

William Rushton

A DEFENSE OF PARTICULAR REDEMPTION

WHEREIN THE DOCTRINE OF THE LATE MR. FULLER RELATIVE
TO THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST, IS TRIED BY THE WORD OF GOD.

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PREFACE

Actuated by a desire to benefit the cause of truth, I publish and send forth this edition of Rushton's "Defence of Particular Redemption," believing that the scarcity of former editions and the recurrence of questions therein discussed, render its republication needful.

Among the many who have risen in the Old Baptist church, who became dissatisfied with its doctrine and practice and sought to change them to suit the notions of the world and render that ancient church more popular, none have succeeded in gaining a greater name than Andrew Fuller. He was born in 1754 and died in 1815. At the early age of seventeen he began to consider the expediency of making a change in the tactics of the Baptists, and at the age of twenty-one he wrote an essay entitled "The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation," which was published in 1782. His object seems to have been to introduce the custom of offering salvation to all sinners without distinction, maintaining that the prophets, Christ, and his Apostles gave unlimited invitations to unconverted hearers of the gospel. As a reason for such indiscriminate exhortations, he argued that the atonement was general in its nature but special in its application, denying that Christ made a vicarious offering when he laid down his life. These views he advocated in a work entitled, "Dialogues, Letters, and Essays," to which Mr. Rushton replied in the form of letters as given in this work.

Mr. Fuller, in connection with Mr. Carey and others, founded the first Missionary Society ever organized—"Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel amongst the Heathen." This Society was organized at Kettering, England, October 2, 1792, and thus was introduced a departure from the apostolic practice that formed a wedge to sever the New School Baptists

from the Old Order of Baptists.

Unscriptural practices usually result from false doctrines. Of the false doctrines that led to the introduction of this new and unscriptural move in the Baptist church, the doctrine of an indefinite atonement was, perhaps, the most prominent. That doctrine has always been a cardinal principle in the Arminian faith, and the arguments of Mr. Fuller are as strong as any that have ever been advanced to support that doctrine. As the issue is one that continues to mark an important distinction between the doctrine of the Apostolic church and that of the churches of the world, Mr. Rushton's letters will ever continue to be of great importance to the household of faith.

JOHN R. DAILY.
LURAY, VA., June 23, 1904.

INTRODUCTION

I think it right to inform the reader that, some time ago, I was accidentally engaged in a verbal controversy on the nature and extent of the atonement of Christ, with a Baptist minister of some celebrity, residing in Northamptonshire. At parting he earnestly entreated me to read Mr. Fuller's "Dialogues, Letters, and Essays," which I promised to do. No sooner had I read and pondered that work, than the fallacy of Mr. Fuller's doctrine, which my friend had espoused, appeared to me in a more striking manner than it had ever done before; and I felt assured that, with a little labor, the speciousness and deceitfulness of Mr. Fuller's views might be fully made manifest. With this conviction, I determined to attempt a refutation of them, and to publish it in the following Letters.

It is more than possible that some weak and inconsiderate persons may feel offended at the free use I have made of Mr. Fuller's name, because being now deceased he cannot answer for himself. Although I have no fear of any objection of this nature from persons who are acquainted with literary affairs, yet, for the sake of the weak, and because of the captious, I offer the following apology:—

1. The subsequent Letters are not directed against Mr. Fuller, but against the *doctrine* now prevailing in the Baptist churches.

2. It is impossible effectually to oppose this doctrine, without reference to some acknowledged writings in which it is stated and defended; and these acknowledged writings are Mr. Fuller's "Dialogues," &c. It is true there are some living authors who have asserted the same things; but these writers are inferior to Mr. Fuller in celebrity and polemical talents. To encounter them, therefore, would not be to allow my opponents the full exercise of their strength: neither would it become the great cause of truth to engage the subaltern, while the champion is defying the advocates of particular redemption, and crying out, "*Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.*"

3. When an author publishes on controverted subjects, he does so, not only for the generation living at the time, but for the succeeding generations. Though he dies as a man, he still lives as an author, and teaches and speaks as long as his writings are read. It is right, therefore, to examine the theories and doctrines of an author, whether he be living or dead. What man of sense would reflect on President Edwards, for publishing his confutation of Dr. Whitby, after the Doctor's death? Or who would charge Mr. Fuller with unfairness, for publishing his "Strictures on Sandemanianism," long after Mr. Robert Sandeman had returned to his original dust?

4. But if, notwithstanding this explanation, any Baptist minister or any other who understands the controversy, and who has espoused Mr. Fuller's views, feels hurt that Mr. Fuller's name has thus been introduced, let such a one take his pen, and as he reads, let him erase the name of Mr. Fuller, and substitute his own; and let him know that he is the man against whom I am writing, and not the deceased Mr. Fuller.

If, however, the reader be one of those favored individuals whom the Father hath drawn to Jesus, he hath already been taught so much of the infinite evil of sin, and the vanity of all created things, as to loathe himself and his own righteousness, and to value nothing in comparison with truth. And in those happy moments, when he is favored with a glimpse of the exalted Lamb, whose transcendent glory fills heaven and earth, he looks coolly upon human authority, human wisdom, and human worthiness. Such a one will not be offended when the authority of celebrated names is set at nought that truth may be maintained; but rather he has learned, in some degree, to "cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

The only persons to whom I would offer any thing like the shadow of an apology, for the polemical style of the following Letters, are the afflicted, broken-hearted children of Zion. I know that disputings gall and distress a tender mind. But how can we contend earnestly for the faith, without disputation? Were not our Lord and his apostles often engaged in reasoning with the opponents of truth? I hope, therefore, that the lambs of the flock will not be offended, especially when they reflect that the things contended for in the following pages are of the highest importance—things with which the honor of God, and the glory of a dear Redeemer are concerned; and which are absolutely necessary to the strengthening of their own weak hands, and confirming of their feeble knees. It is now high time for the friends of truth to speak boldly. Error no longer hides its hateful head, but struts abroad before the sun, and scornfully defies the advocates of sovereign grace.

Although I have, in the following letters, boldly and unequivocally asserted what I believe to be the truth, and although I have endeavored to expose the deceitfulness of the opposite error, I hope the reader will find nothing inconsistent with the meekness and gentleness of Christ. That I have expressed indignation at iniquity I acknowledge, but have not yet learned that this is inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel, or contrary to the example of our Lord. Throughout the whole I have studied brevity and perspicuity; and I have not been unmindful of the well-known advice of the poet, which all controversial writers should observe:—

"Quidquid praecipies esto brevis, ut cito dicta

Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles."

Into the hands of Him whose servant I profess to be, I confidentially commit my work, notwithstanding the sinfulness and imperfection which adhere to it. I shall think myself more than remunerated for my labor, if he make it useful to any of his ransomed ones. But should it please him that it die as soon as it is born, and remain in silence forever, I trust I shall be content. For I am well persuaded that the Lord will defend his own immortal truths in his own way and in his own time, though error may rejoice in a temporary triumph, and though truth may be "fallen in the street."

WILLIAM RUSHTON, JUN.
Liverpool, 1831.

LETTER I.

DEAR SIR:—Agreeably to your earnest request, I have carefully read Mr. Fuller's publication, entitled "Dialogues, Letters, and Essays." Although I have long been acquainted with his sentiments generally, and have attentively perused some of his writings, yet I know not how long I should have postponed reading the "Dialogues" had it not been for your earnest solicitations. I consider myself, therefore, indebted to no small degree to you for the pleasure and advantage I have derived from some parts of that work. In the first and second parts, particularly, Mr. Fuller discovers that strength of mind, and that depth of originality of thought which characterize him as a polemic writer: he has also defended many truths, and triumphantly refuted some dangerous error. Here and there, indeed even in the first two parts, he touches upon certain points, on which you will not expect me to agree with him; but it is in the third part wherein he explains himself more particularly on all important subjects which engaged our attention when I had the pleasure of a personal interview with you, and on which, more especially, I find reason to differ from him.

It is well known that a particular truth is often more effectually opposed by the introduction of principles inconsistent with it, than by an open attack upon that truth. Now, if I mistake not, Arminian principles have been more effectually introduced into the churches, in this manner, by Mr. Fuller's writings, than if he had openly impugned the doctrines of grace, and employed the whole force of his able pen against election, efficacious grace and final perseverance. Those he professed to maintain inviolably; yet, by insisting on faith in Christ as a moral duty, comprehended radically in the law,—by his view of moral inability,—but especially by the sentiments he has advanced relative to the Atonement of the Son of God, he has furnished a system for those who are predisposed towards Arminianism; and this system has so far prevailed in the churches, that now we hear almost as little of finished salvation as if we were Arminians; as little of the earnest and the witness of the Spirit, as if we were Sandemanians.

In all religious error, there is some false doctrine in particular which constitutes its basis, and against which some one branch of divine truth, more than another, stands as a

bulwark. In Mr. Fuller's controversy with his Baptist brethren, the *Atonement of Christ* is the cardinal point. I am not therefore surprised to find him labor so earnestly to explain away the doctrine of Particular Redemption, and by all means to establish his own views of the atonement, as that which constitutes the very basis of his system. However important the controversy about faith and universal invitations may be, it sinks into insignificance when compared with that of the atonement. He who is unsound in this, cannot be sound in any other doctrine of grace. But when the death of Christ is known in its vicarious nature, its certain efficacy, and its discriminating character, it affords the surest defence of sovereign grace against all the attacks of Neonomian, Arminian and Semi-pelagian errors. To this important point our conversation was principally directed, when, in our friendly interview, you defended and I opposed Mr. Fuller's sentiments; and to this fundamental point would I again solicit your attention in an epistolary form. I am desirous of doing this not only because his views almost universally prevail in the churches, but also because in all the replies to Mr. Fuller's that I have seen¹ this subject has been almost neglected; whereas, it is his fundamental and almost vulnerable point. I do not intend to touch upon the other subjects in dispute, but shall confine myself entirely to the doctrine chiefly treated of in the third part of "Dialogues," that is, the doctrine of the ATONEMENT. In doing this, I shall carefully inquire what are Mr. Fuller's views on the subject. I shall take care not to misunderstand them. I shall closely analyze them, and compare them with the Scriptures of eternal truth. It will be necessary, then, in the first place, to attend to what Mr. Fuller has advanced on this great article of Christian doctrine, by quoting his own words:

"If God requires less than the real demerit of sin for an atonement, then there could be no satisfaction made to divine justice by such an atonement. And though it would be improper to represent the great work of redemption as a kind of commercial transaction betwixt a creditor and his debtor, yet the satisfaction of justice in all cases of offence, requires *that there be an expression of the displeasure of the offended, against the offender, equal to what the offense is in reality*. The end of punishment is not the misery of the offender, but the general good. Its design is express displeasure against disobedience; and where punishment is inflicted according to the desert of the offence, there justice is satisfied. In other words, such an expression of displeasure is uttered by the lawgiver, that in it every subject of his empire may read what are his views of the evil which he forbids, and what are his determinations in regard to its punishment. If sinners had received in their own persons the reward of their iniquity, justice would in that way have been satisfied; and if the infinitely blessed God hath devised an expedient for our salvation, though he may not confine himself to a *literal* conformity to those rules of justice which he hath marked out for us, yet he will certainly not depart from the *spirit* of them. Justice must be satisfied even in that way. An atonement made by a substitute, in any case, requires that the *same end* be answered by it, as if the guilty party had actually suffered. It is necessary that the displeasure of the offended should be expressed in as strong terms, or in a way adapted to make as strong impression upon all concerned, as if the law had taken its course: otherwise

¹ I except Mr. Booth's Sermon on "Divine Justice," &c., which, with the Appendix, may be considered a kind of caveat against Mr. Fuller's notions; but this work does not profess to be a full confutation of them nor is Mr. Fuller's name so much as mention[ed] either in the Sermon or the Appendix.

atonement is not made, and mercy triumphs at the expense of righteousness."

The following quotations are taken from the third part, wherein Mr. Fuller has introduced his views in the form of a dialogue between Peter, James and John. James is introduced as expressing Mr. Fuller's sentiments. When asked by Peter his views of imputation, he replies:

"To impute, signifies in general to *charge, reckon* or *place to account*, according to the different objects to which it is applied. This word, like many others, has a *proper* and an *improper*, or figurative, meaning. 1st. It is applied to the *charging, reckoning, or placing to the account* of persons and things, THAT WHICH PROPERLY BELONGS TO THEM. This I consider as its *proper* meaning. In this sense the word is used in the following passages:—'Eli thought she (Hannah) had been drunken,' &c, &c. Secondly, it is applied to the *charging, reckoning, or placing to the account* of persons and things THAT WHICH DOES NOT PROPERLY BELONG TO THEM, AS THOUGH IT DID. This I consider as its *improper* or figurative meaning. It is in this latter sense that I understand the term when applied to justification. It is thus also that I understand the imputation of sin to Christ. He was accounted, in the divine administration, *as if he were, or had been*, the sinner, that those who believe in him might be accounted *as if they were* or *had been*, righteous."

"PETER. Do you consider Christ as having been *punished, really and properly* PUNISHED?"

"JAMES. I should think I do not. But what do you mean by punishment?"

"PETER. An innocent person may *suffer*, but, properly speaking, he cannot be punished. Punishment necessarily supposes *criminality*."

"JAMES. Just so; and therefore as I do not believe that Jesus was in any sense criminal, I cannot say he was really and properly punished."

"If eternal life, though it be a reward, and we partake of it, yet is really and properly the reward of Christ's obedience, and not ours, then the sufferings of Christ, though they were a punishment, and he sustained it, yet were really and properly the punishment of our sins, and not his," &c.

"A voluntary obligation to endure the punishment of another is not guilt, any more than the consequent exemption from obligation in the offender, is innocence. Both guilt and innocence are transferable in their *effects*, but in *themselves*, they are untransferable. To say that Christ was *reckoned* or counted in the divine administration *as if he were* the sinner, and came under an obligation to endure the curse or punishment due to our sins, is one thing; but to say he deserved that curse, is another. Guilt, strictly speaking, is the inseparable attendant of transgression, and could never therefore for one moment occupy the conscience of Christ."

"That the Scriptures represent believers as receiving only the benefits of the *effects* of Christ's righteousness in justification, is a remark of which I am not able to see the fallacy: nor does it follow that his obedience itself is not *imputed* to them. Obedience itself may be, and is imputed, while its effects only are *imparted*, and consequently *received*. Neither sin nor righteousness are in *themselves* transferable."

