the world through idolatry and the like, by the knowledge of the truth — which the text expressly states. Most certain: that no spiritually distinguishing fruits of redemption are attributed to these false teachers, but only common gifts of light and knowledge, which Christ has obtained for many for whom He did not give His life as a ransom.

On the first uncertainty — whether Christ as Mediator is here meant by 'Master' or not — nothing in the text forces us to think so. The Greek word 'despotes' properly means 'sovereign' and is not usually, if ever, applied to our Savior in the New Testament; He is everywhere called 'kyrios,' nowhere clearly 'despotes' as the Father is (Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24).

But suppose He is so intended; it is still highly uncertain that the buying of these false teachers means His purchasing them with the ransom of His blood. The word translated 'buying' in the Old

Testament means any kind of deliverance, as in Deuteronomy 7:8, 15:15, Jeremiah 15:21. The apostle describes at length the deliverance they had and the means of it (verse 20): it consisted in escaping the corruption of the world — such as idolatry, false worship, and the like — through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Of washing in the blood of the Lamb he says nothing at all. So our opponents' argument from this passage amounts to: God the Lord, by granting the knowledge of the Gospel and leading certain people to an outward acknowledgment of it, separated and delivered from the world various people who appeared to be saints but were actually wolves and hypocrites, long since ordained to condemnation; therefore Jesus Christ shed His blood for the redemption and salvation of all the reprobate and condemned persons in the whole world. Who would not be astonished at our opponents' strange reasoning?

Third, it is equally uncertain that the apostle is speaking of the purchase of the wolves and hypocrites as a real and effective purchase, rather than speaking of them in terms of the estimation others had of them. It is the constant practice of Scripture to attribute to everyone in the fellowship of the church everything that is truly proper only to those who are genuine spiritual members of it — such as being called saints, elect, redeemed, and so on. Now after all this, if our opponents can prove universal redemption from this text, let them never give up hope in anything they attempt, however absurd it may be.

The last passage produced in support of this argument is Hebrews 10:29: 'How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was

sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?' Our opponents say that none of this could be stated about apostates — that they trampled under foot, etc. — unless Christ's blood was in some sense shed for them.

Reply: The apostle's purpose in this passage is the same as the overall aim and scope of the whole epistle: to persuade and press the Jews who had embraced the gospel to persevere and continue in it. He urges a powerful argument from the terrible and dangerous effects and consequences of backsliding and willful rejection of truth that has been known and professed, whatever the motivation or circumstances. He assures them that this sin amounts to nothing less than completely cutting oneself off from all hope and means of recovery, along with dreadful horror of conscience in expectation of coming judgment (verses 26-27).

First, he speaks here only of those who were professors of the gospel faith, separated from the world, brought into a church community and fellowship, professing themselves to be sanctified by the blood of Christ, receiving and owning Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and endowed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Now it is absolutely certain that these things are true of only some people — indeed a very few compared to the whole of humanity. Nothing can be concluded about all people from the condition of a very few who possess qualifications the majority do not have.

Second, the apostle neither describes what has happened nor asserts what may happen; he only adds a warning on the basis of a hypothetical. His primary aim is to deter from the thing, not to suggest that it actually can happen. When Paul told the soldiers (Acts 27) that if the sailors escaped in the boat they could not be saved, he did not mean to indicate that in the event they would be

drowned — for God had told him the night before that they would not. A warning about the judgment due for apostasy, being an appointed means for preserving the saints from that sin, may be set before them even though it is impossible for the elect to be deceived.

Third, it is absolutely certain that those he speaks of did profess all the things mentioned here: namely that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, that they were sanctified by the blood of the covenant, and that they had been enlightened by the Spirit of grace. A renunciation of all these things, with open contempt for them, was a sin of such deep wickedness, attended by so many aggravating factors, that this striking warning was entirely fitting to attach to it — even if the apostates never had any true and effective share in the blood of Jesus.

Fourth, it was the practice of the saints and the apostles themselves to regard all baptized and initiated members of the church as sanctified persons; so in speaking of those who fell away, the apostle could not describe them any other way than as they were commonly regarded.

Fifth, if the text is interpreted literally and according to the truth of the matter in both parts — that those the apostle speaks of were truly sanctified, and that such people may totally perish — then two things must inevitably follow: first, that faith and sanctification are not fruits of election; second, that believers can finally fall away from Christ. Neither of these is accepted by our new universalists.

Sixth, there is nothing in the text to compel us to think that those spoken of here must necessarily be truly justified and regenerated believers, much less that Christ died for them. The expression 'sanctified by the blood of the covenant' is to be understood in view of: first, the apostles' practice and custom of writing to churches and calling all their members saints; second, that these persons had been baptized, in which by a solemn use of the symbol of Christ's blood they were outwardly sanctified, separated, and set apart; third, the varied meanings of the word 'sanctified' in Scripture, one of the most common being to consecrate and set apart for any holy purpose.

When these things are considered, it becomes entirely clear that no true, genuine, inward, and effective sanctification proper to God's elect is implied here at all — only a common external setting apart from the ways of the world and practices of the old synagogue, to share in the ordinances of Christ representing the blood of the covenant. To those who were truly sanctified, the warning declared the certain connection between apostasy and condemnation, thereby urging them to avoid it; for those who were only outwardly so, it displayed the wickedness of the sin, along with their own certain and inevitable destruction if they fell into it.

And so with the Lord's help I have given a clear answer to all the arguments the Arminians claim to draw from Scripture in defense of their position. Since a multiplication of arguments on this subject has appeared recently, I will next address all the objections that T.M. in his book on the universality of free grace has gathered against our main thesis that Christ died only for the elect.

CHAPTER 6



The title claims to satisfy those who want reason satisfied — which I readily grant is a tall order. That a properly informed Christian reason, guided by God's Word, could ever be satisfied with a doctrine so contrary to that Word, so filled with internal contradictions and conflicts with its own principles, as the doctrine of universal redemption is — I would find remarkable. I am persuaded that the author of the following arguments will fail to achieve his purpose with all who have enough reason to know how to use it, and enough grace not to love darkness more than light.

Argument 1: What Scripture often and plainly affirms in plain words is certainly true and to be believed (Proverbs 22:20-21; Isaiah 8:20; 2 Peter 1:19-20). But that Jesus Christ gave Himself as a ransom, and by the grace of God tasted death for every person, is often and plainly affirmed in Scripture, as has been shown.

Therefore this is certainly a truth to be believed (John 20:31; Acts 26:27).

The first premise of this argument is clear, evident, and acknowledged by all who profess the name of Christ — but with this qualification: that by Scripture affirming something in plain words

to be believed, you mean the plain sense of those words as determined by sound rules of interpretation. It is the reality signified that is to be believed, not the words alone, which are only the signs of it. If by 'plain words' you mean the literal face value of words that may be figurative or have multiple meanings, then nothing is more false than this principle; for how then would you avoid the absurd error of the Anthropomorphites, who assigned a physical body and human form to God?

Second, the second premise we flatly deny in part — that Christ is said to give Himself as a ransom for every person — since this is neither often, nor even once, nor plainly, nor even obscurely affirmed in Scripture. As for the expression 'tasting death for everyone' (Hebrews 2:9), we grant those words are found there; but we deny that 'every man' always necessarily means all and every person in the world. 'Admonishing every man and teaching every man' (Colossians 1:28): 'every man' there does not mean every person in the world, nor can we believe that Paul personally warned and taught every single individual — which is both false and impossible. So 'every man' in Scripture is not universally collective of all of every kind, but is either distributive — meaning some of all kinds — or collective with a restriction to all of some particular group.

Third, that 'everyone' in Hebrews 2:9 is clearly restricted to all the members of Christ and the children He brings to glory, we have already shown. So that passage is in no way useful for supporting the second premise, which we deny in the sense intended.

To the conclusion of the syllogism, the author adds further proof — apparently aware that it has little force from the premises. Such logic is fitting to support such theology.

Argument 2: Those for whom Jesus Christ and His apostles plainly affirm without any exception or qualification that Christ came to save, died, gave Himself as a ransom, and is a propitiation for sin — He certainly did come to save them, give Himself as a ransom for them, and is the propitiation for their sins.

But Jesus Christ and His apostles have plainly affirmed that Christ came to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15), the world (John 3:17), that He died for the unjust (1 Peter 3:18), the ungodly (Romans 5:6), for everyone (Hebrews 2:9), gave Himself as a ransom for all people (1 Timothy 2:6), and is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2) — and every one of these statements without any exception or qualification.

Therefore Jesus Christ came to save, died, and gave Himself as a ransom for all people, and is the propitiation for their sins (John 1:29).

Regarding the first premise of this argument, I wish only to note that we do not claim Scripture ever places an explicit exception or qualification on those for whom Christ is said to die — as though in one place it says He died for all and in another it makes some exception to that. We only say that one Scripture passage interprets another and clarifies what in one place was ambiguous or unclear. When Scripture says Christ died or gave Himself as a ransom for all, we believe it; and when another passage declares that 'all' to mean His church, His elect, His sheep, all believers, some of all kinds from every people and nation and language under heaven — this is not placing an exception or qualification on what was said before, but only declaring that the 'all' for whom He gave Himself as a ransom was His whole church, all His elect, all His sheep, some of all kinds.