Concerning SUBSTITUTION, Mr. Fuller thus explains:

"I apprehend, then, that many important mistakes have arisen from considering the interposition of Christ under the notion of *paying a debt*. Sin is a debt only in a metaphorical sense: properly speaking it is a *crime*, and satisfaction for it requires to be made not on pecuniary, but on moral principles. The reason of this difference is easily perceived. Debts are transferable, but crimes are not. A third person may cancel the one, but he can only obliterate the *effects* of the other: the *desert* of the criminal remains."

"Were I asked concerning the gospel when it is introduced into a country, *For whom was it sent?* If I had respect only to the revealed will of God, I should answer, It is for men, not as elect or non-elect, *but as sinners*. But if I had respect to the appointment of God without regard to its application, I should say, he hath visited that country to "take out of them a people for his name." In like manner, concerning the death of Christ, if I speak of it irrespective of the purpose of the Father and the Son as to the objects who should be saved by it, referring merely to what it is in itself sufficient for and declared it the gospel to be adapted to, I should think I answer the question in a scriptural way in saying, "*It was for sinners as sinners.*" But if I have respect to the purpose of the Father in giving his Son to die, and to the design of Christ in laying down his life I should answer, "*It was for his elect only.*"

"If the satisfaction of Christ was in itself sufficient for the whole world, there is no further propriety in asking, *Whose sins were imputed to Christ?* or, *For whom did he die as a substitute?* than as it is thereby inquired, Who are the persons whom he intended finally to save?"

"In short, we must either acknowledge an objective fulness in Christ's atonement sufficient for the salvation of the whole world, were the whole world to believe in him; or in opposition to Scripture and common sense, confine our invitations to believe, to such persons as have believed already."

I shall only add a few more quotations on the subject of PARTICULAR REDEMPTION.

"The particularity of redemption," says Mr. Fuller, "consists in the sovereign pleasure of God with regard to the application of the atonement; that is, with regard to the persons to whom it shall be applied."

"PETER. Is there anything in the atonement, or promised to it, which infallibly ascertains its application to all those for whom it was made?

"JAMES. If by this you mean all for whose salvation it was sufficient, I answer, There is not. But if you mean all for whose salvation it was intended, I answer, There is."

"If satisfaction was made on the principle of debtor and creditor, and that which was paid was just of sufficient value to liquidate a given number of sins, and to redeem a given number of sinners, and no more, it should seem that it could not be the duty of any but the elect, nor theirs till it was revealed to them that they were of the elect, to rely upon it: for wherefore should we set our eyes on that which is not? But if there be such a fullness in the satisfaction of Christ, as it is sufficient for the salvation of the whole world, were the whole world to believe in him; and if the particularity of redemption lie only in the purpose or sovereign pleasure of God to render it effectual to some rather than others, no such consequence will follow," &c.

These extracts fully exhibit, at one view, Mr. Fuller's sentiments on the important doctrine of the atonement; and I solicit your minute attention to them; for plausible as his words are, I intend to prove that they are grossly inconsistent with themselves, and as inconsistent with the word of God. And I entreat your attention to them the more, because of the noisy complaints which have been raised that Mr. Fuller has been misrepresented. Even the honest and accurate Mr. Booth did not escape the charge of misunderstanding and misrepresenting Mr. Fuller's meaning. Whether there were any just ground for these complaints, it is not necessary now to enquire; but in the present investigation care shall be taken that there be no mistake.

LETTER II.

You will, I doubt not, agree with me when I say that a great change has taken place, during the last sixty years, in the principles maintained by the Particular Baptist churches. It was once the glory of these churches, that they contended earnestly for the doctrines of sovereign discriminating grace, even when a disposition appeared too generally amongst professors to relax on these points, and to accommodate matters with the world; a disposition much lamented and deprecated by the servants of Christ. Dr. Gill has distinctly foretold its pernicious effects, which have been only too visible in our own churches. In his sermon on "The Watchman's Answer," &c., he says, "Of late years there has been a very visible decline, and a *night* is coming on, which we are entered into; the shadows of the evening are stretching out apace upon us, and the signs of the eventide are very manifest, and will *shortly appear yet more and more*: coldness and indifference in spiritual things, a want of affection to God, Christ, his people, truths and ordinances, may easily be observed; the first love is left; iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold; and it will wax yet colder and colder, and will issue in a general forsaking of assembling together, and in an entire neglect of the ministers of the

gospel; when such who have been professors themselves will be *shy of them*, and carefully shun them," &c. Now, what would this holy man say, were he at present alive, to find his words fulfilled so soon in his own denomination? What an alteration must have taken place amongst us, when there are now very few to be found who maintain the same glorious truths for which Dr. Gill was so able an advocate, and the few who do, are no longer cordially received into our pulpits or tolerated in our associations! Men have risen up amongst us everywhere speaking perverse things; the churches have been gradually drawn aside by them, until at length professors will not endure sound doctrine, but are yearly heaping to themselves such teachers as will gratify their itching ears.

Mr. Fuller appears to have been a kind of a leader in this defection, at least he considered his own publications to have conducted not a little to the change. Writing to a friend on this subject, he expresses himself, says his biographer, in the following strong and pointed language:—"When I first published my treatise on the nature of faith, and the duty of all men who hear the gospel to believe it, the Christian profession had sunk into contempt among us; insomuch that had matters gone on but a few years longer, *the Baptists would have become a perfect dunghill in society.*" Strong and pointed language indeed! yet it must really be confessed that this was in a great degree the case. The truth is, that the principles maintained at that time by the Baptists were such as to render them *odious* to the public. They never could maintain those principles inviolably, and at the same time be generally esteemed a *respectable* body of professing Christians. They were distinctly forewarned by the Lord himself, that they should be hated of all men for his sake; that if they kept his words, the world would hate them, even as it had hated him. If the doctrine he taught caused the Master of the house to be despised and rejected of men; if, for the same cause, the apostles were esteemed as *the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things*,—what right had these Baptists to complain, if while holding in their measures the same truths, their profession became contemptible, and their churches considered a perfect dunghill in society? Complain! No, it was the highest honor they were capable of in this life. If to them it was given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake, they ought to have rejoiced that they were *counted worthy to suffer shame for his name*. And I doubt not many of them did. Dr. Gill, when declaring his determination to go on preaching a free and finished salvation in the face of all opposition, adds: "I am not afraid of the reproaches of men; I have been inured to these from my youth upwards, but none of these things move me."

But, as I have already said, the case is very different now. Since Mr. Fuller's principles have obtained amongst us, we are no longer *offensive* to the world; or, to use his strong language, we are no longer a *dunghill in society*. The offense of the cross has, in a great degree, ceased in reference to our doctrine, our profession, and our preaching. And to add to our respectability, we have amongst us a number of rational polite ministers; men whose minds are too *enlightened*, too *liberal*, to insist much on the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, and who are, consequently, rolling along in the full stream of earthly reputation. They speak according to the world and the world heareth them. But with all these advantages, what have we lost? O God! thou knowest what we have lost! Our profession is offensive; but alas! we have lost much of the comfort of the Holy Ghost. We have gained ease and tranquility; but we have lost in a great degree, the sensible enjoyment of the Lord's special presence. We are no more odious to society; but the Holy Spirit is remarkably withdrawn: that adorable Person is grieved; the *power* of godliness is almost gone; and, in many instances, the *form* is ready to

depart also.

"O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance."

I would now proceed to an examination of the extracts given in my first letter; but before I do so, it will be proper to explain, that, in this controversy, I use the term *redemption* in its general acceptation. When we speak of particular redemption, or universal redemption, we use the term in reference to the *ransom price*. Sometimes in Scripture the word *redemption* means deliverance; but this is its secondary, and not its proper or original signification. To redeem, is properly to buy again, to purchase from captivity, &c., and when used in reference to the great affair of salvation, it relates primarily to the blood of Christ, "in whom we have redemption." In this sense Mr. Fuller uses the term when he speaks of the "particularity of redemption;" and in this sense the inspired writer uses it when he says, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." This explanation is necessary, because some, from inattention, and others from a worse cause, have attached an ambiguous meaning to the term.

The extracts to which I have called your attention are very ingeniously written. But the very ingenuity is suspicious, because truth requires none. Such are the obscurity and artfulness which run through them, that of the many persons who have read Mr. Fuller's Dialogues, &c., very few fully understand them. Some imagine he held the doctrine of particular redemption, because he sometimes speaks of Christ dying for his people. Others suppose he teaches universal redemption; but many, though they do not altogether understand him, plainly perceived that he favors their predisposition to Arminianism, and therefore they approve of his system. In some instances, no doubt, Mr. Fuller has been misunderstood from inattention, but this has not always been the case. There is an uncommon degree of subtilty in his statements, attended with much speciousness: palpable inconsistencies are hid with great ingenuity, and the difference between him and his opponents is so artfully lessened, that it appears to many readers to be of little importance. He evidently wishes not to be considered an opponent of particular redemption; yet he neither agrees with Particular Baptists on the one side, nor asserts boldly, with the General Baptists, that Christ died equally for every man; but maintains a kind of a metaphysical medium which is as far removed from the simplicity that is in Christ, as it is from that gospel which is hid from the wise and prudent.

I shall occupy the remainder of this letter with such an examination of the extracts as may discover the inconsistency and self-contradiction which lie concealed within them.

FIRST. In the first place, Mr. Fuller has discovered great inconsistency and disingenuousness in desiring to be considered an advocate of particular redemption, while in reality he maintained no such doctrine. He wishes it to be understood that he is favorable to the doctrine itself, and differs from his brethren only in the explanation of it. "The particularity of redemption," says he, "consists in the *sovereign pleasure* of God, with regard to the application of the atonement, that is, with regard to the persons to whom it shall be applied." Now, most persons, on reading this, would be naturally led to conclude that Mr. Fuller believed there was something of particularity in the atonement itself. But herein they

would be mistaken; he means no such thing. He affirms that the particularity of redemption lies only in "the sovereign purpose of God, to render it effectual to some rather than others." This, however, is not particular redemption; it is sovereign election. Some who have held universal redemption, have also held particular election, and have consequently maintained the "sovereign purpose of God" to render both the atonement and a preached gospel effectual to some rather than others. Mr. Fuller, therefore, ought to have been equally candid, and to have acknowledged openly that he believed in no particularity of the atonement itself, but only in the sovereign purpose of God with respect to its application; which sovereign purpose belongs to election, and not to the atonement.

It doubtless appeared, to the mind of Mr. Fuller, absurd to hold personal election in connection with universal redemption, as some Protestants, have done, and as the Church of England teaches in her 17th and 31st Articles, and he probably thought that if indefinite redemption were substituted for universal, the absurdity would no longer exist. But, on examination, it will be found that Mr. Fuller's views by no means removes the inconsistency. "The particularity of redemption," he says, "lies only in the purpose or sovereign pleasure of God to render it effectual to some rather than others." Here we have a theological inaccuracy. Mr. Fuller ought to have said that the particularity of redemption is the *effect* of the sovereign purpose of God, &c. The death of the Redeemer is in pursuance of a previous plan; it is the result of the sovereign and immutable purpose of God, and in perfect harmony with it. It is therefore grossly inaccurate to say that the particularity of redemption *consists* in that which is as *distinct* from itself as cause is distinct from its effect.

But it is easy to perceive that an atonement for *sin* in *general* cannot be particular redemption. An atonement which in itself may suffice for an individual only, or for a world, but which was not offered for any particular number of individuals, but merely for *sin as sin*; such an atonement may be called by some other name, but particular redemption it cannot be. The particularity of the atonement consists in the vicarious nature of the death of Christ; in his representing the persons of the whole elect unto God; in his bearing their sins and sorrows; in his dying for them, and for them alone; and in thus purchasing them, body and soul, by his most precious blood. This view of the atonement is both the result of the sovereign purpose of God and in unison with it; but an indefinite atonement is not only a different thing from particular redemption, but it is also at variance with the sovereignty of the divine purpose, and the particular application of atoning blood.

SECOND. The holy Apostle describes the nature of a perverted gospel as "*yea, yea, and nay, nay,*" 2 Cor. 1:18; by which expression he intends to set forth its uncertainty and inconsistency; sometimes it is one thing, sometimes another. But I know not where, in all the world, an example of a yea and nay gospel is to be found, if it does not exist in the extracts under consideration. In page 244, Peter asks, whether there be any thing in the atonement which infallibly ascertains its application to all those for whom it was made? To which James answers, "If by this you mean all for whose salvation it was *sufficient*, I answer, There is not. But if you mean all for whose salvation it was *intended*, I answer, There is." Now the absurdity of this appears in several points of view.

1. If, as we have already seen, there be no particularity in the atonement of Christ itself, but only in the sovereign purpose of God to render it effectual to some, rather than others;

then it follows necessarily, that there is not any thing in the atonement *itself* which infallibly ascertains its application to any man. Mr. Fuller has not shown what there is in the atonement to secure its application to those for whom it was *intended*, and in this he acted wisely. For on the supposition of indefinite redemption, it is impossible to show any necessary connection between the atonement and the application of it; because its application whether to an individual only, or to the whole world, will arise not from any thing in the *atonement itself*, but solely from the purpose or decree of God. If, therefore, the indefinite scheme be correct, there cannot be anything in the atonement itself which infallibly ascertains its application to any of the human race.

2. But admitting that the extracts assert, namely, that there is something in the atonement which infallibly ascertains its application to all for whom it was *intended*; then it will follow that the salvation of *one individual only*, is a thing impossible, seeing that the atonement secures the salvation of *many*. In other words, it will follow that the salvation of an individual, or of a world, does not depend *only* on the sovereign purpose of God, as Mr. Fuller affirms.

3. But further absurdities will be discovered if we inquire into the nature of that *sufficiency* which Mr. Fuller ascribes to the atonement. It is *sufficient*, he affirms, for all mankind—*intended* only for the elect. Now the fallacy of this will appear, if we attend to one simple truth; namely, that the Scriptures always ascribe the salvation of a sinner, not to any abstract sufficiency, but to the *vicarious nature* of the death of Christ. The atonement, therefore, is in no sense sufficient for a man, unless Jesus died *for* that man. Justice requires that the satisfaction be vicarious; so that the sufficiency of the atonement arises from this very thing, that Christ died in our stead. To this the Scripture always traces our salvation. "For God hath not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ WHO DIED FOR US." I conclude, therefore, that it is much less absurd to affirm with the Arminians, that Christ died for all mankind than to maintain with Mr. Fuller, that the atonement is sufficient for the salvation of those for whom it was not intended, and for whom the Saviour did not die.

If the nature of that sufficiency for all men, which Mr. Fuller ascribes to the atonement, be further sifted, it will appear to be nothing more than a *conditional* sufficiency, such as the Arminians attribute to their universal redemption. "There is," says Mr. Fuller, "such a fulness in the satisfaction of Christ, as is sufficient for the salvation of the whole world, were the whole world to believe in him." The atonement then, is sufficient for the whole world, *conditionally*—that is, if the whole world were to believe. The condition, however, is not so easily performed. Many professors speak of faith in Christ as comparatively an easy matter, and as though it were within the sinner's power; but the Scriptures teach a different thing. They represent man by nature as spiritually bound with chains, shut up in darkness, and in a prison-house. To this view, Mr. Fuller's *conditional* sufficiency of the atonement stands opposed, as may be illustrated in the following manner. A wealthy and philanthropic individual visits Algiers, and approaches a dungeon in which a wretched captive lies bound with chains and fetters, and strongly secured within walls and doors, and bars. He proclaims aloud to the captive that he has brought gold *sufficient* for a ransom, on condition that the captive will liberate himself from his chains, burst open his prison doors, and come forth. *Alas!* exclaims the wretched man, *your kindness does not reach my case. Unless your gold can EFFECT my deliverance, it can be of no service to me. The offer of it on such terms can*

do me no good. Now, although there is a great difference between spiritual and physical inability, yet one serves to illustrate the other. Man by nature is *spiritually* as unable to believe in Christ, as the Algerine captive is *physically* unable to break his chains and the prison doors; so that all this boasted sufficiency of the atonement is only an empty offer of salvation on certain terms and condition; and such an atonement is much too weak to meet the desperate case of a lost sinner.

But how different is the salvation of God! "By the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water."—Zech. 9:11. Jesus, by his death, hath paid the ransom, and made the captives his own. Therefore he has a legal right to their persons, and with his own right arm he brings them forth. It is his glory "to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."—Isa. 42:6, 7.

It has just been asserted that the sufficiency which Mr. Fuller attributes to the atonement, is the same which the Arminians ascribe to their universal redemption. Whatever difference exists between him and them on other points, on redemption there is only a verbal variation. When Mr. Fuller asserts that the atonement of Christ is sufficient for all mankind, he does not mean that Christ so died for all mankind as to render their salvation certain: he only means that the atonement is sufficient for their salvation *conditionally*—that is, if they will believe. Dr. Whitby, the champion of Arminianism, explains his doctrine thus: "When we say that Christ died for all, we do not mean that he died for all, or any *absolutely*, or without any conditions to be performed on their part, to interest them in the blessings of his passion; but only that he died for all *conditionally*, or so that they should be made partakers of the blessings of his salutary passion, upon condition of their faith, repentance, &c." Here we find no essential difference between Mr. Fuller and Dr. Whitby on the atonement of Christ; the only difference between them relates to the purpose of God in reference to its application. Both agree in regarding the death of Christ as conditionally sufficient for all mankind; but the Doctor denies that the purpose of God ascertains the application of the atonement to any man; and in this respect he is more consistent with himself than Mr. Fuller.

The coincidence of indefinite redemption with the Arminian scheme, may be further confirmed by comparing Mr. Fuller's words with another quotation from the acute and learned Whitby. Mr. Fuller defines reconciliation to be a "satisfaction of divine justice, by virtue of which nothing pertaining to the moral government of God, hinders any sinner from returning to him; and it is upon this ground that sinners are indefinitely invited to do so." He considers the atonement "as a divine extraordinary expedient for the exercise of mercy consistently with justice, and that is in itself equally adapted to save the world as an individual, provided a world believed in it." Now, let us hear the Doctor express the very same sentiments in other words: "He (that is, Christ) only by his death hath put all men in a capacity of being justified and pardoned, and so of being reconciled to, and having peace with God, upon their turning to God, and having faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: the death of Christ having rendered it consistent with the justice and wisdom of God, with the honor of his majesty, and with the ends of government, to pardon the penitent believer."

Would to God that Mr. Fuller had been found in better company!

4. If it be necessary to pursue this "yea and nay" system still further, it is only to disclose more inconsistencies and more absurdities. If, as Mr. Fuller allows, Christ *intended* that only some should be benefited by his death, then he accomplished his intention according to particular redemption, by paying their ransom only. It is absurd to represent Christ as paying a ransom sufficient for all, when he intended only to redeem some! Or to affirm that Christ is a sufficient Saviour of those whom he never intended to save!

Whenever the Scriptures speak of the sufficiency of redemption, they always place it in the *certain efficacy* of redemption. The atonement of Christ is sufficient because it is absolutely efficacious, and because it carries salvation to all for whom it was made. It is sufficient, not because it affords men the *possibility* of salvation but because, with invincible power, it *accomplishes* their salvation. Hence the word of God never represents the *sufficiency* of the atonement as more extensive than the *design* of the atonement, which Mr. Fuller has done. The Scriptures know nothing of a sufficient redemption which leaves the captive to perish in slavery, nor of a sufficient atonement which never delivers the guilty; but they speak of a redemption every way sufficient and efficacious—a redemption which cannot be frustrated, but which triumphantly accomplishes the salvation of all its objects. "Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him *plenteous redemption*. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." Psa. 103:7, 8.

THIRD. Mr. Fuller's modesty most certainly failed him, when he reprobated, in so unqualified a manner, the representation of sin as a debt, and the atonement of Christ as the payment of a debt. Every one who has learned the Lord's prayer, knows that our Lord has there taught us to consider our sins under the notion of a debt. And yet Mr. Fuller informs us, that "it would be improper to represent the great work of redemption as a kind of commercial transaction betwixt a creditor and his debtor." But who should know best? If the wisdom of God has thought fit so to represent it, we may be assured there is an admirable propriety in it, whether we can discern it or not. Mr. Fuller, however, is apprehensive of evil consequences from such a view of sin and redemption. "I apprehend," says he, "that many important mistakes have arisen from considering the interposition of Christ under the notion of paying a debt." Really this is quite at variance with Mr. Fuller's usual reverence for the Scriptures: it is nothing less than a direct contradiction of the word of God. Does not the very term *redemption* plainly point at a commercial transaction? Does it not signify *buying again*, in allusion to an inheritance under the law, or to slaves in servitude? See Lev. 25:23-24; Isa. 52:3. In how many instances are we taught that Christ "gave his life a ransom,"²—that the church is "bought with a price,"³—and called the "purchased possession,"⁴—redeemed, not indeed with silver and gold, but with what is truly valuable, even the "precious blood of Christ?"⁵ Does not our Lord introduce a parable, one design of which is to reach us that our trespasses are debts, even *ten thousand talents*, for which God himself is our creditor? Matt. 18:23, &c. And does not the apostle represent the Lord Jesus as the great paymaster of his people's debts, when he says, "And for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that, by means of death, for the *redemption of the transgressions* that were under the first testament, they who are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance?" Heb. 9:15.

2 Matt. 20:28.

3 1 Cor. 4:20.

4 Eph. 1:14.

5 1 Pet. 1:19.

Yet, with all this, Mr. Fuller judged it improper to represent the work of redemption as a debt cancelled, a price paid, and a purchase made.

But it may be inquired, what design had Mr. Fuller to answer by opposing this view of sin and redemption? To this it may be replied, that many Protestant writers, especially when defending imputed righteousness against the Papists and Socinians, have often illustrated the transfer of our sins to Christ, and our entire deliverance from them, by allusion to commercial transactions amongst men. These writers knew well that amongst men crimes could not be transferred, though the punishment of crimes might; and, judging that a transfer of punishment merely came infinitely short of that wondrous exchange which is transacted in the great work of redemption, they have often represented our sins as debts, Christ our great surety and paymaster, and our deliverance from guilt and misery so complete, in consequence of the transfer of our sins to him, that the justice of God demands our salvation, in the same way that justice amongst men requires the debtor to be set free, when the creditor has received payment at the hand of a surety.

These are the "important mistakes" to which Mr. Fuller alludes, but whether they are mistakes or not we shall enquire hereafter. However, to represent the interposition of Christ under the notion of paying his people's debts, although nothing can be more scriptural, is so repugnant to the view Mr. Fuller has taken of the atonement, that it is easy to account for the unguarded and inconsiderate manner in which he has expressed himself on the subject.

FOURTH. Mr. Fuller is singularly inconsistent with himself when he speaks, as he sometimes does, of Christ laying down his life for his sheep, his people, &c. If there be, as Mr. Fuller says, "such a fulness in the satisfaction of Christ as is sufficient for the salvation of the whole world, were the whole world to believe," and if "the particularity of redemption lie only in the sovereign pleasure of God to render it effectual to some rather than others," then it follows that Christ did not die for any of the human race in distinction from others, but only that it was the sovereign pleasure of God that his indefinite atonement should be applied to some rather than others. It follows, in other words, that Christ did not die for Paul any more than for Judas, but only that the atonement was to be applied to Paul and not to Judas. It is therefore highly inconsistent to say that Christ died for his sheep, or that he laid down his life for his people, his elect, &c.

The atonement of Christ cannot be both indefinite and special. If Christ died for his elect, and for them only, then it is not true that the particularity of redemption lies *only* in the purpose of God with regard to its application; but if Christ made an indefinite atonement for sin, then it cannot be said with any degree of truth or propriety, that he died for his elect in distinction from others. If the death of Christ be special, it is no more indefinite; if it be indefinite, it is no more special.

The adoption of this uncertain self-contradictory system, has led many to suppose that it depends on our believing, whether Christ died for us or not. According to such persons, our believing makes it true that Christ died for us. Such a sentiment is contrary both to Scripture and to every principle of right reasoning. Surely if Christ died for any particular persons, this is a fact *in itself*, and is true independently of the application of the atonement; but if Christ died indefinitely, no change which passes upon the sinner can alter the previous fact, or make

it true that Christ died for him. It is certainly much less absurd to affirm plainly with the Arminians, that Jesus died for all the human race, whether they believe in him or not.

FIFTH. Mr. Fuller has often spoken of the *application* of the atonement, but he has not informed us what he means by that term. The expression, in its ordinary acceptation amongst Calvinistic writers, is altogether inconsistent with his views of the death of Christ. The particular application of the atonement can comport only with particular redemption. By application, in the generally received sense, is intended that work of the ever-blessed Spirit, whereby the consciences of those for whom Christ died are purged from guilt through the knowledge of his blood, and faith in it, and whereby they are persuaded of their special interest in his death. This is called in Scripture "receiving the atonement;" Rom. 5:11, and is usually intended by its *application*. Now, it is inconsistent to speak of this particular application on the footing of indefinite redemption. Particular application plainly presupposes a special interest or propriety in Christ, unknown to the redeemed sinner until revealed by the Spirit; but no such propriety can possibly exist on the supposition of indefinite redemption. When the first Christians had received the atonement, they believed that "Christ died for *their* sins, according to the Scriptures." 1 Cor. 15:3. This they received as an immutable truth, which depended not on the *application*, but rather the application depended on the fact, that Christ died for *their* sins. When the atonement was applied to Paul, he thereby recognized his special interest in it, so that we find him declaring his faith in the Son of God, "who" says he, "loved me and gave himself for me." Gal. 2:20. By the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, or, in other words, by the application of the atonement, the conscience of the apostle was purged from guilt, and he became assured that Christ died for his sins. Gal. 1:14; Rom. 5:11. But all this is wholly inconsistent with indefinite redemption. Indeed it is impossible, if, as Mr. Fuller says, "the particularity of redemption consists only in the purpose of God respecting its application."

Mr. Fuller's inconsistency on this subject is not unlike that which may be often observed among the Arminian Methodists. It is common for some of them, when describing their deliverance from guilt, to say that the blood of Christ was so powerfully *applied* to their consciences, that they felt assured that Christ died for them. But certainly when a man believes that Christ died for all mankind, he cannot think he needs the Spirit of God to show him that Christ died for him in common with all the rest! Neither is any man consistent who asserts a particular application of the atonement, and yet maintains, as Mr. Fuller does, that there is no particularity in the atonement at all, but only in the purpose of God!

SIXTH. I cannot pass by the very exceptionable manner in which Mr. Fuller has explained himself on the subject of imputation. I have quoted his words in my first letter, to which I beg leave to refer you, and also to the original. We are there informed what the term signifies: we are also told that, like many other words, it has a *proper* and an *improper* meaning. We are informed, moreover, that the word, in a *proper* sense, means so and so; and in an *improper* sense, it means so and so; the conclusion of all which is, that when the Scripture speaks of the imputation of sin to Christ, or of righteousness to the sinner, the term is to be taken not in a *proper*, >but in an *improper* sense. Now, all this sounds very philosophically; but what real instruction or comfort can such a detail communicate to a sincere, inquiring soul? Such a one, on meeting with this explanation of Mr. Fuller, would immediately start, and say, "Alas! I did indeed think that all my sins were imputed to the Lord

Jesus, and this was the ground of my comfort; but Mr. Fuller tells me that this was so only in what he calls an *improper* sense. And I have comforted myself with the thought that Christ's righteousness was mine, being truly imputed to me; but Mr. Fuller has perplexed and distressed me, for he says this is not *properly* the case." In this manner would Mr. Fuller's philosophy be worse than thrown away. But his whole statement on this subject is badly illustrated, and essentially deficient.

In the first place, then, the statement itself is liable to be misunderstood, owing to the indistinct and confused manner in which he has attempted to illustrate it. To give an instance or two. The *proper* sense of imputation, we are told, is, "the charging, reckoning, or placing to the account of persons and things THAT WHICH PROPERLY BELONGS TO THEM." And the very first instance of the imputation in a proper sense, which Mr. Fuller has adduced, is the case of Eli charging Hannah with drunkenness. "Eli thought she had been drunken." Now there is reason to think that many of Mr. Fuller's readers would not clearly comprehend his meaning here; and if they did not understand the deep metaphysical sense of the word "proper," they would be weak enough to imagine that Eli's imputation was an improper imputation. But even amongst those who are more expert in the meaning of words, there may be some, who, being aware that Eli charged Hannah unjustly, would perhaps not find it so easy to understand how he imputed to her "that which properly belonged to her." Equally at a loss would some readers be to find that the Lord's not imputing iniquity to men, is to be understood in a proper sense; that is, he does not properly impute iniquity to his people. They would be still more at a loss, on reflecting that Mr. Fuller understands the imputation of sin to Christ in an improper sense, and might naturally conclude that, as the Lord does not properly impute sin to his people, nor yet to Christ, that their sin is never properly imputed at all. It is truly a pity to find so important, and yet so simple a subject darkened as it is in Mr. Fuller's explanation. Indeed, the artificial distinctions and scholastic phrases are sometimes worse than useless, and often good for nothing but to increase the importance of the teacher, and to serve the same purpose in divinity as a barbarous kind of Latin is made to answer in law and physic.