The second premise affirms that Christ and His apostles say He died to save sinners, the unjust, the ungodly, the world, all — and therefore the conclusion should simply be: Christ died for sinners, for the unjust, for the ungodly, for the world, and so on. The whole force of this argument lies in converting indefinite statements into universal ones: concluding that because Christ died for sinners, therefore He died for all sinners. If you extend the words in the conclusion no further than their intended meaning in the Scripture passages cited in the premise, we may safely grant the whole: namely, that Christ died for sinners and for the world — for sinful people in their various generations living in it. But if you intend a universality in the conclusion that includes every individual without exception, then the syllogism is fallacious and false.

Fourth, regarding the particular passages cited — 1 Timothy 1:15, 1 Peter 3:18, Romans 5:6, John 3:17, Hebrews 2:9, 1 John 2:2 — these have already been considered. Romans 3:10, 19, 23; Ephesians 2:1-3; Titus 3:3; John 3:4 — these prove that all are sinners and children of wrath; but of Christ dying for all sinners, or for all those children of wrath, there is not the slightest suggestion. This should be sufficient as an answer to the first two arguments.

Argument 3: What Scripture sets forth as one end of Christ's death, and one basis and reason for God's exalting Christ to be the Lord and Judge of all, is certainly to be believed.

But Scripture sets forth as one end of Christ's death and resurrection that He might be Lord of all (Romans 14:9; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15), and for that reason God has exalted Him to be the Lord and Judge of all people (Romans 14:9, 11-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10;

Philippians 2:7, 11; Acts 17:31; Romans 2:16). Therefore that Christ so died and rose again for all is a truth to be believed (1 Timothy 2:6-7).

The clumsy framing of this argument, the awkward expressions, and the errors along the way are the fault of the author, not the cause he represents, so I will not dwell on them. His interpretation of 'for this cause God exalted Christ' as referring only to His death and resurrection — when His resurrection, in which He was declared to be the Son of God with power (Romans 1:4), was itself a glorious part of His exaltation — illustrates the weakness that pervades this treatment. May God grant them understanding and repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.

Second, regarding this entire argument as presented, I have only one request for Master More: if the difficulties of our times call him to write again, he should stop expressing his views through syllogisms. In the conclusion he asserts and infers — and then reinforces with a new proof text — something that was never suggested in either premise; the premises speak of Christ's exaltation as Judge of all (which concerns His own glory), while the conclusion speaks of His dying for all (which necessarily aims at their benefit). What a noble ambition — to drive out all human learning and replace it with such reasoning as this.

Third, the force and substance of the argument is this: Christ died and rose again so that He might be Lord and Judge of all; therefore Christ died for all. Now ask what T.M. means by 'dying for all,' and his whole treatise answers: it means paying a ransom for them all so that they might be saved. How this conclusion can

be extracted from Christ's dominion over all and His authority to judge all — an authority that extends even to the angels, for whom He certainly did not die — I honestly cannot grasp.

Argument 6 amounts to the claim that universal redemption can be proved from Scripture — which is the very thing in question, making it no real argument at all. As for the second premise — that Christ gave Himself as a ransom for all and tasted death for all — these are indeed the words of Scripture and no one has ever denied them. But making 'all' mean every individual person in both passages cited is your addition, not Scripture's assertion. If you intend to prove that 'all' means every person of every age and kind — both elect and reprobate — and not all His children, all His elect, all His sheep, all the children given to Him by God, and some from every nation, language, and people — then I am glad to examine together the meaning of that word and the mind of God in it.

Proof 1: God so loved the world that He gave His Son to be the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14), and sends His servant to testify of His Son so that all people through Him might believe (John 1:4, 7), that whoever believes in Him might have everlasting life (John 3:16-17), and He is willing that all should come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4) and be saved (1 Timothy 1:15).

The one essential thing to be proved is that the indefinite statements in Scripture about Christ's death should be understood universally — that the terms 'all' and 'world' mean every individual person in the world. But this proof offers nothing toward that end. It merely recites a few ambiguous passages and draws a false conclusion from them.

No thoughtful person familiar with this controversy will expect me to spend many words on such weak arguments, empty repetitions, confused expressions, and illogical conclusions as this supposed new argument — which is essentially the same as the first two and nearly all that follow. My answer is fourfold. First, whatever Scripture presents as a truth to be believed is certainly true and to be embraced. Second, Scripture presents the death of Christ, to all who hear the Gospel, as an all-sufficient means of bringing sinners to God — so that whoever believes and comes to Him will certainly be saved. Third, what can be concluded from this except that Christ's death is of such infinite value that it is able to save everyone to whom it is made known, if they obtain a share in it through true faith? Fourth, the conclusion should at least express the full and entire claim contained in the premise — namely, that Christ is presented as Savior of the world in such a way that whoever among them believes will be saved — which we fully grant, since this says nothing at all about the universality of redemption, but only about the fullness and sufficiency of His satisfaction.

Argument 5: What God will one day cause every person to confess to His glory is certainly a truth, for God will own no lie for His glory.

But God will one day cause every person to confess Jesus — by virtue of His death and the ransom He gave — to be Lord, to the glory of God (Philippians 2:7-11; Isaiah 45:22-23; Romans 14:9, 12; Psalm 86:9).

Therefore it is certainly a truth that Jesus Christ gave Himself as a ransom for all people and thereby holds the right of lordship over them; and if any refuse to believe and submit to His rule, He

remains faithful and cannot deny Himself, but will one day bring them before Him and cause them to confess Him as Lord to the glory of God — when those who denied Him in the days of His patience will themselves be denied by Him (2 Timothy 2:12-14; Matthew 10:32-33; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

The conclusion of this argument should read — and only this: 'Therefore, that Jesus Christ is Lord and is to be confessed to the glory of God is certainly a truth.' Everything inserted about His giving Himself as a ransom for all, and about the conviction and condemnation of unbelievers, is entirely foreign to the point at hand. We do not attribute a fruitless, ineffectual redemption to Jesus Christ; we do not deny that He will also judge the reprobate — all who ignore, deny, and disobey the truth of His Gospel — and that all will be made to confess He is Lord of all on the last day. Second, regarding the phrase 'by virtue of His death and ransom given': we deny that Scripture anywhere teaches that the ransom Christ paid in His death was the cause of His exaltation to be Lord of all. Scripture presents His obedience to His Father in His death — not His satisfaction for our sins — as the basis of that exaltation (Philippians 2:7-11).

Argument 6: Whatever can be proved from Scripture — whether by plain statements or necessary logical conclusions, without twisting, quarreling over, adding to, removing from, or altering Scripture's words — is a truth to be believed.

But that Jesus Christ gave Himself as a ransom for all people, and by the grace of God tasted death for every person, can be proved from Scripture by both plain statements and necessary conclusions, without altering any words, as already shown in chapters 7-13 — which will now be arranged into several proofs.

Therefore it is a truth to be believed that Jesus Christ gave Himself for all people and by the grace of God tasted death for every person.

The point of this argument is simply that universal redemption can be proved from Scripture — but since that is the very thing in dispute, there is no reason it should serve as an argument in its own right; it is just filling space. In answer: first, the first premise means this — what Scripture affirms, or what may be rightly deduced from it, is certainly to be believed. This is granted by everyone and is the only foundation of the very article of faith you are trying to oppose. Second, to the second premise: that Christ gave Himself as a ransom for all and tasted death for all is the very language of Scripture and has never been denied. Making 'all' mean every individual person in both passages is your addition, not Scripture's claim. If you intend to prove that 'all' means every person — elect and reprobate alike — and not all His elect, all His sheep, and some from every nation and language only, then with the Lord's help I am glad to examine with you the meaning of the word and the mind of God in it. The claim to be proved is that Jesus Christ, according to His Father's counsel and will, and in His own mind and intention, paid a ransom in His death for every individual person — elect and reprobate, saved and lost alike — and not only for His elect or the church chosen before the foundation of the world. Various scripture passages have been offered to confirm this, and we will consider them in order.

PROOF 1 OF ARGUMENT 6.

God so loved the world that He gave His Son to be the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14), and sent His servant to testify of His Son so that all people through Him might believe (John 1:4, 7), that whoever believes in Him might have everlasting life (John 3:16-17), and He wills that all should come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4) and be saved (1 Timothy 1:15), and He will not withhold sufficient help from those who, as light comes, allow themselves to be moved and receive it (Proverbs 1:23; 8:4-5) — is this not plain in Scripture?

ANSWER.

The one essential — indeed the only — thing to be proved is that the indefinite statements in Scripture about Christ's death are to be understood universally: that the terms 'all' and 'world,' when they define the objects of Christ's death, signify every individual person in the world. Unless this is demonstrated, all other effort is completely useless and fruitless. Yet toward this, the proof offered is nothing more than a few ambiguous passages simply cited, with a false conclusion drawn from them that the texts themselves do not support.

Regarding 1 John 4:14: God's sending His Son to be the Savior of the world simply means He is the Savior of people living in the world — which His elect are. As for John 1:4, 7 — that all people through Him might believe — verse 7 refers to John the Baptist, not Christ: he was sent as a witness so that all through him might believe. By 'all' there, the text means only some of all kinds to whom his word came, so the necessary sense of 'all' in this passage actually undermines the premise entirely. As for John 3:16-17 — that God sent His Son so that whoever believes might have eternal

life — this is not disputed among Christians as to its meaning. Regarding 1 Timothy 2:4 — God's willing that all should be saved — I ask: what act of God does this willing consist in? If it is God's eternal decree that all should be saved, why is it not accomplished, since who has resisted His will? Grant that salvation is found only in Jesus Christ as Redeemer, and show me one instance in which God has declared to all people of all times and places His willingness for their salvation — and I will never raise this matter with you again. By 'all people' we understand some of all kinds throughout the world. What closes this proof — that God will not withhold sufficient help from those who allow themselves to be moved — is the whole Pelagian poison of free will and Arminian sufficient grace, neither of which finds the slightest support in the passages cited.

The substance of the whole claim is that a universal sufficiency of grace is given to all — even grace enabling obedience — a position so contradicted by countless Scripture passages, so derogatory to God's free grace, so destructive of its efficacy, and so plainly an enthronement of the old idol free will in the place of God, that it stands among the worst errors a declining Christianity has produced. Far from being plain and clear in Scripture, it stands in direct contradiction to the entire administration of the new covenant.

PROOF 2.

The second proof: Jesus Christ the Son of God came into the world to save the world (John 12:47), to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15), to take away our sins and destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:5, 8), to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29), and therefore

died for all (2 Corinthians 5:14-15) and gave Himself as a ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:6), to save what was lost (Matthew 18:11) — so His propitiation was for the world (2 Corinthians 5:19), indeed the whole world (1 John 2:2) — all of which, it is claimed, is fully and plainly in Scripture.

ANSWER.

The passages in this proof that mention 'all' or 'world' — John 12:47, John 1:29, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 1 Timothy 2:6, 2 Corinthians 5:19, 1 John 2:2 — have already all been addressed, and I have no wish to burden the reader with repetition. Review those discussions, and I have no doubt you will find that far from supporting what is being argued, they actually undermine it. As for the remaining passages — 1 Timothy 1:15, Matthew 18:11, 1 John 3:5, 8 — I cannot see how anything in them supports the universality of redemption, and what they actually argue against it has already been explained.

PROOF 3.

The third proof: God in Christ gives, through some appointed means or another, some witness to all people of His mercy and goodness procured by Christ (Psalm 19:6; Romans 10:8; Acts 14:17), and through this sends at some point some stirrings of His Spirit to move and knock at people's hearts, inviting them to repentance and seeking God, so that they may lay hold on the grace and salvation offered — and this not in pretense but in genuine

goodwill, ready to bestow it on all who receive it; and all of this is fully attested in Scripture (Genesis 6:3; Isaiah 45:22; Acts 17:30-31; John 1:9).

ANSWER.

If universal redemption needs proofs like these, it is in great need and has little hope of support. Universal calling is here asserted to prop up universal redemption — the two legs of the idol of free will set up for people to worship, each keeping the other upright when it staggers. First, it is true that God has at all times since creation called people to knowledge of Himself as the great Creator through the visible creation (Romans 1:19-20; Psalm 19:1-2; Acts 14:17). Second, after Christ's death, God called home through Gospel preaching the children of God scattered throughout the world (Mark 16:15; Romans 10:18; Acts 17:30-31). But third — that God should at all times, in every place and every age, grant means of grace or issue a call to Christ as Redeemer, along with stirrings and movements of His Spirit for people to respond to — this is so baseless and contrary to God's distinguishing mercy, and so plainly contradicted by Scripture, that I am astonished anyone would assert it. Let the reader consult Psalm 147:19-20, Matthew 11:25, Matthew 22:14, Acts 14:16, Acts 16:7, and Romans 10:14-15.

PROOF 4.

The fourth proof: the Holy Spirit who comes from the Father and the Son will convict the world of sin — because people do not believe in Christ, and their unbelief is their sin. But how could it be their sin not to believe in Christ, and how could they stand con-

demned for that unbelief, if the atonement Christ made had nothing in it for them, if God's offer of mercy to them were not genuine, and if the Spirit's movements were not sufficient to have brought them to believe at some point? And yet all this is evident in Scripture (John 3:18-19; 8:24; 12:48; 15:22, 24; 16:8-11).

ANSWER.

This proof aims to show that people will be condemned for their unbelief — for not believing in Christ — which, the author claims, cannot be just unless three things are granted: first, that the atonement Christ made has something in it for them; second, that God's offer of mercy to them is genuine; third, that the Spirit grants them sufficient will and power at some point to believe. To the first: if 'enough in the atonement for them' means the atonement contains sufficient merit for them, we do not deny it — not because the atonement lacks sufficiency, but because it was not made for them. If you mean there is sufficiency in Christ's merit to save them should they believe, we grant that, and affirm this sufficiency is the main basis for presenting it to all who hear the Gospel. To the second: there is an eternal truth in God's offer of mercy — namely, that God will certainly give life and salvation to all who believe. These offers declare our duty and the connection between faith and life; they say nothing at all about God's intention toward the particular soul receiving the offer. To the third: I say, first, you are putting the cart before the horse by placing will before power. Second, I deny that any internal assistance is needed to make a person without excuse for not believing, as long as the object of faith has been set before him. Third, please explain how a person can be given a will to believe and yet still not believe. The passage

in John 16:7-11 about the Spirit convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment primarily refers to the abundant outpouring of the Spirit on the apostles at Pentecost after Christ's ascension — which accomplished exactly this in Peter's sermon in Acts 3, when enemies and haters of Christ cried out, 'Men and brothers, what must we do to be saved?' What this has to do with universal redemption, let those who think they understand it keep to themselves — I am confident they will never be able to explain it to others.

PROOF 5.

Proof 5 asserts that God has testified by His Word and oath that Christ would accomplish a redemption for all people, that God wills all to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4; John 3:17), and that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked but rather wills that they turn and live (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11). And would anyone dare say that the God of truth says and swears something He does not inwardly and genuinely mean?

ANSWER.

First, the claim that God testified by word and oath that Christ saves only 'so far' is a bold falsehood — God revealed that Christ saves to the uttermost all who come to Him (Hebrews 7:25), not merely in some partial degree. Second, that Christ would bring all people to the knowledge of the truth is another bold distortion of Scripture. Third, John 3:17 speaks of being fully saved from sins (Matthew 1:21) and to the uttermost (Hebrews 7:25) — which confirms that only the world of God's elect is intended. In 1 Timothy

2:4 there is something about God's will to save all kinds of people, but nothing that supports the strong claim being made here. Fourth, Ezekiel 18:23, 32 might give some color to a general call to repentance, but gives no support to universal redemption, since the passage contains no mention of Christ or His death. The words are addressed to the house of Israel alone (verse 25), not to all humanity. 'God wills not the death of a sinner' means either that God has decreed they shall not die — but then why do sinners die, since His counsel is immutable? — or that He commands those He calls to do what leads to life. The entire passage in Ezekiel concerns God's temporal judgment on Israel for their sins; it has nothing to do with a universal design in the death of Christ.

PROOF 6.

The very words and phrases the Holy Spirit uses in Scripture about the death of Christ — all nations (Matthew 28:19-20), the ends of the earth (Isaiah 45:22; 49:6), every creature (Mark 16:15), all (2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Timothy 2:6), every person (Hebrews 2:9), the world (John 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 5:19), the whole world (1 John 2:2), what was lost (Luke 19:10), sinners (Matthew 9:13), the unjust (1 Peter 3:18), the ungodly (Romans 5:6) — imply no less than all people without exception. And since whoever repents and believes in Christ will receive His grace (John 3:16, 18; Acts 10:43), would it not be arrogant and mistaken to invent interpretations that restrict what Scripture presents so openly for all people?

ANSWER.

This argument from words and phrases is essentially the same argument repeated throughout the whole book — it does nothing more than restate the very point under debate, namely whether 'all' and 'the world' are to be taken universally, and merely asserts that they are without proving it. Second, the passages that speak of Christ dying for sinners, the ungodly, and what was lost have already been shown to give no real support to universal redemption. Third, all the passages where 'all,' 'every person,' 'the world,' and 'the whole world' appear have been examined at length. Fourth, 'all nations' and 'every creature' refer to those to whom the Gospel is to be preached without national restriction — they do not encompass every individual at all times, and the command to preach the Gospel to all does not in the least prove that Christ intended to redeem all. Fifth, 'the ends of the earth' in Isaiah 45:22 refers to those who look to God and are saved; and Christ being given as salvation to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49:6) means gathering the preserved remnant of His elect — which is the correct interpretation of 'all' and 'the world' wherever those terms appear.

PROOF 7.

The seventh proof argues that Scripture describes certain high and unique privileges of the Spirit belonging only to the saints and God's chosen, yet when these privileges are mentioned alongside the ransom and propitiation, they are not expressed in exclusive terms but with language that leaves room to apply the ransom to all people. Scripture says Christ died 'for His sheep' and 'for many,' but nowhere says 'only for His sheep' or 'only for many' — which the author takes as strong proof that the ransom is for all.

ANSWER.