But Mr. Fuller's explanation of this important subject is not only confused and indistinct, but it is essentially deficient. In short, the imputation of sin to Christ is explained away. According to Mr. Fuller, sin was not really, or, as he terms it, properly imputed to Christ, but only in appearance. He was treated as though sin were really imputed to him; he suffered as though he were guilty; but yet, according to Mr. Fuller, guilt itself was not truly imputed to him. Not to dispute about words, the subject may be illustrated by transactions among men. When one man imputes sin or crime to another, this is the same thing as charging him with that crime. Thus Saul imputed treason to Ahimelech, when he charged him with it. But such imputation may be real, or it may be only in appearance; an imputation may be just, or it may be unjust. When Nathan charged David with sin in the matter of Uriah, the imputation was both real and just. When Joseph imputed bad motives to his brethren, he charged them not really, but only in appearance, for he knew they were not spies; and when Eli imputed drunkenness to Hannah he did so really, but he did so unjustly. Now, when God imputed sin to Christ he charged him either really, or only in appearance, justly or unjustly. With respect to justice we shall not now inquire; but the question relates to the former, namely whether God really imputed sin to Christ, as a sinner's surety, or whether he did so only in appearance. Mr. Fuller denies that he did so really, or that Christ suffered real and

proper punishment; and although he does not say, in the very words, that this imputation was only in appearance, yet this is his meaning. He tells us that the imputation of sin to Christ is to be understood in an improper sense. By imputation in an improper sense, he understands "charging, reckoning, or placing to the account of persons and things that which does not properly belong to them, as though it did." As an instance of this improper imputation, he gives us the complaint of Job, "Wherefore hidest thou thy face and holdest me for thine enemy?" Now the Lord did not really count Job for an enemy; he imputed enmity to him only in appearance, or he dealt with him as though he were an enemy. Yet in this very sense does Mr. Fuller understand the imputation of sin to Christ. "He was counted," says he, "in the divine administration, as if he were, or had been the sinner, that those who believe in him might be accounted as if they were, or had been righteous." The plain meaning of which is, that God gave his Son to suffer, as though sin had been found upon him, or, in other words, that Christ bore the punishment of guilt, but not guilt itself. Now, for Christ to suffer instead of the guilty is one thing, but to have guilt itself imputed to him is another. The difference is so manifest that it scarcely needs the following illustration. A certain man is found guilty of high treason, and condemned to die. His brother, from mere compassion, offered to die in his stead. The ransom was accepted, and the innocent man underwent the penalty of the law as a voluntary substitute for his guilty brother. Now, in this case, the innocent man bore the punishment of his brother's guilt, but not the guilt itself. He underwent, indeed, the sentence of the law, but treason was not imputed to him—justice forbade that it should. He was treated as though he were guilty, and that is one thing, but to lie under the imputation of guilt is another. Thus Mr. Fuller explains away the doctrine of imputation. By denying the transfer of our guilt to Christ, he admits of no real imputation of our sins to him, but only a transfer of punishment. Imputation of sin, therefore, in Mr. Fuller's improper or figurative sense, means no real imputation at all.

SEVENTH. Although Mr. Fuller has written very ably against Socinianism, there are some of his own notions which savour most alarmingly of that heresy, and, it may be justly feared, tend directly thereto. The first I shall mention, is the view he takes of the chief design of the death of Christ. The principle design of our Lord's atonement, he says, is the "manifestation of God's hatred to sin, in order to render the exercise of mercy consistent with justice." "Its design," he says, "is to express displeasure against disobedience—it is to utter such an expression of displeasure by the lawgiver that in it every subject of his empire may read what are his views of the evil which he forbids, and what are his determinations in regard to its punishment; it is to answer this great end of moral government, which could not have been answered by the sufferings of a mere creature."

1. It is freely allowed that one design of the death of Christ is to express God's hatred to sin, and to answer the ends of moral government, even as one design of it is to leave us an example of patience and submission. But neither of these is its principal design. To suppose otherwise, would be to assign no sufficient reason for that great event, since the displeasure of the law-giver against sin is already uttered in the law itself, and in the sufferings of them that perish; and an example of patience is furnished in the conduct of the holy prophets. Indeed the Socinians themselves ascribe almost as much honor to the sufferings of Christ, as Mr. Fuller expresses. They speak of the death of Christ answering the ends of moral government, by confirming to us the will of God. And they go so far as to say, that "there is no doubt but that Christ so satisfied God by his obedience, as that he completely fulfilled the whole of his

will, and by his obedience obtained, through the grace of God, for all of us who believe in him, the remission of our sins and eternal salvation."

This fond notion of Mr. Fuller, respecting the chief design of the death of Christ, destroys the idea of *atonement*. It represents the Lord Jesus as a *Lawgiver* rather than a *Saviour*, and attributes to his death that which belongs rather to the law of ten commands. When that holy but fiery law came forth in terrible majesty from Sinai, its chief design was so manifest, that Moses quaked, and all the people trembled. Its design, indeed, is to "express displeasure against disobedience—to utter such an expression of displeasure by the lawgiver, that in it every subject of his empire may read what are his views of the evil which he forbids, and what are his determinations in regard to its punishment." But the death of Christ is not an atonement for sin, if this be its principal design; it is rather a law *given*, which, as is supposed, is able to give life, by publishing milder terms of acceptance than the moral law. It would then exhibit, indeed, the purity of the lawgiver, tempered with so much mercy as to offer salvation to men on certain terms and conditions, by the performance of which they may obtain life. Thus we have the law and the gospel mingled so ingeniously as to constitute a perversion of both.

2. In the next place, it is certainly a Socinian notion that all the virtue of the atonement lies in the *appointment of God*; and Mr. Fuller has argued very pertinently against this notion. But I am much deceived if Mr. Fuller himself does not teach doctrine very like this. Does he not teach that the atonement in itself is equally sufficient for the salvation of a world as for an individual, and that the only reason why its virtue reaches some and not others, is the appointment of God? Does he not maintain that if one sinner only were saved, the atonement would be the same as though the world were saved, and that the atonement being once yielded, a world may be saved or only an individual, according to the appointment of God? Now, what is this but to place the *virtue* of the atonement in the appointment of God? How comes the efficacy of the atonement to reach to the world, and not to an individual only? Is it because of any thing in the *atonement itself*? Certainly not; for Mr. Fuller says it is in itself equally adapted to an individual, and to all mankind. Its virtue to save, therefore, must be all traced to the appointment of God. Further; if there be nothing in the *atonement itself* to secure the salvation of more than an individual, had God so appointed, then it follows that God might not even have appointed the salvation of one individual. Thus it appears that if there be any virtue in Christ's death to accomplish salvation, it must be all placed in the appointment of God!

It is hard to say how the grace of God can be frustrated at all, if not by doctrine like this. To what purpose do we maintain the Godhead of Christ, if we hold so lax views of his atonement as to deny the certain efficacy of his death, or maintain, by implication, that there is no more power in his blood, of itself to take away sin, than there was in the blood of the Old Testament sacrifices?

3. It is well known to all who are acquainted with the Socinian controversy that one chief argument urged against the substitution of Christ is, that it leaves no room for the free unmerited mercy of God in the pardon of sin, but that it represents the salvation of men as a matter of justice. Thus the Socinians argue against those who assert the substitution of Christ. "The Scriptures every where testify that God forgives men their sins freely. But to a free

forgiveness nothing is more opposite than such a satisfaction as they contend for, and the payment of an equivalent price. For where a creditor is satisfied, either by the debtor himself, or by another person on the debtor's behalf, it cannot with truth be said of him that he freely forgives the debt."

This reasoning is so very like that of Mr. Fuller in his objections to the principle of debtor and creditor, as serving to illustrate the great work of redemption, that the resemblance is both surprising and affecting. He agrees with the Socinians in denying that Christ hath so satisfied divine justice for the sins of his people, as that *justice itself* demands their salvation. And although the comparison of the debtor and creditor is only used to give some idea of the principle on which the great work of redemption proceeds, yet scriptural as it is, Mr. Fuller has had the hardihood to reject it, and, with it, the important truth intended to be illustrated by it. "In the case of the debtor," says he, "satisfaction being once accepted, justice *requires* his complete discharge; but in that of the criminal, where satisfaction is made to the wounded honor of the law, and the authority of the lawgiver, justice, though it *admits* of his discharge, yet no otherwise *requires it*, than as it may have been matter of promise to the substitute." The answer to this objection, on the part of Mr. Fuller and the Socinians, is very

easy. Towards the sinner, salvation is an act of *free unmerited mercy*; but towards Christ, as the sinner's surety and representative, it is an act of *justice*, arising not merely from a promise made to him of the Father, but from the meritorious nature of his own plenary satisfaction. In all the stupendous plan of redemption, infinite justice and boundless mercy are displayed. In this great work, Jehovah shines in all his glory as *a just God and Saviour*.

EIGHTH. By denying the transfer of sin to Christ, Mr. Fuller has entangled himself with many absurdities. Among other things, this has led him to deny that the sufferings of Christ were real and proper punishment. But by this he does not mean, as some have supposed, that Christ did not really and truly *suffer*, but that his sufferings were not really and properly *punishment*. Now, if the sufferings of Christ were not real punishment, it will follow that the sins of those who are saved are never *punished at all*, and thus mercy would triumph at the expense of justice. It is allowed that sin is not properly punished in the persons of those who are saved; and if it be not in the person of their great Surety, it is remitted without punishment, and justice is not satisfied. If it be, as Mr. Fuller asserts, that "guilt is not transferable, but the *desert* of the criminal remains," then justice, because it finds guilt upon the criminal, calls aloud for his punishment; nor can it allow the sufferings of an innocent person in his stead, because it finds in such a one no guilt, and because it punishes sin, only where it finds sin to punish. But if it be true that God, by a strange act of his grace, laid the iniquity of all that are saved upon Christ, then divine justice, finding sin upon him punished it in him; but the same justice forbids the punishment of believers, because it finds no guilt upon them.—Again: Mr. Fuller has said much about the sufferings of Christ, as an expression of God's hatred against sin; but this part of his system is as inconsistent as the rest. The sufferings of Immanuel were, indeed, an expression of God's infinite abhorrence of iniquity; and it appears in this that he would not spare sin when found upon his Son, but punished it even in him. But if we suppose that sin was not really transferred to Christ, then his sufferings might be indeed an expression of love to the sinner, and of the honor of the lawgiver, but hatred to iniquity would not be perfectly expressed. "All the world," says a holy Puritan, "is nothing so dear in the eyes of God as his Son; and if it had been possible that sin could have

been connived at, it would be upon his Son, being his only by imputation. A fond father may possibly wink at a fault in a son, which he will not pass by in a slave; but when a father falls foul upon a dear child upon whom a fault is found, and the fire of indignation restrains his affection, this argues the extremity of the rage of the father, and heinousness of the crime that incenseth it. When the Lord will lay iniquity upon Christ, and when he finds it upon him, if he himself shall not escape—nay, if there shall not be a mitigation of wrath, though the crime be upon him no otherwise than only as a surety, this shews the iniquity is of such a loathsome savour in the nostrils of God, that it is impossible he should have any partiality or remissness wherever it is to be found."⁶

NINTH. In which way soever Mr. Fuller's system is contemplated, its inconsistency and absurdity appear. He admits the doctrine of election, though experience has shewn that the tendency of his principles is opposed to the cordial reception of it; but he admits that God the Father chose a certain number of fallen men in Christ Jesus, whom he determined to bring to everlasting glory through the blood of the Redeemer; yet Mr. Fuller virtually denies that the blood of Christ was shed for the sins of the elect, in distinction from the rest. He admits that the design of God in giving his Son, and the design of Christ in laying down his life, were *definite*; yet he asserts an *indefinite* atonement. He allows that the sovereign purpose of God in election, and the work of the blessed Spirit in conversion, respect a peculiar people; yet he denies that the same sovereignty shines in the death of Christ. Instead of consistently maintaining that the part which each person in the adorable Trinity took in the great economy of salvation, respected the same objects, we have particular election, and effectual vocation, but not special redemption. The decree of God the Father he allows is absolute; the operation of the Spirit is absolute; yet, with marvelous inconsistency, he represents the atonement of Christ as conditionally sufficient for the whole race of Adam!

I have thus stated some particulars wherein Mr. Fuller's sentiments appear self-contradictory; and if you, my friend, are as heartily disgusted with this perverted gospel, this "yea and nay" system, as I am, and if you have any relish for an honest declaration of divine truth in its simplicity, I will here introduce to you, by way of contrast, the testimony of some of those churches which have been considered almost "a perfect dunghill in society." It is the confession of the Baptist churches of the Norfolk and Suffolk Association, which Dr. Rippon has done himself the honor to record in his Baptist Register.

"We are kept by the power of our Covenant God steadfast in the great and glorious truths of the everlasting gospel—the God-honoring, soul-enriching, and heart-warming doctrines of a Trinity in the Godhead—of the sovereign, eternal, and immutable love of the Triune Jehovah, centering in Jesus, and resting with all its unfading glories, and unnumbered blessings, upon the sons of God—the eternal election of some of the human race to everlasting, life and glory in Christ Jesus proceeding from and directed by the absolute, uncontrollable sovereignty of Jehovah's will—the eternal and indissoluble union of all the chosen in Christ, who was set up from everlasting as their federal head and glorious representative; in whom their persons were accepted in love—their predestination to the adoption of children, as God the Father's act, proceeding from the boundless love of his heart in his Son, and designed for the praise of

6 Dr. Crisp's Sermons, 4th edit. 1791, vol. ii. page 43.

the glory of his stupendous grace—the eternal, gracious, and infinitely-wise covenant transactions of the Holy Three, relating to the salvation of offending mortals—the transfer of all the sins of the elect from them to Christ and the full condemnation and punishment of them in him—the complete atonement made for them by the one glorious and all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ's spotless humanity, presented to infinite justice upon the altar of his divinity in all the flames of his transcendent love—the personal and all-perfect obedience of our great Immanuel to the holy law, performed in the room and stead of his people, accepted for them, and imputed to them by the God of all grace; and their free, full, and everlasting justification by it in his sight—the glorious redemption, perfect cleansing, and full pardon, of all the vessels of mercy, through the precious blood of the cross—their regeneration, effectual calling, and conversion, by the glorious, almighty, and irresistible operations of God the Holy Ghost—the life of faith they live upon the fulness of Jesus, and the good works they perform in love to the Trinity in Covenant, for the honor of discriminating grace, and the glory of the Triune Jehovah—in fine, their preservation by the power of the Almighty, through faith, to that glory to which they were destined by electing love before the foundation of the world. These sublime truths we consider as the glory of the Bible, the soul of Christianity, the ground of a sinner's hope, and the source of a believer's joys; and we can say in truth that we esteem them beyond the riches of the Indies. Nor are we yet possessed of a sufficient degree of modern candor to treat them with cold indifference, or to view them as non-essentials, but think ourselves bound to maintain them to the utmost of our ability, and to reject all assertions inconsistent with them."