The claim that where these unique privileges are mentioned alongside the ransom there is room to extend the ransom to all is asserted but never proved. First, it is certain that all particular saving privileges belong only to God's elect, purchased for them alone by the blood of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3-4); Christ's death for them is itself one of those privileges — He redeemed His church with His own blood (Acts 20:28) and gave Himself for it (Ephesians 5:25-26). Second, that 'room' is merely asserted, not demonstrated. Third, whether 'many,' 'sheep,' or 'all' is used, the language about the ransom is handled identically throughout Scripture. Fourth, in several passages the ransom and the unique privileges are so inseparably joined that it is impossible to apply the privileges to some while extending the ransom to all — Revelation 5:9-10 assigns the redemption by blood precisely to those crowned individuals distinguished from the rest of the nations, from among whom they were taken. Fifth, enough has already been said about the sheep passages.

PROOF 8.

The eighth proof asserts that the restoration Christ accomplished in His own body for humanity is as broad and complete for all people, and as powerful in its effect, as Adam's fall was for all people — Christ as the second Adam therefore corresponding to the first Adam in universal scope (Romans 3:22-24; 5:12, 14, 18; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-47).

ANSWER.

First, it is true that Christ and Adam are compared in Romans 5:12, 18, but the comparison concerns the intensity of efficacy, not the extent of its objects — the apostle asserts that Christ's righteousness is as powerful to justify as Adam's transgression was to condemn, with Adam's sin passing to all his natural descendants and Christ's righteousness to all His spiritual descendants, the children given to Him by the Father. Second, 1 Corinthians 15:22-23 speaks of the resurrection to glory through Christ's resurrection — verse 23 restricts that 'all' to all who are Christ's; others will also rise, but not to a resurrection of glory. Third, the comparison in verse 45 is between the kinds of life each communicated to those united to them: Adam a living soul giving natural life, Christ a life-giving Spirit giving grace to His own. Fourth, Romans 3:23 — 'all have sinned' — was stated to show that salvation comes only through Christ; when Paul specifies to whom Christ's righteousness extends, he says plainly: 'to all and upon all those who believe' (verse 22), whether Jew or Gentile.

PROOF 9.

The Lord Jesus Christ sent and commanded His servants to preach the Gospel to all nations and to every creature, and to tell them that whoever believes and is baptized will be saved (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16), and His servants have so preached to all (2 Corinthians 5:19; Romans 10:13, 18). And the Lord Jesus Christ will make it clear one day that He did not send His servants on a false errand, did not put a lie in their mouths, and did not have them pretend to offer to all what they knew belonged only to a few — but to speak truth (Isaiah 44:26; 61:8; 1 Timothy 1:12).

ANSWER.

The force of this ninth proof is not easy to see. First, it is true that Christ commanded His apostles to preach the Gospel to all nations and every creature — calling all people without distinction of person or nation to repent and believe, except where the Spirit withheld them (Acts 16:6-7). Second, His servants obeyed, calling people everywhere to be reconciled to God without discrimination (2 Corinthians 5:19-20; Romans 10:18). Third, it is absolutely certain that Christ did not send His servants with a lie to offer what belonged only to some. But what any of this proves for universal redemption is impossible to see. The Gospel has never been preached to every individual person — and what must be proved is that Christ died for all people, including those who never hear the Gospel. What do Gospel preachers offer? Life and salvation through Christ on the condition of faith and repentance — and the truth of that offer rests on this: that everyone who believes will be saved, which stands firm as long as Christ is all-sufficient to save all who come to Him. God has entrusted ministers with His commands and promises, not His secret purposes and counsels — and it is no lie to tell people 'he who believes shall be saved,' even if Christ did not die for some of them.

PROOF 10.

The tenth proof: the Lord wills believers to pray even for the unjust and their persecutors (Matthew 5:44, 48; Luke 6:28), yes even for all people, yes even for kings and all who are in authority (1 Timothy 2:1, 4), on this ground: it is good in the sight of God, who

wills all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Surely this means a door of life has been opened for all (2 Timothy 1:10).

ANSWER.

The force of this proof rests on several unfounded assumptions. First, it assumes that indefinite statements are equivalent to universal ones — which is false (Romans 4:5). Second, it assumes that 'all' in 1 Timothy 2:1 does not mean all kinds of people, when the apostle's enumeration of various categories plainly shows a distributive meaning. Third, it assumes we are obligated to pray for every individual person that they may be saved — for which there is no warrant, rule, command, or example in Scripture. This is contrary to the apostle's direction (1 John 5:16), our Savior's example (John 17:9), and the revealed counsel and purpose of God (Romans 9:11-12, 15; 11:7). Fourth, it assumes the only thing we should pray for people is that they be saved through Christ — which is obviously false (Jeremiah 29:7). Fifth, it assumes our basis for praying for anyone is assurance that Christ died for them in particular — which is not the case (Acts 8:22, 24). Inferring God's secret purpose from our duty is invalid reasoning, though inferring our duty from His command is entirely sound.

PROOF 11.

The eleventh proof states that the Lord has given His Word and promise to be with His servants as they preach the Gospel to all, and with His people as they pray for all, so that both may proceed

with confidence (Matthew 28:20; 1 Timothy 2:3, 8; Luke 10:6; Isaiah 54:17).

ANSWER.

That God will be with His people whether in preaching or praying according to His will and their duty is as clear as it is obvious that this proves nothing for universal redemption.

PROOF 12.

The Lord has already fulfilled His word to His servants and people, showing mercy to the very end — mercy to people of all sorts and all kinds of sinners — so that none might exclude themselves, but all might be encouraged to repent, believe, and hope (Acts 2; 3; 8; 9; 10; 11; 16; 19; 28; 1 Corinthians 6:10-11; 1 Timothy 1:13-17).

ANSWER.

Had the author told us that God had already fulfilled His word by saving every individual person and proved it clearly, he would have undeniably confirmed his main position. But by affirming only that God has shown mercy to some of all sorts and all kinds of sinners — so that others of the same kind might be encouraged to believe — he has actually undermined his own case and established that of his opponents: showing that in practice, God declares Himself on their side, saving in the blood of Jesus only some of all kinds, not every individual.

PROOF 13.

The thirteenth proof argues that the blessing of life has flowed through the doctrine of God's love for humanity, and that in the gracious revelation of the ransom given and the atonement made by Christ for all people, God has first and above all moved His chosen ones to believe and turn to God (Acts 13:48; Titus 2:11, 13; 3:4-5).

ANSWER.

First, the freedom of God's grace and the greatness of His eternal love toward humanity — expressed in the sending of His Son to die for them and reclaim them from sin and Satan — is a most powerful motive for conversion, and we gladly acknowledge this. But that this motive has ever been effective by extending that love to all, or that its effectiveness depends on that broader application, we utterly deny. First, that claim is false and a corruption of God's Word, and no good conclusion can follow from a false premise. Second, this idea undermines the very power of this heavenly motive by turning the intense and incomparable love of God toward His elect into a common desire and a love that falls short — which is contrary to His nature. Third, the passages cited contain nothing of this common love for all: the grace in Titus 2:11-13 is the grace that certainly brings salvation — not a common goodwill — and came to redeem a people of His own. Likewise the love and kindness in Titus 3:4-5 is that by which we receive the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit — a particular, not a common, love. Fourth, Acts 13:47 speaks only of the extension of God's mercy through the Gospel to the Gentiles as well as the Jews — which is far from proving universal grace.

PROOF 14.

The fourteenth proof urges that those who, when the Gospel and its light come to them, refuse to believe and are drawn away by other things, are said to love darkness rather than light (John 3:19), to follow empty idols and forfeit their own mercies (Jonah 2:8), to harden their own hearts (Romans 2:5), to lose their souls (Matthew 16:26), and to destroy themselves (Hosea 13:9). And since they had already fallen through Adam into darkness, hardness, and spiritual death, how could these things be said of them if Christ had obtained no life for them, made no atonement, brought about no restoration, and provided no means by which they could be saved?

ANSWER.

The sum of this argument is: those who do not believe when the Gospel is preached are the cause of their own ruin; therefore Jesus Christ died for every person in the world. Though it might seem wasted effort to answer such a non sequitur, a few observations are necessary so that weaker readers are not left with lingering doubts. First, not all people have the Gospel preached to them — from the beginning of the world the great majority of humanity has been passed over in the distribution of the means of grace (Romans 2; Acts 17). All such people must be excluded from this conclusion, which makes it entirely useless to the case at hand, since the universality of redemption collapses the moment even one soul is not included in the payment of the ransom. Second, what destroys people is not their failure to believe that Christ died for every individual soul — which Scripture nowhere requires as an article of

faith — but their failure to trust in the all-sufficiency of Christ's suffering for sinners, and their rejection of the mercy obtained through it on the terms the Gospel sets out. Those terms do not address God's purpose regarding for whom Christ died, but the sufficiency and efficacy of His death for all who receive Him. Third, the other passages cited — Jonah 2:8, Romans 2:5, Matthew 16:26, Hosea 13:9 — give no support to the argument. Jonah 2:8 concerns those who abandon the true God for idols and thereby forfeit their temporal and spiritual mercies. Romans 2:5 speaks of Gentiles who had the created order to instruct them and God's patience waiting on them, yet hardened themselves further. Fourth, the conclusion of this proof seems to reveal a deeper purpose — that all people are in a restored condition through Christ: not merely that a door of mercy is open to all, but that all are actually brought back into grace and favor, so that if they do not fall away they will certainly be saved. The argument for this is that since people fell in Adam into darkness and hardness, they could not be said to love darkness and harden themselves unless they had first been restored and enlightened by Christ. If this is the author's meaning — as it appears to be — several things must be said. First, regarding the argument itself: this is like saying that because original sin makes people guilty of death, they cannot by actual sins make their condemnation worse; or that because people are naturally blind they cannot be said to undervalue light. It is precisely because they are blind that they undervalue it — and people who have the time, opportunity, and means to save their souls can rightly be said to lose them by their own fault. Second, regarding the claim itself — that all people are actually restored by Christ into covenant — there is nothing in Scripture that gives this gross error the slightest

support. It contradicts many passages affirming that we are dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1), that unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3), and that until one comes by faith to Christ the wrath of God remains on him (John 3:36), along with countless other passages demonstrating the universal alienation of all people from God until actual peace and reconciliation is made through Christ. It contradicts the very nature of the new covenant of grace, which flows from God's free mercy to His elect, is made with His own people in distinction from the world, and effectively works every promised good in all those to whom it belongs — which is certainly not all people. It contradicts the eternal purpose of God in election and reprobation, reprobation being a decision to leave people in their fallen state with no reparation through Christ. This position also carries many absurd consequences. First, all infants who die before committing any actual sin must necessarily be saved, placing the infants of Turks, Pagans, and persecutors in a far happier condition than the apostles of Christ who died in maturity — yet Christ said that without being born again no one can see the kingdom of God (John 3:3), Paul says the children of unbelievers are unclean (1 Corinthians 7:14), and nothing unclean shall enter the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:27). Second, nothing more is required of anyone to be saved than simply remaining in the condition in which he was born — when the entire Word of God declares that all who remain in that state will certainly perish eternally. Third, every person in the whole world who perishes must have fallen away from the grace of the new covenant — yet the covenant's promises declare there will never be a total falling away of those who are in covenant. Fourth, no one can come to Christ except

those who have first personally fallen away from Him, since all others are already abiding in Him. Countless other absurdities follow inevitably from this false and heretical assertion, which is completely destructive to the free grace of God.

PROOF 15.

The fifteenth proof urges God's earnest pleadings, appeals, and protests to those many who ultimately perished (Romans 11:27; Isaiah 10:22) — such as: 'Oh that there were such a heart in them to fear Me, that it might go well with them' (Deuteronomy 5:29); 'What more could have been done for My vineyard?' (Isaiah 5:4-5); 'What injustice did your fathers find in Me?' (Jeremiah 2:5); 'My people, what have I done to you?' (Micah 6:3); 'How often I wanted to gather your children together, and you were unwilling' (Matthew 23:37); 'Because I called and you refused' (Proverbs 1:24-25, 32) — arguing that since God pleads in this way with all, a ransom must have been given for them and genuine mercy shown to them.

ANSWER.

First, in all these pleadings there is no mention of any ransom given or atonement made for those who perish — they all concern temporal mercies and outward means of grace. Second, all the passages cited (except Romans 1:28 and 2:5, which plainly ground the inexcusability of sin on knowledge available through creation and providence) are addressed only to those who enjoyed the means of grace — a very small portion of all humanity, so nothing can be concluded from them about God's mind toward all others (Psalm

147:19-20). Third, everyone who enjoys the means of grace has received so many mercies from God that He may justly plead with them about their ingratitude. Fourth, everything God pleads with people about lacking, He could — if He chose — effectively work in human hearts by His exceeding power. So these pleadings cannot be declarations of His purpose. Fifth, desires and wishes should not properly be ascribed to God — these expressions are to be understood as language adapted to human understanding. Sixth, all these passages are nothing more than emphatic declarations of our duty, strong convictions of the disobedient, and a vindication of the excellence of God's ways. The conclusion 'therefore Christ died for all people' does not follow.

PROOF 16.

The sixteenth proof urges the way Scripture describes the sin of those who despise and refuse grace — that they turn the grace of God into an excuse for immorality (Jude 4), trample underfoot the Son of God, treat as common the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified, and insult the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:29), deny the Lord who bought them (2 Peter 2:1), and perish — those for whom Christ died (1 Corinthians 8:11) — being trees twice dead, uprooted (Jude 12-13), bringing on themselves swift destruction (2 Peter 2:1). The argument is: how could all this be said of them if God had in no way given His Son for them, if Christ had shed no blood to obtain their remission, if He had not purchased them?

ANSWER.

First, the three scripture passages most pressed in this case — Hebrews 10:29, 2 Peter 2:1, and 1 Corinthians 8:11 — have already been examined at length, where it was shown they in no way support what they are forcibly made to prove. Second, as for the passages from Jude — verses 4, 12, and 13 — it is not clear how they bear on the matter at hand. Those said in verse 4 to 'turn the grace of God into an excuse for immorality' are abusing the doctrine of the Gospel to encourage themselves in sin — from which it is a strange inference to conclude that Christ died for all people, especially since the apostle indicates that Christ did not die for these abusers of His grace, declaring that they were marked out for condemnation long ago.

PROOF 17.

The seventeenth proof argues that Jesus Christ by virtue of His death will be the Judge of all, and that by the Gospel — in which they could have been saved — He will judge them to a second death. How can this be if He never died the first death for them, and if the Gospel preached to them contained no truth? (Romans 14:9-12; Philippians 2:7-11; Romans 2:16; John 12:47-48, 50)

ANSWER.

First, that Jesus Christ will be Judge of all and that all judgment has been given to Him is granted; but it does not follow that He died for all — otherwise one would also have to say He died for the devils, since they too will be judged by Him. Second, that all people will be judged by the Gospel — including those who never heard a word of it — is directly contrary to Scripture: 'as many as have

sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and as many as have sinned under the law will be judged by the law' (Romans 2:12). Every person will be judged according to the light and standard they had or could have had, not according to what was completely beyond their reach. Third, the claim that Christ died only 'the first death' is neither a scriptural expression nor deducible from Scripture. Fourth, the suggestion that there is no truth in the Gospel preached unless Christ died for all is actually one of the most self-defeating assertions imaginable. The passages cited speak of Christ as Lord, exalted above all, and Judge of all — but how they can be twisted to support universal atonement is not apparent.

PROOF 18.

The eighteenth proof urges that believers are exhorted to contend for the faith of this common salvation once delivered to the saints (Jude 3-5), which some who have heard it oppose and others twist into an excuse for sin; and that by ignoring and not walking in it, people deprive themselves of the salvation already accomplished by Christ and cut themselves off from the salvation to come.

And each of these proofs being plain and scriptural — and each having force individually, how much more together — they continue to support the sense that 1 Timothy 2:6 and Hebrews 2:9 convey, and the truth of the original proposition.

ANSWER.

All that can be found here is that the salvation purchased by Christ is called 'common salvation.' If the author concludes from this that it is common to all people, he might as well conclude that faith belongs to all people, since it is called 'the common faith' (Titus 1:4) — though also 'the faith of God's elect' (verse 1). There is a community of believers, and the common salvation is the salvation by which they are all saved — having nothing to do with the strange kind of 'common salvation' maintained here, the kind by which no one is actually saved. The rest of this proof is filled with words suited to the author's convictions but largely contrary to God's Word and derogatory to the merits of Christ, making the salvation He purchased ineffective in itself and dependent on sinful and corrupted people either to make it effective or to reject it.

These are the proofs this author calls plain and scriptural — they amount to a summary of nearly everything he has said throughout his whole book, with little of weight left out. Whether the thing meant to be proved — that Christ paid a ransom for every individual person — is plainly and clearly confirmed from Scripture, as the author would have us believe; or whether this whole collection of claims called arguments, reasons, and proofs is not in its manner of expression obscure, in its manner of reasoning childish, weak, and laughable, in its use and interpretation of Scripture perverse, forced, and in direct opposition to the revealed mind and will of God — this is left to the judgment of every Christian reader who examines them alongside the answers given here.

CHAPTER 7



Addressing certain common fallacies and captious arguments of the Arminians will close our treatise and bring the whole controversy to a conclusion. I will aim to be as brief as possible, partly because others have treated these matters at length, and partly because, now that all scriptural support for the opposing view has been dismantled, all other objections will naturally fall on their own. Yet because some of what follows has been accompanied by much boasting and inflated rhetoric, something must be said to expose the emptiness of such language so that less experienced readers will not be misled.

We begin with an argument that has enjoyed great fame in this controversy while possessing very little actual merit: What everyone is obligated to believe is true; but everyone is obligated to believe that Jesus Christ died for him; therefore it is true that Jesus Christ died for everyone.