And are these the doctrines which have given Mr. Fuller such offence? Is this the profession which is so contemptible in his eyes? Are these the churches which he compares to a *dunghill in society*? O my soul, be thou contemptible too! Be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, and have thou fellowship with those who are, in their tribulation as well as in their joys. And what though thou be reproached and reviled here as thy great Leader was; be assured of thy consolation, that the reproach of his followers shall be rolled away, when he comes in his own glory, and in his Father's glory, and all the holy angels with him.

LETTER III

Having in my last letter compared Mr. Fuller's sentiments with themselves, I shall occupy the present with a careful examination of his peculiar views of the GREAT ATONEMENT, by bringing them to the test of the word of God. And I entreat your attention the more earnestly to this part of the subject, because it is my intention to prove that the principles I am opposing are subversive of nearly all the great and fundamental doctrines connected with redemption through the blood of Jesus. When I first began this investigation I was not aware that the evidence in support of this serious charge was so abundant; but the more I study the subject the deeper is my conviction that the difference is not in *words* but in

things; and in things, too, which are essential to the gospel and constitute the very foundation of a sinner's hope. This charge I proceed to prove in the following manner.

FIRST. The first thing which strikes the mind on a close examination of Mr. Fuller's views relative to the atonement is, that upon his principles the *death of Christ is not vicarious*. By vicarious I mean *for*, or *in the stead of* others. Both Arminians and Calvinists hold that the death of Christ is vicarious, but Mr. F., by endeavoring to go between them, virtually denies it. When we assert that Christ laid down his life for his sheep, or that he died in the stead of his elect, we thereby assert that his death is *vicarious*; or should we affirm, with Dr. Whitby, that Christ died equally for the whole race of Adam, we would still assert that his death is *vicarious*. But Mr. Fuller agrees with neither of these; he neither teaches that Christ died for the elect only, nor does he affirm that he died for the whole race of Adam, but he maintains that Christ made an atonement for sin *indefinitely*, for *sin in general*, in such a way as that God might pardon some men if he pleased, or all men if he pleased. Thus Mr. Fuller denies that the death of Christ is *vicarious*.

This will perhaps appear still clearer by the following dilemma. If Christ died, he died for, or in the stead of, *all men*, or in the stead of *some men*, or in the stead of *no man*. Now let any person of Mr. Fuller's views take whichever of these he pleases, for one of them must be true. If he takes the first, and affirm with the Arminians that Christ died for all men, he changes his ground: if he takes the second, and asserts, that Christ died only for his elect, he gives up the argument by uniting with his opponents; and if he takes the last, he denies that Christ died for any of the human race! And this Mr. F. has virtually done by his doctrine of indefinite atonement. The truth of this has often been confirmed in conversation with persons of Mr. Fuller's views. Such a dialogue as the following as frequently occurred.

Question. "What is your view of the efficacy and extent of the death of Christ?"

Answer. "I consider the atonement as a divine extraordinary expedient, for the exercise of mercy consistently with justice; and that therein such satisfaction is made for *sin*, as to afford ground for sinners to believe and be saved."

Ques. "Good; but I wish to know whether you believe that Christ died for all *men*, or only for *his elect*?"

Ans. "I consider he died for *sin*."

Ques. "Truly he did; but he also died for *sinner*s, and I wish to know whether you believe he died for *all sinner*s, or only for *some sinner*s?"

Ans. "I consider that if one sinner only had been saved consistently with justice, it required to be by the same all-perfect obedience unto death; and this being yielded is itself equally adapted to save the world as an individual, provided a word believed in it."

Ques. "I understand you, but you have not answered my question. You have not said whether he died *for* an individual or *for* a world."

Ans. "I believe there is a fulness in the atonement of Christ sufficient for the salvation of the whole world, were the whole world to believe in him."

Ques. "You still evade my question: I wish you to say whether Christ died for all sinners or only for some?"

Ans. "If by this you mean to ask whom Christ's atonement is sufficient for, I answer the *whole world*, but if you refer to the purpose Of God respecting its application, I answer *for some men, only.*"

Ques. "Here you have artfully confounded several things; for a man may believe in the sovereign purpose of God, respecting the application of the atonement, and yet maintain universal redemption. But I ask nothing about the purpose of God, nor the application of the atonement, but I ask a plain question, to which I expect an ingenious answer, but in vain. Let me intreat you to renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, and walk no more in craftiness. Acknowledge boldly, either that Christ died for all men, or that he died only for some men, or else he died for no man. To say that he died for *sin* merely, is to deny that his death is *vicarious.*"

I am aware that Mr. Fuller sometimes departs from his peculiar sentiments, and speaks of Christ's dying for *his sheep, his church, &c.*; but this proves nothing but the inconsistency of error. Every erroneous man is condemned of himself⁷ It is Mr. F.'s *peculiar* view of the atonement which I am opposing, and not the truth which he sometimes acknowledges. His peculiar view is simply this: "The death of Christ (he considers) was a satisfaction to justice, God having hereby expressed his displeasure against sin. This satisfaction being yielded, and this displeasure expressed, a way is opened whereby an individual may saved, or the whole world, according to the sovereign pleasure of God." All particularity in the atonement itself he denies, but acknowledges the sovereign purpose of God with regard to its application. In short, he neither avows universal redemption with the Arminians, nor particular redemption with the Calvinists, but asserts what may be very properly termed *indefinite redemption* and how contrary this doctrine is to the word of God we shall presently see.

It is worthy of remark, that although there are many Scriptures which appear to favour universal redemption, there are none which even appear to countenance Mr. Fuller's views. Those texts which speak of Christ dying for the *whole world*, for every man, &c. prove too much for his purpose. In vain shall we search the Scriptures for a single text to countenance the absurd notion that the atonement is sufficient for all, but was intended only for some; or for the least warrant to separate the *sufficiency* of the atonement from the *design* of it. To the law and to the testimony we will now appeal, and by this unerring rule we will try the doctrine of indefinite redemption. To cite all the passages which express the fixed, definite, and vicarious nature of the atonement would be to transcribe a great part of the Old and New Testament; a few, therefore, may suffice as an example.

And, in the first place, if we attend to the meaning of the word redemption, we shall find it furnishes a strong argument against the indefinite scheme. Our English word is derived from the Latin *redimo*, to buy again, to ransom by price; and the words used in the Greek

7 Titus 3:11.

Testament to express our Redemption are, *apolutrosis*, to buy, and *apoluo*, to buy out of the hands of another, or to obtain something by paying a proper price for it. In Hebrew, to redeem signifies also to separate or sever; either because a thing when it is bought is "separated" for the purchaser's use, or because the children of Israel were by redemption separated to be a peculiar people unto the Lord. The very nature of redemption, therefore, comprehends something vicarious, something definite. This great truth shines in the types and figures of the law, in all which the definite nature of redemption by the death of Christ is constantly held forth. Thus, the ransom of a poor Israelite by any of his near kin, is a lively figure of the death of Christ for his people, who gave his life for their lives, and his person instead of theirs. "And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee; after that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him," &c.⁸ The atonement money also was typical of the redemption by Christ, and of his giving himself a ransom for a given number of sinners. "When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul into the Lord, when thou numberest them, that there be no plague among them when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle."⁹ It was commanded also that the land should not be sold for ever, but should be redeemed or bought back; to signify that although God's elect have sold themselves for nought, yet they shall not perish because they are the Lord's property, being certainly bought again, not indeed with silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ. "The land shall not be sold forever, for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land. If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold."¹⁰ In these instances we learn the meaning of the word redemption, and as they refer to our Lord Jesus Christ, we may also discern in them traces of the vicarious nature of his death. Indeed whenever the atonement of Christ is spoken of in the Scripture, this principle is always implied and nearly always expressed. Accordingly we read, that he "laid down his life for his sheep;" that he "gave himself for his Church;" that he "give his life a ransom for many." The prophet foretold that "Messiah should be cut off, but not for himself;" and another prophet informs us for whom, or in whose stead he should die: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, for the transgression of my people was he stricken." His blood, as the blood of the New Testament, "was shed for many." "He gave himself for us that he might redeem us." "He gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world." And, in short, the objects of redemption, the church of God, are "purchased with his own blood,"¹¹ "redeemed from among men," and therefore said to be *bought with a price*. Now all these Scriptures with a host of others, declare plainly that the death of Christ is not an atonement for sin abstractedly, nor a mere expression of the Divine displeasure against iniquity, nor an indefinite satisfaction of Divine justice, but a ransom price paid for the eternal redemption of a certain number of sinners, and a plenary satisfaction for their particular sins.

8 Lev. 25:47.

9 Exod. 30:12-16.

10 Lev. 25: 23-25.

11 John 10:15ff.

Neither are those passages of Scripture which appear to favor the universal scheme, less to the point. It would be easy to show that such passages do not really favor universal redemption, inasmuch as they fully express the absolute satisfaction yielded to divine justice by the blood of Christ, and the certain efficacy of his death; but this is not our subject. The question relates not to universal, but to indefinite redemption: the question is not for whom Christ died, but did he die for any? Is his death vicarious?

Now we read that Jesus "*died for all*." That he "tasted death for every man;" i.e., in the stead of every man. "Scarcely FOR a righteous man will one die; peradventure FOR a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died FOR US." And indeed in every passage which appears to favor universal redemption, this great truth is conveyed, that Christ died FOR, or *in the stead of* the persons referred to, and so purchased them by his blood. "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." "Shall thy weak brother perish for whom Christ died?" "They shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them." "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."¹² In this last cited passage, the word translated "ransom" is very significant. It is not simply a ransom, but correspondent ransom. "It properly signifies," says a learned critic, "a price by which captives are redeemed from their enemies, and the kind of exchange, in which *one person is redeemed by another, and life is redeemed by life*." No one doctrine, therefore, is more opposed to another, than this scriptural view of redemption is to Mr. Fuller's indefinite scheme. I have called it by way of distinction, *indefinite redemption*, but it is, in fact, no redemption at all. The absurdity of the system may be further proved by the following arguments: *viz.*—

Arg. 1. If Christ died only for sin abstractedly, and his death be not vicarious then, no sinner in particular can have any special interest or propriety in his death, and consequently Paul labored under a mistake, when expressing his faith in the Son of God, he added, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Arg. 2. An atonement for sin abstractedly, and an indefinite redemption, are both equally absurd. There can be no redemption where individuals are not ransomed; there can be no atonement where persons are not concerned. An atonement may be made for offences which one man commits against another, but an atonement for offence abstractedly is unintelligible; an atonement may be and was made for the offences of sinners, but an atonement for *sin as sin* is an absurdity. Connected with the atonement is reconciliation. Among men, when an offence is atoned for, the injured party is satisfied, and reconciliation ensues: so when Christ died for the sins of his elect, atonement was made, satisfaction given, and reconciliation took place.¹³ But on the supposition that Christ died for sin in the abstract, who or what is reconciled?

Arg. 3. This notion of indefinite atonement reflects on the wisdom of God: for if, as Mr. Fuller allows, it was the purpose of God to render the atonement effectual only to the elect, then this great object was accomplished by laying their iniquities only upon Christ; and thus according to particular redemption, Jehovah is of *one mind*, abounding towards his chosen in

¹² Rom. 14:15; 1 Cor. 8:11; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 Tim. 2:6.

¹³ Rom. 5:10.

all wisdom and prudence. But indefinite redemption, coupled with personal election, represents our God as halting between two opinions, as though he had not fully determined whom he would save.

Arg. 4. The sentiment now under consideration obscures the glory of the all perfect work of Christ. All that it ascribes to that work is the mere possibility of salvation. In this respect the advocates of indefinite and of universal redemption agree. Both unite in denying that Christ made absolute satisfaction for the sins of men, and effected their real reconciliation to God; clearly perceiving that if Christ died for men *absolutely* their salvation would be certain.¹⁴ Indefinite redemption does not ascertain the salvation of a single sinner; all that it pretends to effect is to place men in a *salvable state*, and render them *reconcilable* to God. It pretends to be *sufficient* for the salvation of all men, but *secures* the salvation of none. Now it is the glory of redemption that it does not merely render God *placable* and sin *pardonable*; that it does not render God *reconcilable* to man, or man *reconcilable* to God; but that it hath finished transgression, made an end of sin,¹⁵ justified the ungodly, reconciled sinners to God,¹⁶ and perfected for ever them that are sanctified.¹⁷ Christ did not appear to render men *salvable* and sin *pardonable*; but he appeared to "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." "In a word," says one of the valiant of Israel, "either the death of Christ was not real and perfect satisfaction for sin, or if it was, then upon every principle of reason and justice, all that sin must be actually forgiven and done away, which his death was a true and plenary satisfaction for. But on the supposition that his redemption was not absolute, it vanishes into no redemption at all. Go over, therefore, fairly and squarely, to the tents of Socinus, or believe that Christ is the Lamb of God, who, in deed and in truth, beareth and taketh away the sin of the world."¹⁸

Arg. 5. Mr. Fuller's view of the atonement destroys that beautiful harmony which pervades every part of the glorious priesthood of Christ. This harmony appeared typically under the law. Aaron, the high priest, was taken from his brethren, the children of Israel, to offer gifts and sacrifices. For the sins of Israel only, was atonement made, and not for the neighboring nations, nor yet for transgression indefinitely. The high priest represented Israel only, when he bore their names upon his heart in the breast-plate of judgment, and when he entered into the holy of holies with the names of the twelve tribes upon his breast. He bare their judgment, and theirs only, before the Lord continually; for them he made intercession, and them he solemnly blessed. All this represented that great high priest who is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God. He took not on him human nature indefinitely, but he took on him the seed of Abraham that he might be the *Goel*, the kinsman of the heirs of promise, and so possess a legal right to redeem them. As their high priest, he made reconciliation for the sins of his people; for them he appears in the presence of God; them he represents; for them he intercedes, and them he will finally bless. He saves none but those for whom he intercedes; he intercedes for none but those for whom he died; he died for none but those to whom he stands related as their kinsman redeemer. This glorious subject filled the soul of the apostle with holy rapture when he exclaimed, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that

14 See Dr. Whitby, p. 105, 2d ed. 8vo.

15 Dan. 9:24.

16 Rom. 5:10.

17 Heb. 10:14.

18 Toplady's Sermons. Works, vol. 3, p. 31.

died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."¹⁹ But, alas, how does Mr. Fuller's doctrine disturb this harmony! If the great atonement be indefinite, every part of Christ's glorious priesthood, resting upon it, must needs be indefinite too. If Christ died for sin abstractedly, it will follow that he appears in the presence of God for no man particularly, that he represents sinners generally, and that he intercedes for men indefinitely; which doctrine, thanks be to God, is false, otherwise not an individual of the human race would be saved.