The Arminians and their allies never present this argument without adding some lavish praise of it and some measure of contempt and threat toward their opponents — so much so that by general consensus it has earned the nickname 'the Remonstrants' Achilles.' For my part, I sincerely wish that the many lengthy and

labored answers drawn out by our opponents' boasting had not given this hollow argument far more reputation than its own merit could ever have secured. Consider these four assumptions: first, that the word 'believe' is used in the same sense in both premises; second, that 'believing' means a saving application of Christ to the soul as He is offered in the promise; third, that believing Christ died for any person must relate to the purpose of the Father and the intention of Christ Himself; fourth, that 'everyone' must refer to all people in the one condition common to all — a state of wrath and death (Ephesians 2:3). On these assumptions, the minor premise reads: all people in the world, as they stand in a state of wrath and unregeneracy, are obligated to believe that it was God's intention for Christ to die for each one of them individually. This minor premise is absolutely false and has not the slightest support from reason or Scripture. First, some would then be obligated to believe what is false — which cannot be, since every obligation to believe comes from the God of truth; and it is false that Christ died for every individual. Second, people would be obligated to believe what has not been revealed — yet divine revelation is the object of all faith; Scripture nowhere declares that Christ died for this or that particular person as such, but only for sinners in general. Third, the purpose and intention of God is not presented in Scripture as an object of faith, but is left to be known and assured to the soul through experiencing its effects in the heart. Fourth, no scriptural command to believe can be rightly interpreted as meaning 'God intended that Christ should die for you in particular.' Fifth — and this alone is enough to break the back of this argument — not all people have the object of faith, Christ's death, set before them: how can they believe unless they hear? How many millions

in distant nations have gone to their end without hearing the least report of Jesus Christ? Is not unbelief the great damning sin where faith is required (John 3:30)? And yet does not Paul prove that many will be condemned for sinning against the light of nature (Romans 2)? — a clear demonstration that faith is not required of all people.

Our opponents may reply — as they must, if they intend to preserve any appearance of strength for this argument — that they mean it only with respect to those who are called by the Word. Let the argument then be restated as follows:

What every person called by the Word — to whom the Gospel is preached — is obligated to believe, is true.

But every such person is obligated to believe that Christ died for him individually; therefore it is so.

First, this revised version of the argument removes only the last objection raised; all the rest remain in full force and are sufficient to overturn it. Second, does anyone not see that this very revision has rendered the argument completely useless for the cause it was meant to defend? If even one person is excluded — much more the great majority of humanity, who are now left outside the scope of this argument — the general ransom collapses. From the innumerable multitudes of 'all,' we have narrowed to the many who are called, and no doubt we will soon arrive at the few who are chosen. As for the objection that what holds true for those to whom the Gospel is proposed would also hold true for all others if it were proposed to them: first, the argument must be drawn from the actual scriptural obligation to believe and can extend no further than that obligation actually reaches; second, it is not safe rea-

soning to speculate about what would or should be if things were other than God has appointed and ordained. If the Gospel were preached throughout the whole world, all that God's mind and will could in general communicate through it would be this: 'He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned' — that is, God has linked faith and salvation together, so that whoever would enjoy the latter must perform the former. What unbelieving Turks and Indians would be condemned for upon hearing and rejecting the Gospel is not for failing to believe that Christ died for them individually, but for rejecting God's wisdom and plan to save sinners through the blood of Jesus — for refusing to believe in the necessity of a Redeemer and that Jesus of Nazareth is that Redeemer.

The minor premise of the revised syllogism is still denied, partly for the reasons already given and partly for these additional ones. First, those to whom the Gospel is preached are obligated to believe only with the faith required for justification — and this is not a firm conviction that Christ died for any one person in particular by God's intention and purpose. Second, there is a natural order, established by God's appointment, in the things that must be believed, so that until some are believed, others are not yet required — just as a man cannot reasonably be commanded to jump to the top of a ladder by skipping all the lower rungs. The order is this: first, repent and believe the Gospel to be God's Word containing His will, and that Jesus Christ revealed in it is the power and wisdom of God for salvation; second, believe in the inseparable connection God has ordained between faith and salvation; third, receive a particular conviction from the Spirit of one's own need for a Redeemer — becoming weary, heavy laden, and burdened;

fourth, with a full and sincere resting and casting of the soul upon Christ in the Gospel promise, as an all-sufficient Savior able to save to the uttermost all who come to God through Him. In doing all this, no one called by the Gospel is ever required to inquire into God's purpose and intention concerning the particular objects of Christ's death; everyone is fully assured that His death benefits those who believe in Him and obey Him. Only after all this — and not before — does it become the believer's task to assure his soul, based on the fruit of Christ's death experienced within him, of God's eternal love in sending His Son to die for him individually. What a backward and Gospel-opposing approach it would be to call on a person to believe and be assured that it was God's purpose for Christ to die for him individually, before he is convinced of the truth of the Gospel in general — or that faith is the only way of salvation, or that he himself needs a Savior, or that Christ is sufficient to save and recover him if he comes to Christ.

When properly stated, the argument is this: what every person is obligated to believe who is convinced of his need for a Savior, who knows the right way of salvation, and who hungers, thirsts, and longs after Jesus Christ as the only one who can satisfy him — what such a person is bound to believe is true; but every such person is bound to believe that Christ died for him individually; therefore it is true. Some grant this entire argument without any harm to the cause we are defending. It is now clear, first, that not all who are called by the Word are obligated — in whatever condition they remain — to believe that Christ died for them by name. Only those who are qualified as described above bear this obligation. Second, the duty of believing with personal confidence that Christ died for any particular person is not proposed to all who are called; nor is

the failure to perform it a sin in any other sense than as it is rooted in unbelief or in refusing to turn to God in Christ for mercy. Third, no one for whom Christ did not die will be condemned for not believing that Christ died for him individually — that would be requiring belief in something false — but for not believing the things to which he was called, all of which are true and applicable to him. Fourth, the command to believe in Christ, so often pressed as given to all, is not obligatory on anyone regarding this particular point except when the required conditions have been met. Fifth, to believe on the name of Jesus Christ — which is the command of 1 John 3:23 — is not to believe that it was God's intention for Christ to die for us individually, but to rest on Him for salvation (Isaiah 50:11). Sixth, the testimony of God to which we should set our seal is simply this: he who has the Son has life, but he who does not have the Son of God does not have life (1 John 5:12); and those who deny this do everything in their power to make God a liar, and are justly condemned for it. For further reading on this argument, the reader may consult Piscator, Perkins, Twisse, the Synod of Dort, Moulin, Baronius, Rutherford, Sparhemius, Ames, and others.

A second objection: any doctrine that fills the minds and souls of poor, miserable sinners with doubts about whether they are permitted to believe when God calls them cannot be in agreement with the Gospel. But the doctrine of particular redemption does exactly this — it fills sinners' minds with fears about whether they may believe, since they are uncertain whether it was God's intention for Christ to die for them individually, not knowing whether they are among the elect for whom He died.

First, it is all too clear from experience that doubts, fears, and misgivings — the natural offspring of unconquered unbelief — will often rise in sinners' hearts, sometimes in opposition to and sometimes taking occasion from the truth of the Gospel. The question is whether the doctrine itself, when rightly received, gives rise to such fears in those who properly do their duty, or whether all those fears are simply the natural product of corruption and unbelief setting itself against the truth as it is in Jesus. The first we deny concerning the doctrine of particular effectual redemption; the second God alone can remedy. Second, this objection assumes that a person must know and be persuaded — that is, must believe — that Jesus Christ died by God's appointment for him individually, before he believes in Jesus Christ. In fact, they make this the very foundation of their argument: that people, according to our view, may hesitate over whether they ought to believe, because they are not first assured that Christ died for them by God's design. Now if this is not a plain self-contradiction I do not know what is — for what is it, according to Scripture, for a person to be assured that Christ died for him individually? Is it not the highest attainment of faith? Does it not include a sense of God's love poured out in our hearts? Is it not the crown of the apostle's comfort (Romans 8:34) and the foundation of all his joyful assurance (Galatians 2:20)? So they evidently require that a person must believe before he believes — that he cannot believe and will greatly fear whether he should, unless he already believes before he believes. Such a removal of doubts would be the surest way to entangle troubled consciences in further inescapable confusion. Third, we deny that a persuasion that it was God's will for Christ to die for a particular sinner is necessary to bring that sinner to faith. The call of Christ

(Matthew 11:28; Isaiah 55:1), the command of God (John 3:23), the promise of life upon believing (John 3:36), the all-sufficiency of Christ's blood to save all believers (Acts 20:21; Ephesians 5:2), and the assured salvation of all believers without exception (Mark 16:16) — these are what Scripture sets out to remove doubts and fears and draw sinners to faith. Fourth, the doctrine that affirms the certainty of salvation through Christ's death for all believers; confirms that God's command and Christ's call infallibly declare one's duty; holds out purchased free grace to all distressed and burdened consciences; and presents a fountain of blood all-sufficient to cleanse the sin of everyone who uses the appointed means to come to it — such a doctrine cannot possibly create any doubt or hesitation in convicted and burdened sinners about whether they ought to believe. All of this is presented by the doctrine of particular effectual redemption in its proper Gospel form. One final question for the advocates of universal redemption: what exactly, according to them, are people required to believe when they already know beforehand that Christ died for them individually? It cannot be a persuasion of God's love and Christ's goodwill, since they already have that. Nor can it be a coming to God through Christ to enjoy the fruits of His death — for what are those fruits according to them but things common to all, which may end in condemnation as well as salvation, in unbelief as well as faith? In the end, their position will resolve itself into Socinian obedience.

Two remaining matters are hotly contested: both are excellent and valuable things, and both are claimed by each side in this debate. These are, first, the exaltation of God's free grace and the merit of Christ, and second, the consolation of our souls. Let us consider each in turn and let each position receive its due.