Thus Mr. Fuller's views stand opposed to the vicarious nature of the death of Christ, and are consequently subversive of one of the most important truths of the gospel.

SECOND. Another essential doctrine of the gospel, denied by Mr. Fuller, is *the transfer of Christ*. This great doctrine is not denied by him in an indirect manner; it is not denied consequentially or by inference; but he denies it boldly, and as plainly as language can possibly express. It is impossible to misunderstand the following quotations: "A voluntary obligation to endure the punishment of another is not guilt, any more than a consequent exemption from obligation in the offender is innocence. Both guilt and innocence are transferable in their effects, but in themselves they are untransferable;"²⁰ and again, "neither sin nor righteousness are in themselves transferable;" and again, "Debts are transferable, but crimes are not. A third person may cancel the one, but he can only obliterate the effects of the other; the desert of the criminal remains."²¹

How cautiously soever Mr. Fuller has thought right to express himself on some subjects, he speaks boldly on this. Here we have as plain a denial of a great Protestant doctrine as words are capable of. But again, care must be taken not to misrepresent him. Mr. Fuller does not deny that it was *transferred* to him. What he means by the *imputation* of sin to Christ, we have in his own words: "The imputation of our sin to Christ, consists in the transfer of its effects," but the transfer of *sin itself*, he positively denies as a thing impossible. Amongst men, indeed, it is admitted that guilt cannot be transferred, but its *effects* only. It is admitted that among the sons of men, a third person may cancel debts but not crimes, which with mortals can only be transferrable in their effects; but in the great affair of salvation, our God stands single and alone. In this most glorious work, there is such a display of justice, mercy, wisdom and power, as never entered into the heart of man to conceive, and consequently, can have no parallel in the actions of mortals. "Who hath declared this from ancient time? Who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me"²²

The question then is simply this: whether, in the great economy of salvation, the sins of men were transferred to Christ, or the effects only. If the former does not appear from the Scripture, then Mr. Fuller's reasoning is correct; but if the word of God plainly teaches that not only the tremendous consequences and effects of sin were transferred to Christ, but also sin itself, then all his reasonings on the subject are words of falsehood. It is freely and joyfully admitted that Christ did bear, as the surety of his people, the effects of their sin, the

19 Rom. 8:33, 34.

20 Dialogues, &c., page 209.

21 Morris' Memoirs of Fuller, 412.

22 Isa. 45:21.

punishment of their guilt; but to teach that he bore this only, and to deny the translation of sin itself, is another matter, and is, as I shall attempt to prove, a grievous error and contrary to the plainest declarations of the word of God; as for example,

(1.) *The translation of sin itself to Christ, was clearly taught under the law.* It was prefigured by the sinner laying his hands on the head of the animal intended to be sacrificed. Thus when Aaron and his sons were to be hallowed, they were commanded to "put their hands on the head of the bullock," which represented typically the transfer of their sins to the animal which was thereby counted worthy of death; for it is added, "And thou shalt kill the bullock before the Lord, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."²³ Still more striking is the atonement of the scape goat, which is a lively figure of the transfer of sin to Christ, and of his bearing it away for ever. "And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited and he shall let go the goat into the wilderness"²⁴ Here, then, we have in a figure first, the real transfer of *sin itself* to Christ; secondly, the transfer of the sins of a *peculiar people*, even the children of Israel; and thirdly, the transfer of *all* their iniquities, all their transgressions, and all their particular sins. In corroboration of this, it is worthy of notice that the word which in the law of Moses is used for the *sin offering*, properly means *sin itself*; so that the victim, in consequence of the typical transfer of iniquity to it, was considered a mass of sin *e.g.*, Lev. iv. 21, and al. freq. where the bullock is called a sin offering of the congregation, but the animal is in the Hebrew called *sin* itself. "And he shall carry forth the bullock without the camp, and burn him as he burned the first bullock, THE SIN of the congregation is he." Also the word which is translated *trespass offering*, properly signifies *guilt*; because the animal typically bore the *guilt* of the transgressor who brought it for an offering. Lev. v. 6, 7, 18, and al. freq. "The victims and expiations offered for sins," says Calvin "were called *ashmoth* a word which properly signifies sin itself. By this appellation, the Spirit intended to suggest, that they were vicarious sacrifices to receive and sustain the curse due to sin. But that which was figuratively represented in the Mosaic sacrifices, is actually exhibited in Christ, the archetype of the figures. Wherefore, in order to effect a complete expiation, he gave his soul, that is, an *atonement sacrifice for sin*, as the prophet says; so that our guilt, and consequent punishment, being as it were, transferred to him, must cease to be imputed to us."²⁵

(2.) *The transfer of our sins to Christ is discovered not only in the law of Moses, but also in those parts of the prophets and of the Psalms which testify of him.* In these Scriptures it is most clearly and distinctly revealed, not only that he bore our sorrows, and all the *consequences* of our transgressions, but also that he bore our very *sins* themselves; and not only so, but that his bearing our sorrows is the effect of his bearing our sins. Mr. Fuller positively denies that our sins themselves were, or could be transferred to Christ. The effects of them, he says, might, but not the sins themselves. "A voluntary obligation to endure the punishment of another," says he, "is not guilt, any more than a consequent exemption from

²³ Exod. 29:10, 11.

²⁴ Lev. 16:20-22.

²⁵ Institutes, Book 2, chap. 16. v. 6.

obligation in the offender is innocence. Both guilt and innocence (or sin and righteousness, as he elsewhere expresses it) are transferable in their *effects*, but in *themselves* they are untransferrable." Thus Mr. Fuller teaches: now we will see what the word of God teaches. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is allowed to be a prophecy of the Messiah, his deep sufferings, and subsequent glory. In this portion of the divine word, the Messiah is represented as a despised and rejected person, as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: but it is more clearly taught that he was so, not on his own account, but on account of his people. Their transgressions wounded him, their iniquities bruised him. It is indeed more distinctly revealed that the *effects* of their iniquity were transferred to him. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;" but it is not less clearly ascertained, that our sins *themselves* were transferred to him. "All we, like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." v. 6. The Messiah could not have borne our sorrows, unless they had been transferred to him; neither could he have borne our sins, unless they also had been transferred to him. Accordingly we are taught, that he bore our sins as well as their effects; "by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, FOR HE SHALL BEAR THEIR INIQUITIES." v. 11. "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great—because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, AND HE BARE THE SIN OF MANY." v. 12.

In these solemn transactions, our Lord Jesus stood as the great Surety of many. "It was exacted and he become responsible: and he opened not his mouth."²⁶ As debts are transferred from the original debtor to the surety, so were the sins of many transferred to the spotless Redeemer, and he bore them: and as the surety smarts for the debt which by transfer becomes his own, so Christ was *stricken for the transgression of his people*. Hence it is that he calls their sins his own, as he often does when speaking in the Psalms. In the fortieth Psalm, the speaker, beyond all doubt, is Messiah, as the apostle assures us in Heb. x. 5. In this Psalm he calls the distress into which his covenant engagements brought him, *a horrible pit*; and though he foreknew the consequences yet in v. 7, he declares his readiness to assume a body, and to accomplish his Father's will in the salvation of his chosen, agreeably to the ancient settlements written in the *Volume of the Book*, saying, "Lo! I come, I delight to do thy will, O my God." Then in verses 11 and 12, he prays for deliverance from his deep distresses, saying, "Withhold not thy tender mercies from me, O Lord, let thy loving, kindness and thy truth continually preserve me. For innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, so that my heart faileth me." And to this exactly corresponds the evangelical history of the sufferings of Christ. "Now" said he "is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour."²⁷ The true cause of all his sufferings was this, that God the Father laid on him the iniquity of us all; and if our iniquity, consequently its effects. Indeed Christ could not have borne the effects if he had not borne sin itself, because one part of the punishment of sin is a sense of guilt and wrath. Therefore when our sin was upon him his heart failed him, and he was not able to look up, but cried out in infinite grief, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"²⁸

In the sixty-ninth Psalm also, which in various places of the New Testament is applied

26 See Lowth's translation of Isaiah 53:7.

27 John 12:17.

28 Matt. 27:46.

to Christ, we find the Messiah calling the sins of his people his own; inasmuch as he and they constitute one body. "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in upon my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." And in v. 5 he ascribes his sufferings to their proper cause. "O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee." How could the spotless Redeemer speak of *his sins* in any other sense than the one in question? How could they be *his* otherwise than by transfer, as debts are transferred to the surety? But thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer:²⁹ and since he became voluntarily responsible, "ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"³⁰

(3.) *This great doctrine is fully attested in the apostolic writings.*

All the expressions of the New Testament writers in relation to this subject seem to have a reference to the legal sacrifices. As the animal offered in sacrifice was called *sin*, because it typically bore transgression, so Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.³¹ Yea, he was made a curse for us,³² and he was so, because he was once offered to bear the sins of many.³³ This one offering was not typical, like the sacrifices of the law, but real expiation of iniquity; nor was the imputation of sin to Jesus of a figurative or improper nature, but an imputation connected with a real transfer of our iniquities to him, as is clearly comprehended in those forcible words of Peter, who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness.³⁴

If there be a doctrine of the gospel with which we should desire to be acquainted, a doctrine on which our salvation and comfort depend, it is that of the translation of our sins to Christ. If we would know Christ, and the fellowship of his sufferings; if we would look on him whom we have pierced and mourn; if we would die unto sin, and bring forth fruit unto God, we must have the gift of the blessed Spirit to reveal to us this great mystery, that the Father hath laid on Christ the iniquity of us all. Why did the holy Redeemer go mourning to the grave? Why did divine justice pursue him? Only because he bare the sin of many. From this fountain the streams of free salvation flow: we die unto sin, we live unto righteousness, only because his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree. O mysterious transfer! O wondrous secret! which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor ever entered into the heart of man to conceive, but which thou, O God, will reveal to thine elect by the Spirit!

I shall only add, in further confirmation of this fundamental doctrine, the following arguments:

Arg. 1. If *sin itself* be not transferable, but only its *effects*, then it is not true that Christ bore our sins. Their consequences in part he might bear, but our sins themselves he could not bear, unless they were transferred to him. "He shall bear their iniquities," saith the prophet: for the original word signifies to bear, as a porter carries a burden. The Old Testament saints

²⁹ Luke 24:46.

³⁰ Luke 5:26.

³¹ 2 Cor. 5:21.

³² Gal. 3:13.

³³ Heb. 9:28.

³⁴ 1 Pet. 2:24.

were well acquainted with their God, as a sin-bearing God, and considered this the glory of his character. "Who is a God like unto thee, that beareth iniquity; and that passeth over the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?"³⁵ But because it is impossible among mortals that guilt should be transferred, Mr. F. argues that it is impossible with God.

Arg. 2. If sin itself be not transferable, Christ could not have borne all the effects and consequences of our iniquities. The shame and pain which the undefiled Redeemer endured from the Jews, the Roman soldiers, the cross, the nails, and the thorns, were a very small part of the reward of our transgressions. The principal part of the punishment of sin, consists in a *sense of guilt, and of Divine wrath*: but neither of these could Immanuel have endured, unless he had borne our sins themselves.

Arg. 3. If sin be not transferable, then infinite justice still finds guilt upon believers and glorified saints, and will do so for ever; in which case, justice would require to be satisfied, and mercy would be displayed at the expense of righteousness. But contrary to this, the Scripture represents it as the glory of salvation, that the guilt of sin itself is done away in the blood of the Lamb. In this consists the glory of his righteousness, not only that the curse is removed, but the *cause* of the curse also; "for as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our TRANSGRESSIONS from us." Our sins were so transferred to Christ, that if he had not conquered and destroyed them, they would have destroyed him. His resurrection was a proof that sin was on him no longer; and the apostle confirms this by a remarkable expression in Heb. 9:26, where, after teaching that Christ bare the sins of many, he says, "he shall appear the second time without sin." "Mark it well," says a holy man, "there was a time that Christ did not appear without sin; for he bore the sins of many; but there is a second time when he shall appear, and then he shall be without sin; so that believers have no sins upon them, and Christ hath none either."³⁶ A glorious truth, and worth more than a mountain of gold!

Arg. 4. If the sins of men were not transferred to Christ, then his sufferings were not of a penal nature, nor could infinite justice be satisfied with them. Justice requires that iniquity should be punished, but the sufferings of Christ were not punishment, unless our sins were transferred to him. An innocent person may *suffer*, but an innocent person cannot properly be *punished*; nor can justice admit that an innocent person, *considered as innocent*, should suffer in the room of the guilty. But divine justice is satisfied with the sufferings of Christ; because he bore both iniquity and its consequences, and thus God hath "condemned sin in the flesh."

"Penalty," says a judicious author, "is suffering under a charge of offence, and without a just imputation of guilt, punishment cannot in equity be inflicted on any subject. It is a most unrighteous thing to punish any one considered as innocent; and therefore, if it was not possible with God to impute sin to the innocent Jesus, neither could he inflict punishment on him; and if Christ did not endure *proper* punishment, his suffering were not, nor could be, satisfactory to the law and justice of God for our sins, and it is in vain to hope for salvation through his sufferings and death."³⁷

35 Micah 7:18.

36 Dr. Crisp—Christ alone exalted, vol. i. p. 428.

37 Brine's Sermon on 2 Cor. 5:21.

What a serious thing it is that any professed friends of Christ should be found opposing this foundation principle of the gospel!