Concerning the first matter — the exaltation of God's free grace — many have come to believe that universal redemption greatly magnifies God's love and free grace: they say God loves all, gave Christ to die for all, and is ready to save all who come to Him — and that this is free grace magnified indeed. But consider carefully: what precisely is this so-called free grace that is universal? Is it the grace of election? Certainly not — God has not chosen all to salvation (Romans 9:11-12; Ephesians 1:4; Romans 8:28). Is it the grace of effectual calling? No — for those God calls He also justifies (Romans 8:30) and glorifies, and not all have even received an outward call (Psalm 147:19-20; Romans 10:14). Is it the grace of cleansing and sanctification? Are all washed in the blood of Jesus? Surely only the church (Ephesians 5:24-26), for some remain defiled (Titus 1:15), faith is the means by which the heart is purified, and not all people have faith. Is it the grace of justification — God's free love and mercy in pardoning and accepting sinners? But is this universal? Are all pardoned and accepted? See Romans 1:17; 3:22; 5:1. Is it the grace of redemption in the blood of Christ? See Revelation 5:9. What then is this universal free grace? Is it not entirely a figment of the imagination, or simply a new name for the old idol of free will? Is it not destructive to free grace in every one of its dimensions? Does it not tend to overthrow the entire covenant of distinguishing grace, denying that its conditions are effectively worked in any of its members by the power of the covenant's own promises? What are the two real aims of their free grace but to mock God and to exalt themselves? They present God as making a display of love, goodwill, free grace, and pardon to all, yet never communicating — by an incomparably wide margin — any such love to the greatest portion of them, even though God

knows that without His working in them they can never come to any such knowledge. For those who are outwardly called, they portray God as pretending to love them all, sending His Son to die for them all, desiring that they all be saved — yet on a condition that, without His enabling grace, they can no more fulfill than climb to heaven on a ladder, and which grace He will not supply. They would have God say, in effect: 'Such is My love, My universal grace — by it I freely love you and gladly embrace you in everything, except the one thing that would do you good.' Would they not call a man a rank hypocrite who went to a blind man and said, 'Poor man, I pity your condition, I see your need, I love you dearly — open your eyes and I will give you a hundred pounds'? And yet they dare assign such conduct to the most holy God of truth. Is their universal grace anything but mockery? Has it ever done any soul good — that is, in anything common to all — as far as salvation goes? Are not the two distinguishing marks of God's grace in Scripture that it is discriminating and effective? Is their grace either of these? Granting everything they claim about the extent of grace to be true: is it the kind of grace any soul was ever saved by? If so, why are not all saved? Because, they will say, people do not believe — meaning, then, that the giving of faith is no part of this free grace. Here their second aim stands exposed: to exalt themselves and their free will in the place of grace, or at least to leave room for free will to step in and claim the decisive share in salvation — namely believing itself, which makes all the rest profitable. In a word: to bring the reprobate within the scope of free grace, they deny free grace to the elect; to make it universal, they deny it to be effectual; so that all may have a portion of it, they deny that any are saved by it — for saving grace, they insist, must be limited.

On the other side: in what single way does the doctrine of the effectual redemption of God's elect alone by the blood of Jesus diminish the free grace of God? Is it in its freedom? We say it is so free that if it is not entirely free it is no grace at all. Is it in its effectiveness? We say that by grace we are saved, ascribing the whole work of our recovery and return to God entirely to grace. Is it in its extent? We affirm that it extends to every person who ever was, is, or shall be delivered from the pit. We do not call grace that leads to hell 'free grace' in the Gospel sense, for we hold that God's free grace is so powerful that wherever it has chosen and destined a person as its object, it brings God and Christ and salvation along with it into eternity. You say we do not extend it to all, that we restrict it to a few — but is the extent of God's love and favor within our power to determine? Does He not have mercy on whom He will have mercy and harden whom He will (Romans 9:18)? And do we not affirm that grace is extended to the entire company of those who are saved? Should we throw the children's bread to dogs? We believe that God's grace in Christ works faith in everyone to whom it is extended; that all the conditions of the covenant ratified in Christ's blood are effectively worked in the heart of every covenant member; that there is no love of God that fails to accomplish its purpose; that the blood of Christ was not shed in vain; that of ourselves we are dead in trespasses and sins and can do nothing except what God's free grace works in us. Therefore we cannot conceive of it being extended to all — for those who claim that millions brought into a new covenant of grace perish eternally, that it is left to people to believe, that God's will may be frustrated and His love made ineffective, that we distinguish ourselves one from another — you may extend it wherever you please, since it matters nothing

to you whether its objects go to heaven or to hell. But in the meantime, I must ask: is what you speak of God's free grace, or your own imagination? His love, or your will? Our prayer will be that God grants you infinitely more of His love than is contained in that ineffectual universal grace with which you make such a display. We will only labor to keep poor souls from being deceived by the appealing pretense of free grace for all — not knowing that this so-called free grace is a painted facade that will give them no real help to change their condition, but only grant them permission to be saved if they can, while they suppose, from the name you have given your own invention, that you mean an effectual, almighty, saving grace that will certainly bring all to God on whom it rests — which is what they have actually heard of in Scripture. While in effect what you say to such souls is: go on your way, be saved if you can by the revealed means — God will not stop you.

Both sides also contend over the exaltation of Christ's merit; something has already been said on this, so I will be brief. A quick look at the difference between the two positions on this point will settle the matter.

There is only one thing regarding the death of Christ on which the advocates of a general ransom take the affirmative and by which they claim to magnify His death — namely, that its benefits extend to every person, whereas their opponents restrict it to a few, the elect alone, which they say dishonors Christ. In answer: first, it is not for us poor creatures to set the measure of Christ's honor — He receives as honor what He Himself gives and ascribes to Himself, and He has no need of our fabrications for His glory. Even if this seemed in our eyes to exalt Christ's glory, arising as it does from a lie of our own hearts, it would be an abomination to

Him. Second, we deny that extending the effectiveness of Christ's death to all actually magnifies the nature and worth of that death, because such extent of effectiveness would not arise from the death's own innate sufficiency but from the free pleasure and determination of God — which is weakened by a pretended universality, as was shown before. Third, the value of anything comes from its own inherent sufficiency and worth for the purpose to which it is put; and those who maintain effectual redemption assert that this value in Christ's death is far greater than anything their opponents attribute to it.

If I were to fully declare the many ways in which the honor of Christ and the excellence of His death and passion — with all its fruits — are upheld in the doctrine we have drawn from Scripture, far above anything that can be attributed to it consistent with universal redemption's principles, I would be forced to repeat much already said. It will be enough to set before the reader the following contrast.

Universalists hold: (1) Christ died for every person, elect and reprobate alike. (2) Most of those for whom Christ died are condemned. (3) Christ's death purchased no saving grace for those for whom He died. (4) Christ took no care that the majority of those for whom He died should ever hear a word about His death. (5) Christ in His death did not ratify or confirm a covenant of grace with any covenant members, but only made it possible for God to enter into a new covenant with whomever He chose and on whatever conditions He saw fit. (6) Christ could have died and yet no one be saved. (7) Christ had no more intention to redeem His church than the wicked seed of the serpent. (8) Christ did not die for the unbelief of anyone. Scriptural redemption holds: (1) Christ

died for the elect only. (2) All those for whom Christ died are certainly saved. (3) Christ's death purchased all saving grace for those for whom He died. (4) Christ sends the means and reveals the way of life to all those for whom He died. (5) The new covenant of grace was confirmed to all the elect in the blood of Jesus. (6) Christ by His death purchased, by covenant and agreement, a definite people of His own — the Lord's purpose prospering in His hand to the end. (7) Christ loved His church and gave Himself for it. (8) Christ died for the unbelief of the elect.

Many other examples of the same kind could easily be gathered; on first examination they would quickly settle the dispute. These few are sufficient in the eyes of all experienced Christians to show how little the general ransom contributes to the honor and glory of Jesus Christ or to demonstrating the worth and dignity of His death and passion.

The next and final matter under debate in this controversy is Gospel consolation — that which God in Christ is abundantly willing for us to receive. A brief examination of which view provides the firmest and soundest foundation for such consolation will, with the Lord's help, bring this long debate to its conclusion. May the God of truth and comfort grant that all our labor ends in peace and consolation. To make this clear, certain things must first be established.

First, all true evangelical consolation belongs only to believers (Hebrews 6:17-18); God's people (Isaiah 40:1-2); on unbelievers the wrath of God remains (John 3:36).

Second, to extend consolation to those to whom it does not belong is no less a crime than to withhold it from those to whom it does (Isaiah 5:20; Jeremiah 23:14; Ezekiel 13:10).

Third, the attempt to present the death of Christ in such a way that everyone — meaning every individual in the world — might be comforted by it is an arrogant attempt to make straight what God has made crooked, and is deeply contrary to the Gospel.

Fourth, any doctrine that holds out consolation from the death of Christ to unbelievers cries 'peace, peace' when God says there is no peace.

With these points established, I will briefly demonstrate the four following positions.

First, extending the death of Christ universally to all people in its scope cannot give the slightest ground of consolation to those whom God would have comforted by the Gospel.