THIRD. Intimately connected with the foregoing, is the doctrine of JUSTIFICATION; which important article, although it seems to have been acknowledged with one consent by all the reformed churches, is entirely set aside by Mr. Fuller. Justification is a judicial term, and means an acquittal from guilt; it stands opposed, not to punishment, but to the *desert of punishment*. When a man, charged with a crime, is tried according to the laws of his country, the crime is either proved against him or it is not. If it be, he is then pronounced *guilty*; but if it be not, he is declared to be *not guilty*, or in other words, he is *justified* from the charge. But if a man be really guilty of a crime, he may be *pardoned*, but he cannot be *justified*. Pardon is merely an exemption from punishment, but justification is freedom from its *desert*. If mercy be extended to the criminal, he is pardoned, but no created power can justify him. But what is impossible with men is accomplished by our God. Wonder, O heavens! be astonished O earth, Jehovah not only pardons, but justifies the ungodly! He not only remits their punishment, but removes their sins also; so that heaven, earth, and hell are challenged to bring one fault against the ransomed of the Lord, if they be able. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died."³⁸ Now that this great doctrine is wholly set aside by Mr. Fuller's principles, can be scarcely doubted by any person who reads and understands the following quotations. "Debts are transferable but crimes are not. A third person may cancel the one, but can only obliterate the *effects* of the other: the *desert* of the criminal remains." And again, "Neither sin nor righteousness are in themselves transferable." And again, "That the Scriptures represent believers as receiving only the benefits or the effect of Christ's righteousness in justification, is a remark of which I am not able to see the fallacy: nor does it follow that his obedience itself is not imputed to them. Obedience itself may be, and is imputed, while its effects only are imparted, and consequently received." If this be really the case, then there is no such thing as the justification of a sinner, except in the same sense which the Papists themselves allow, which indeed is not justification but pardon only. And although Mr. Fuller uses the term justification, because it is found in the Scripture, yet it is evident he means no more by it than an exemption from punishment, or treating the sinner as though he were righteous.³⁹ He positively denies that sin itself is or can be transferred from the sinner, or the desert of punishment removed, or the righteousness of Christ imparted; which doctrine, if the Scriptures be true, I will prove is utterly false.

The ideal meaning of the word to justify, is expressed by justice in weights and measures: it is derived from a correct beam, just weights, a righteous balance. "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in mete yard, in weight or in measure. Scales of justice, weights of justice, an ephah of justice, and a hin of justice, shall ye have."⁴⁰ A just or righteous man, therefore, is one who, when weighed in the balance, is not found wanting; one whose obedience corresponds with the holy law. "Judgment also will I lay to the law, and righteousness to the plummet." But that obedience which is in any way lighter or shorter than the holy law of God is not righteousness; for "justice and judgment are the basis of his throne."⁴¹ When Jehovah, therefore, is said to justify a man, he does more than pardon him;

38 Rom. 8:33.

39 Memoirs, 412.

40 Lev. 19:35, 36.

41 Psa. 89:14.

and as his judgment is always according to truth, he never condemns the innocent, nor deals with any as though they were righteous, who are not really so.

Nothing is more common amongst men than the pardon of offences, but the justification of an offender, consistently with truth, is with them impossible. All that created power can righteously do, is to justify the innocent, and *condemn* the guilty. But it is the glory of Jehovah's character, that he is a just God, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. In the stupendous work he brings to nought all the wisdom and disputing of this world.⁴² In this his masterpiece of wisdom and of power, he accomplishes that which with men is impossible; viz. a transfer of sin and righteousness, and thus obliterates not only the *effects* of sin, but *sin itself*. And in answer to all the objections of carnal men, as to the possibility of this great event, it is thus written, "Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and wonder; for the wisdom of their wise shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." This marvellous work, if we are to believe an inspired apostle, consists not in destroying the wisdom of the wise, but in that great event by which this effect is produced. It is no great achievement with our God to destroy the wisdom of this world, but to save and justify the ungodly by his precious blood of the cross is an amazing work indeed. This is God's marvellous work, this is God's wonder; by which he "destroys the wisdom of the wise, and brings to nothing the understanding to the prudent."

If we attend to what the Scripture says relative to the great blessing of justification, we shall find the term used in its strict and proper meaning, and also in a more extended sense. This has given occasion to many Protestant writers to teach that justification consists of two parts, namely remission of sin, and the imputation of Christ's perfect obedience. Justification, in its strict and original meaning, is that act of God's abounding grace, whereby he takes away the guilt of his elect, and constitutes them faultless and spotless in the eye of infinite justice, through the death and resurrection of Christ. In this sense believers are said to be *justified from sin*, and to be "justified from all things." In this sense the word is used in that triumphant exclamation of the Apostle, "Who shall lay any thing, to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth:" so that a justified man is one against whom no charge can be righteously brought; and in this respect, justification is ascribed to Jesus' *blood*. But as the humiliation, sufferings, and death of Christ were not only an expiation of iniquity, but also a solemn act of obedience to the law of God, so our righteousness consists not only in deliverance from guilt, as in Psalm, li. 14, and Rom. 4:6, 7, 8., but also in our standing complete in the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

Having thus attempted an explanation of terms, I now proceed to prove that Mr. Fuller's doctrine, as above stated in his own words, is utterly false, being directly opposed to the word of God.

1. The Scripture teaches, as plainly as words can express, that God, in the justification of his people, not only obliterates the effects of their sins, through the blood of the cross, but sin itself; not only does he exempt them from the consequences of their transgressions, but takes away the guilt of their transgressions also.

⁴² Isa. 28:21.

It has been proved that the iniquity of the people was transferred to Christ, and laid on him, so that it will of course follow, that iniquity is no more to be found upon believers, since it was all transferred to Jesus. It is only in this sense that God "hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel."⁴³

To inculcate this all important truth, the Holy Spirit has been pleased to employ many very strong expressions and figures, of which the following are a sample.

(1.) Believers are said, in reference to their justification, to be made "free from sin." Rom. 6:7. The principal part of David's petitions in Psalm 51. relate to this blessing. He does not seem so much concerned to be delivered from the punishment of his sins, as from the guilt of it. But if he had believed that guilt was not transferrable, he would never have prayed for deliverance from it. He had, indeed, murdered Uriah the Hittite, and the guilt of this action distressed his soul. But as the Lord had declared, by the prophet Nathan, that Jehovah had "put away his sin," he was encouraged to pray, v. 14, "deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness." In this petition, David expresses his conviction that the righteousness of God could take away his guilt, and, although his soul was stained with the foul murder of an innocent man, yet he knew that God his Saviour could wash him clean, and render his polluted soul "whiter than snow," v. 7. To this agrees the language of the Apostle when describing the blessedness of believers, he says, the "blood of Christ purges their conscience from dead works;" and accordingly they have "no more conscience of sins," but are become perfect forever in the eye of the law. Heb. 9:14; x. 2,4. This judicial freedom from sin is confirmed and illustrated at large by Paul in his epistle to the Romans, chap. vi. He begins by repelling the charge of licentiousness brought against the doctrines of grace and by establishing the holy tendency of this very truth: "How shall we, that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" He further illustrates the subject, by the holy ordinance of Baptism, and the believer's union to Christ, in his death and resurrection; who, as the surety of many, became free from their sins in his death. "For he that is dead, is freed from sin," or rather *is justified from sin*. He then proceeds to prove that the believer is dead with Christ, and justified with him; and after shewing that this blessedness, so far from leading to licentiousness, is the spring of all true satisfaction, he thus concludes, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

(2.) Believers receive not the remission of *punishment* merely, but also the remission of their *sins*. This blessing, so often spoken of in Scripture, involves pardon, but comprehends more than pardon merely. It implies that sin is put away; 2 Sam. xii. 13. Heb. 9:26. Accordingly, they whose sins are remitted stand no more in need of atonement; for "where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin."⁴⁴ Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness, saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are remitted, and whose sins; are covered, blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." And again it is written, "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive the remission of sins."⁴⁵ And again, "This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for

43 Num. 23:21.

44 Heb. 10:18.

45 Acts 10:43.

many, for the remission of sins."⁴⁶

(3.) The sins of believers are *blotted out*. To blot out, is to obliterate; Mr. Fuller, however, says, that the *effects* only of sin can be obliterated; he denies that *sin itself* is, or can be so. But what saith the Scripture? "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." And, because this is impossible with men, and peculiar to Jehovah himself, it is added, "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."⁴⁷ Agreeable to this, the Psalmist prayed; "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities."⁴⁸ And again it is written, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."⁴⁹ No figure can more strongly express the entire obliteration of all the sins and iniquities of the people of God, than this. As the debt which has been discharged, is obliterated from the creditor's books; or, as the sun dissipates for ever the thick cloud, which, in the morning, appears in an eastern sky, so Jehovah obliterates the sins of his chosen, when he justifies them by his grace. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for my own sake; and will not remember thy sins. Put me in remembrance; let us plead together; declare thou, that thou mayest be justified."

(4.) The sins of the Lord's people are said to be *removed, or taken away* from them, and that in reference to the *guilt* thereof. This, like every other gospel blessing, is taught in the law of Moses. Aaron was commanded to lay his hands upon the head of the scape goat, to confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, putting them upon the head of the goat; and he was commanded to send all away, by the hand of a fit man, into the wilderness. It is then added, "And the goat shall bare upon him all their iniquities, into a land not inhabited; and he shall let go the goat into the wilderness,"⁵⁰ This was a lively type of the "Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world."⁵¹ He taketh away not the *punishment* of sin merely, but *sin itself*; "For, as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."⁵² And without doubt, it is in reference to the Messiah, the Branch, and to His death, as the surety of the guilty, that Jehovah said by the Prophet, "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day,"⁵³ for we know, that "he was manifested to take away our sins."⁵⁴ How, then, can any man who believes the Scriptures say that "sin and righteousness are not in themselves transferable?"

(5.) The efficacy of the blood of Christ is such as to annihilate the iniquities he bore, which comprehends the destruction of sin, in its guilt, power, and awful consequences. Hence the lofty language of the prophet, when predicting that Messiah should be cut off, declares, he shall "finish the transgression, make an end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness;" which is thus explained by the apostle, "When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high;" or, in language still more similar to that of the prophet,

46 Matt. 26:28.

47 Isa. 44:22, 23.

48 Psa. 51:9.

49 Acts 3:19.

50 Lev. 16:22.

51 John 1:29.

52 Psa. 103:12.

53 Zech. 3:9.

54 1 John 3:5.

"but now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Although the Messiah was crucified through weakness, yet his death is always represented as a glorious victory over our sins, which were his chief enemies. How often is he said to come with vengeance, &c. In Isaiah lxiii. he appears returning from the enemies territory with garments dyed in the blood of his foes, declaring at the same time his righteousness and ability to save, having conquered our sins and overcome the world. In Micah vii. 19, the triumphs of Messiah are related, in terms referring to the destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptian host in the Red Sea. "He will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." For as Pharaoh and his host were destroyed in the deep, so the Messiah, it is foretold, would conquer our sins, and annihilate them for ever. In the faith of a triumphant Saviour, holy Zacharias spake, saying, "That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness," &c. And in the enjoyment of this great salvation, the Apostle exclaims, "But now, being made free from sin,⁵⁵ and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end ever lasting life."

If, then, believers are made free from sin; if their sins are remitted; if they are blotted out; if they are removed from them; if they are finished, obliterated, and put away; in fine, if believers are so justified, that neither heaven, earth, nor hell, can righteously lay any thing to their charge—then, that doctrine is false which asserts that sin and righteousness are not transferable, but only in their effects.

2. The Scriptures clearly teach that the righteousness of the Lord Christ is transferred to believers, imparted to them, and received by them. This indeed is so clearly and unequivocally declared in the divine word, that it is marvellous any Protestant should be found denying it. Many of Mr. Fuller's admirers would refuse to believe, on any other evidence than their own senses, that so excellent a man would assert that "righteousness is in itself not transferable, but only its effects;" "that believers, in justification, receive "only the *benefits* or the *effects* of Christ's righteousness, and these only are *imparted* and consequently *received*." He has indeed admitted that Christ's obedience is *imputed*, but we have before learned what he understands by imputation of righteousness; he means nothing more by it "than the transfer of its *effects*, or treating the sinner as *though he were righteous*."⁵⁶ But, alas! what corruption of the gospel is this! What a lamentable instance of handling the word of God deceitfully! How plainly does the Scripture declare that "the righteousness of God is unto all and upon all them that believe;" which cannot be true in any sense, unless this righteousness be transferred to them. With what rapture does the redeemed church express her triumphant faith in this sublime truth when she exclaims, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." In this Scripture the church expresses the ground of her rejoicing, which is not that the *effects* and *benefits* merely, but the righteousness of Christ itself, was transferred and imparted to her, as really as the best robe was transferred to the Prodigal son and received by him. "To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white."

55 i.e., from the guilt of sin, as in v. 7.

56 Memoirs, page 412.

So far is it from being true, that God, in the justification of a sinner, treats him "as though he were righteous," that the Scripture declares in so many words that he constitutes him righteous. And to assert that believers in justification receive only the effects or benefits of Christ's righteousness, amounts to nothing short of a verbal contradiction of the word of God. The apostle in an inspired treatise of justification, in Rom. 5., illustrates the subject at large. He introduces the first Adam as a figure or type of him who was to come. He contrasts the offence of the first man and its abounding, with the gift of righteousness through the second Adam and its abounding. He declares that, as in Adam's one offence, all his seed are guilty; so in the one righteousness of Christ are all Messiah's seed justified. And although the offence hath abounded in the awful reign of death, yet the free grace of God in the gift of righteousness hath much more abounded unto everlasting life. Here we discover that the righteousness of Christ is called *the free gift*, the *gift by grace*, and the *gift of righteousness*: we also learn that it hath *abounded* unto many, that the many *receive* it, and that it *comes upon* them. These expressions, if they mean any thing, mean that the righteousness of Christ is *transferred* for justification, and that the obedience of Christ is imparted to the believer, and received by him, as a robe imparted by the donor, and received by the wearer. "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment⁵⁷ came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift⁵⁸ came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made, or constituted sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be constituted righteous." According to Scripture, therefore, God first constitutes his people righteous, and then treats them as such: he first transfers to them the righteousness of Christ, and then the effects necessarily follow.

"For this Thy boundless favor,
We thank Thee, Lord of heaven;
'Tis through Thy love we daily prove,
Thou hast our sins forgiven.