Second, denying the effectiveness of Christ's death toward those for whom He died cuts the very root of all strong consolation — the kind that is proper for believers to receive and that the Gospel alone can give.

Third, there is nothing in the doctrine of the redemption of the elect only that can in any way deprive those to whom comfort is due of any portion of their consolation.

Fourth, the doctrine of the effectual redemption of Christ's sheep by the blood of the covenant is the true and solid foundation of all lasting consolation.

Beginning with the first: extending the death of Christ to an unlimited universality in terms of its scope contains nothing, as such, that can give the slightest ground of consolation to those whom God would have comforted. Gospel consolation, properly speaking, being a fruit of actual reconciliation with God, belongs only to believers. That no consolation can be drawn for believers from anything distinctive to the persuasion of a general ransom is easily proved.

First, no consolation can arise to believers from what is nowhere in Scripture proposed as a basis or cause of consolation — and the general ransom is nowhere so proposed. What has no existence can have no effect, and all the foundations and materials of consolation are things particular and personal.

Second, no consolation can come to believers from what they share in common with those whom God would not have comforted, who will certainly perish eternally, who stand in open rebellion against Christ, and who never hear a single word of the Gospel. Yet to all such people the supposed basis of consolation arising from the general ransom belongs equally as much as it does to the most devoted believers.

Let a person try — not in the moment of debate but in times of spiritual darkness and temptation — what consolation or peace of soul he can find in this reasoning: Christ died for all people; I am a person; therefore Christ died for me. Will not his own heart tell him that, despite everything that conclusion assures him of, the wrath of God may still rest on him forever? Does he not see that despite this, God shows so little favor to millions of people — for whom this same conclusion is equally true — that He never once reveals Himself or His Son to them? What good does it do me to

know that Christ died for me, if I may still perish forever? If you intend to comfort me with what is common to all, you must tell me what all people enjoy that will satisfy my longing — which reaches after assurance of God's love in Christ. If you give me no more comfort than you could have given Judas, can you expect it to bring me peace? Truly, you are miserable comforters, physicians of no value, skilled only in adding grief to the grieving. 'Take comfort,' the Arminians will say, 'Christ is a propitiation for all sinners, and now you know yourself to be one.' True — but is Christ a propitiation for all the sins of those sinners? If so, how can any of them perish? If not, what good does this do me, whose sins — such as unbelief — may be among those for which Christ was not a propitiation? 'Do not exclude yourself — God excludes no one; the love that moved Him to send His Son was universal toward all.' Say nothing to me of God's excluding — I have already sufficiently excluded myself. Will He powerfully take me in? Has Christ not only purchased my admission but also obtained for me the ability to enter into His Father's arms? 'He has opened a door of salvation to all.' But is it not futile to open a tomb for a dead man to walk out? Who lights a candle for a blind man to see by? To open a prison door for one who is blind, lame, and bound — indeed dead — is to mock his misery, not to secure his release. Never tell me that what millions share in common with those who perish eternally will produce strong consolation for my soul.

Second, the opinion of a general ransom is so far from yielding firm consolation to believers from the death of Christ that it actually destroys all the richest elements of strong consolation that flow from it: first, by making strange divisions between things that must be joined together to form one certain foundation of confi-

dence; and second, by denying the effectiveness of His death toward those for whom He died — both of which are unavoidable consequences of that persuasion.

First, they so sharply separate the obtaining of redemption from the application of it — the former being in their view the only proper direct fruit of Christ's death — that the one may belong to millions who have no share in the other: redemption may be obtained for all, and yet not one person have it applied so as to be saved by it. Now an ineffectual and merely possible redemption — notwithstanding which all humanity could perish eternally — being the whole object of Christ's death as they assert, and this being completely cut off from any application to any particular person: what comfort this can offer any poor soul I cannot understand. 'What shall I do?' says the sinner. 'My iniquities surround me; I have no rest in my bones because of my sin — where shall I turn with my grief?' 'Take heart — Christ died for sinners.' 'Yes, but will the fruits of His death certainly be applied to all for whom He died? If not, I may still perish forever.' Let those who can answer him on universalist grounds, without sending him back to his own strength in believing — which in the end amounts to the same thing — and I will acknowledge their great help. But if they send him there, they admit that the consolation they boast of flows properly from ourselves and not from the death of Christ.

Second, their separation between the oblation and the intercession of Jesus Christ contributes little to the consolation of believers — indeed it completely undermines it.

There are two prominent Scripture passages in which the Holy Spirit holds out consolation to believers against the two general sources of all their troubles — afflictions and sins: Romans 8:32-

34 and 1 John 2:1-2. In both places the apostles ground the consolation they offer to believers on the tight and inseparable connection between the oblation and intercession of Jesus Christ, and the identity of the people these cover. Let the reader examine both texts and he will find that on this inseparable union rests the entire weight and force of the consolation offered — which is the main point in both passages. Now the advocates of universal redemption sever these two completely: they allow no connection between them, nor any dependence of one on the other beyond what the will of man effects. They extend the oblation to all but restrict the intercession to a few. The death of Christ separated from His resurrection and intercession is nowhere in Scripture proposed as a ground of consolation — in fact it is expressly declared to be unsuitable for any such purpose (1 Corinthians 15:14) — and those who present it in that separated form are no friends to Christian consolation.

Third, the denial that faith, grace, holiness, the whole intention of the new covenant, and perseverance within it were purchased by Christ's death and blood for those for whom He died does not appear to offer any suitable basis for drawing consolation from His cross. What solid comfort can be drawn from such barren sources, from which none of these things flow? That these things have no direct dependence on the death of Christ, according to the view of those who assert universal grace, has been stated before and is not only conceded but actively argued by them. But where should a soul look for these things if not in the purchase of Christ? Is this a way to comfort a soul from the death of Christ — to tell him that Christ did not procure for him the very things without which he cannot be comforted? It is then entirely clear that the general ran-

som, so called, is so far from being the foundation of any solid consolation that it directly destroys and stands in open opposition to all the ways in which the Lord has declared He is willing for us to receive comfort from the death of His Son.

Third, we must show that the doctrine of the effectual redemption of the elect only by the blood of Jesus is not open to any fair objection on this point and does not in any way deprive believers of any portion of the consolation God is willing for them to receive. The only objection raised by its opponents with any appearance of reason — for we are not at all troubled by the outcry that innumerable souls are shut out from any share in Christ's blood, since these are admittedly reprobates, unbelievers, and those who are finally unrepentant — comes down to this:

There is nothing in Scripture by which any person can assure himself that Christ died for him in particular, unless we grant that He died for all.

That this objection is plainly false, the experience of all believers who by God's grace have assured their hearts of their share and interest in Christ as offered in the promise — without the slightest thought of universal redemption — is ample testimony. Second, that the assurance arising from a practical syllogism, in which one premise is true in Scripture and the second is established by the Spirit's witness in the heart, is certain — this has been acknowledged by all. All believers may have such assurance that Christ died for them with the intention and purpose of saving their souls. For example: Christ died for all believers — that is, for all who trust in Him and rest on Him as an all-sufficient Savior; not that He died for them as believers, but that all such people are among those for whom He died. He did not die for believers as believers,

but for all the elect as elect, who through the benefit of His death become believers and so receive assurance that He died for them. This first premise is true in Scripture in countless places; and second, the heart of a believer testifies: 'But I believe in Christ — I choose Him as my Savior, cast and roll myself on Him alone for salvation.' From these the conclusion follows: therefore the Lord Jesus Christ died for me individually, with the intention and purpose of saving me. This is a conclusion all believers — and only believers — can rightly draw. The all-sufficiency of Christ's death to save every person without exception who comes to Him is more than enough to sustain all the Gospel's invitations to sinners to believe; and when they do believe, this certain assurance of Christ's intention and purpose to redeem them through His death (Matthew 1:21) is made known. Whether this is not a better foundation than the universalist reasoning — 'Christ died for all people; I am a person; therefore Christ died for me' — let anyone judge, especially considering that the first premise of that syllogism is absolutely false. All of this is said not as though either view can of itself produce consolation — which God alone creates by the sovereignty of His free grace — but only to show what principles are suited to the means by which He works in and toward His elect.

Fourth, drawing Gospel consolation from the death of Christ as presented in its effective power toward the elect only, for whom alone He died, should bring our discussion to a close. Considering first how abundantly this has already been accomplished by various eminent and faithful workers in the Lord's vineyard; second, how it is the daily work of Gospel preachers to make it out to God's people; third, how pursuing it would carry me beyond my purpose, this work having been designed to be strictly polemical in nature;

and fourth, that such practical matters are no more expected or appropriate in learned controversies than dense scholastic arguments in sermons intended simply for the edification of the people — I will not pursue it further. Only, as a close, I urge the reader to read that one passage, Romans 8:32-34, and I have no doubt that he will — if not corrupted by the error we have opposed — agree with me that if there is any comfort, any consolation, any assurance, any rest, any peace, any joy, any refreshment, any elevation of spirit to be had in this life, it is all found in the blood of Jesus, shed long ago, and His intercession still continuing — both united and applied to the elect of God through their precious effects and fruits, drawing them to believe and keeping them in believing, unto the obtaining of an immortal crown of glory that will never fade.

THANKS FOR READING



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