Ten thousand thanks we render
To Thee, the Lord Jehovah;
For Thou dost bless with righteousness,
Thy bride, the favor'd Beulah."

3. The Scriptures speak abundantly of the glorious state of believers even in this life, considered as justified persons in Christ, which they would not do if believers received only the effects of Christ's righteousness. They are often spoken of as persons who possess a righteousness, and a perfect one; and this righteousness is the cause of their glorious state and exalted character. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn! This is the heritage of the servant of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." It is in reference to her union to the Lord Christ, and her participation of his glorious righteousness, that it is said to Zion, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." The word *'ôr* relates to the rising of the sun, and hence, in the revelations, the church is said to be "clothed with the sun," to express her union to the Lord our righteousness, and her justification in him;

57 i.e., the offence.

58 i.e., righteousness.

"for the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee."

The lofty description which the word of God gives of believers, is scarcely short of blasphemy in the eyes of a natural man. Amidst all their sins and sorrows, and doubt and fears, and weakness and failings, they are *perfect* in the eye of the law; they are *clean*; they are *whiter than snow*. Christ calls them his love, his dove, his *undefiled*, and says, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." Even in this life they have a completeness in him, so as to appear in the court of God without spot. He hath loved them, and *washed them from their sins* in his blood, and therefore he calls them his "undefiled." Hence they are exalted to be priests and kings, through the blood of the Lamb; and shall trample upon sin, and death, and the world, and the curse of the law; as it is written, "in thy righteousness shall they be exalted."

4. The Scriptures represent believers as possessing a *title* to eternal life, in consequence of their justification in the righteousness of Christ. Now this could not be the case if they were not constituted righteous. If God merely treated them *as though* they were righteous, they could possess no *title* to life, nor could it be demanded on the footing of justice. John 17:24. Yet we find the Lord Jesus claiming eternal life for his people, not merely on the ground of his Father's promise, but on the ground of his own righteousness. Indeed this is the foundation of all his intercession for them. Rom. 8:34. He appears in the holiest of all, like a lamb newly slain, and every request founded upon his righteousness is irresistible. The power which the Father hath given him, to bestow eternal life upon his chosen, is nothing but the reward of his righteousness. "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." And as he who sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are both one in the eye of the law, his title to eternal life becomes theirs also. Accordingly he uses the language of confidence, when asking their salvation, "Father, I will that they also whom thou gavest me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory."

One design of the apostle, in his dissertation on this subject in Rom. 5., is to shew that as death is the wages of Adam's offence, so life is the reward of Christ's righteousness. He even ascribes much more efficacy to the latter, than to the former, and argues, that if death reign over all them to whom the offence is imputed, much more shall life attend the imputation of righteousness. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they who receive abundance of grace,⁵⁹ and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Here the apostle assures us that believers receive righteousness as a free gift, flowing from abundant grace, and that, through this righteousness, they are justly entitled to live and reign eternally with Christ; or, as he elsewhere expresses it, "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life." Hence the heavenly bliss is called "the hope of righteousness;" and to this agree the words of Isaiah, "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness shall be quietness and assurance forever." Indeed, eternal life is represented in Scripture, as the just reward of Christ's righteousness, freely given, and freely received, as much so as, yea and much more than, the reign of death is the just reward of Adam's offence; "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

59 i.e., who are the objects of abundant mercy.

If the sins of believers are blotted out, obliterated, and put away; if the righteousness of Christ is transferred to them, and this entitles them to reign in life with him, then it will follow that those who are engaged, from one Lord's day to another, in teaching that "neither sin nor righteousness are in themselves transferable;" that believers in justification, "receive only the *benefits or effects* of Christ's righteousness," are false witnesses for God, and are engaged in speaking lies in the name of the Lord. And it should never be forgotten, that although the heavenly Comforter, the Holy Ghost, is the author of all meekness, and in his influences he is compared to a dove, yet he has inspired his servants, the prophets, to write the severest things against those who "utter error against the Lord, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and cause the drink of the thirsty to fail." And, notwithstanding all the pretensions of such men to universal charity and liberality of sentiment, he exposes the secret iniquity of their hearts, and calls them by very foul names. He calls them *liars*, and *churls*, and *vile persons* and *workers of iniquity* because they "devise wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right." In perfect accordance with this, was the conduct of our Lord. His whole character was made up of meekness, kindness, and love; yet how severe were his invectives against those builders, the Scribes and Pharisees. In this also he is imitated, in measure, by all his faithful disciples, whom he has so earnestly warned to "beware of false prophets who come in sheep's clothing." For in the same proportion believers are humbled with spiritual discoveries of the divine glory in the grand plan of salvation, will their holy zeal be inflamed against every corruption of the gospel, so as not to bear them that are evil, not even to receive them unto their house, nor to bid them God's speed.

I shall recapitulate the substance of what has been urged above, on the subject of free justification, in the following arguments.

Arg. 1. If sin and righteousness be not in themselves transferable, but only their effects; if believers receive only the *benefits* of Christ's righteousness; and if sin itself cannot be obliterated, then it follows that there is no such thing as the *justification* of a sinner. Pardon there may be, but justification there cannot be; and, consequently, the apostle was egregiously mistaken when he uttered those memorable words, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."

Arg. 2. If God, in the justification of a sinner, merely accounts him righteous, and treats him as such, when, in reality, he is not so, then his judgment is not according to truth. But far be this from our God. Justice and judgment are the basis of his throne. He hath declared, that he will lay righteousness to the line, and judgment to the plummet. He will not in judgment either condemn the innocent or clear the guilty. If, therefore, he accounts any of Adam's race righteous, it is because he has first *constituted* them so.

It is with much pleasure I quote the sound words of Mr. Hervey on this subject, in his letters to Mr. John Wesley. The latter had asserted that "God through Christ, first *accounts*, and then *makes* us righteous." To this Mr. Hervey replies. "How? Does God account us righteous before he makes us so? Then his judgment is not according to truth. Then he reckons us to be righteous, when we are really otherwise. Is not this absolutely irreconcilable with our ideas of the Supreme Being, and equally incompatible with the doctrines of Scripture? There we are taught that God *justifieth the ungodly*. Mark the words. *The ungodly* are the objects of the divine justification. But can he account the ungodly righteous?"

Impossible! How then does he act? He first makes them righteous. After what manner? By imputing to them the righteousness of his dear Son. Then he pronounces them righteous, and most truly. He treats them as righteous, and most justly. In short, then, he absolves them from guilt; adopts them for his children, and makes them heirs of his eternal kingdom."⁶⁰

Arg. 3. If God merely deals with his people *as though they were* righteous when he bestows eternal life upon them, then mercy indeed may be displayed, but justice cannot be satisfied. Justice requires equally, that the guilty should die, and that the righteous should live. If guilt cannot be obliterated, but the "desert of the criminal remains," then righteousness and truth forbid that he should live: but if the sinner be constituted righteous, then, as such, justice forbids that he should die. In judgment, justice does not merely *admit* of these effects, but it *requires* them. Accordingly, a believer is "passed from death unto life," in a judicial or forensic sense, because he has received that great blessing which is called "justification of life."

This wondrous display of justice and mercy constitutes the very glory of the gospel, and renders it infinitely superior to any thing that ever entered into the mind of man to conceive. For "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." In the plan of salvation, infinite justice and infinite mercy, sweetly harmonize. Mercy is not displayed at the expense of righteousness, nor is justice so displayed as to obscure the glory of sovereign mercy; but in the wondrous scheme of redemption, justice goes forth in all its brightness; and mercy as a lamp that burneth. They are greatly mistaken who imagine that if salvation be a matter of justice, no room is left for the exercise of free, unmerited mercy. Such objectors forget that those who receive the gift of righteousness, do so in consequence of abounding grace. In all the mysterious plan grace reigns. But how does it a reign? Through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

FOURTH. Another doctrine, clearly ascertained in the word of God, with which Mr. Fuller's views are entirely at variance, is the *federal union of Christ and his people*. By federal union, I mean that covenant, or representative union, which subsists between Christ and his elect, prior to their believing in him, and which is the foundation of vital union to him. There is a sense in which the chosen of God are not in Christ until renewed by his grace, Rom. 16:7; when by faith and love he dwells in them, and they dwell in him; and this has been rightly termed *vital union*. But there is another kind of union, which subsisted between Christ and his elect, in every step of his meditorial work, and in every act of his most glorious redemption; so that when he obeyed they obeyed in him, when he died they died in him, and when he rose they rose in him. This union is the foundation of all the benefits which believers ever did, or ever will receive from the death of Christ; and this union, by whatever other name it may be called, is what I mean by *federal union*. It is necessary that I should first prove the doctrine itself; and then show how Mr. Fuller's views are opposed to it though I do not find that he directly notices it in his "Dialogues. &c."

One design of the apostle, in this chain of reasoning throughout Rom. 5., is to establish this important doctrine. He introduces the two Adams, as the covenant or federal heads of their respective seeds. He insists upon the union of the first Adam and all his seed, so that when he fell, they all fell in him; and when he committed the offence, judgment came upon

60 Letters to Wesley. Letter 10.

them, because of their federal union unto him. Now Adam was a figure or type of him that was to come. As Adam and his seed stood or fell together, so is it with the Lord Christ and his seed. For as when the one federal head offended, the offence came upon all men whom he represented; so, when the second Adam obeyed, righteousness came upon all the men whom he represented. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." All this proceeds upon the supposition of union, and of *federal* union; for, unless union subsisted at the time Adam's offence was committed, justice would forbid that the offence should be imputed to all men. Yet we know that death reigns, even over them who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; even so, because of the union of the second Adam and his seed when he obeyed, righteousness is imputed to them all, and they reign in life, although, in their own persons, they have never perfectly obeyed the law. Accordingly we find it clearly taught in Scripture, that Christ and his people are one; he the head, they the members; and that, in the eye of the law, they were one body when he obeyed, died, and rose. "Thy dead man shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise." In this Scripture we are taught, that those for whom Christ died are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones;" that federally they died with him, revived with him, and rose with him. And this will appear more fully, if we consider that the words *together with*, are a suppliance, and that the text may more literally be thus rendered, "Thy dead men shall live, even my dead body shall they arise," the meaning of which is thus explained by the apostle; "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins; hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." That this refers to *federal* union is clear; for believers are not yet exalted in *their own persons*, to sit in heavenly places; but having a representative existence in Christ, they sat down there with him, when he entered into the holiest, and took his seat at the right hand of God, in the highest heavens. And in reference to this federal union, believers are said to be crucified with Christ, dead with him, buried with him, and justified in him, and raised up together with him. For that spiritual or vital union to Christ, which believers enjoy by faith, is the effect of this federal union, as the word of God abundantly teaches. "We thus judge," says the apostle, "that if one died for all, then were all dead;" that is, if one died as the covenant head, or representative of all, then all died in that one. This is federal union. "And that he died for all, that they who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again." Whereby the apostle teaches, that because Christ died as the representative of all his covenant seed, the spirit causes them to die unto sin, through his death, and to live unto him, through his resurrection. This will appear still clearer, if we consider Paul's prayer for the believing Ephesians, that they might know the mystery of the Spirit's work on their hearts, and understand how it corresponds with the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. "That ye may know, what is the exceeding greatness of his power, to usward who believe, ACCORDING to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." Here we see that the work of the Holy Ghost, in the hearts of the saints, which produces spiritual union to Christ in his death and resurrection, is a work corresponding with the work wrought in Christ himself, and is the necessary effect of it. This is the mystery which the apostle himself desired, above all things to comprehend. "That I may know him, and the POWER of his resurrection, and the FELLOWSHIP of his sufferings, being made CONFORMABLE unto his death."

The doctrine of *federal* union as the foundation of *vital* or spiritual union to Christ, has been acknowledged by most writers who have firmly maintained eternal and personal election; but it is gratifying to know that the Lord's people, who are more remarkable for their attachment to the first principles of the gospel, than to the deeper doctrines of it, have been led to see that their salvation depends upon this very thing.

Mr. John Bunyan, in the account he has given of the Lord's dealings with him, has recorded, with artless simplicity, the establishment of his soul in this most glorious truth. "Now I saw," says he, "that Christ Jesus was looked upon of God, and should be looked upon by us, as that common or public person, in whom all the whole body of his elect are always to be considered and reckoned; that we fulfilled the law by him, died by him, rose from the dead by him, got the victory over sin, death, the devil, and hell, by him; when he died, we died, and so of his resurrection. 'Thy dead men shall live,' &c. saith he. And again, 'after two days he will revive us, and the third day we shall live in his sight;' which is now fulfilled, by the sitting down of the Son of Man at the right hand of the Majesty of the heavens; according to that to Ephesians, 'He hath raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' Ah! these blessed considerations and Scriptures, with many others of like nature, were in those days made to spangle in mine eye; so that I have cause to say, 'Praise ye the Lord in his sanctuary, praise him in the firmament of his power; praise him for his mighty acts, praise him according to his excellent greatness.'"⁶¹

But, alas! these soul-comforting considerations, which have supported the drooping and afflicted saints in all ages, are not true, unless Mr. Fuller's sentiments are false. They cannot stand, if it be true that the atonement of Christ is indefinite, or that Christ died for sin abstractedly. But if the Scripture most clearly teaches that Christ died as the federal head of his chosen, and that their salvation depends upon their *federal* union to him when he died and rose again; then the absurd notion that the atonement of Christ was *intended* only for some men, but is *sufficient* for all mankind will fall to the ground.

FIFTH. The Scripture clearly discovers a necessary connection between the death of Christ, and the conversion or faith of those for whom he died; that is, the death of Christ hath *obtained* faith, repentance, and every grace of the Spirit, for those who are interested in it. Many of our English writers, especially the old ones, have used the term *purchase*, in this sense; and have often said that Christ by his death, *purchased* faith, repentance, and the Spirit for his elect. Now, although there are reasons why the term purchase should not be used in reference to these things, yet what those writers meant by the term is a doctrine fully ascertained in the word of God. Without, therefore, dwelling upon words, the scriptural doctrine, that a necessary connection subsists between the death of Christ and the conversion of his redeemed, is entirely set aside by the doctrine of Mr. Fuller. It must appear plainly to every one who considers the subject, that if Christ so died for *sin* as to open a way for the efflux of divine mercy to millions of sinners, or only to one sinner, according as the sovereign pleasure of God shall decree; then it will follow, that whatever connection there, may be between the *purpose* of God and the conversion of millions, there can be none between the *death of Christ* and their conversion: for, according to their scheme, one sinner only might have been saved by the death of Christ. It is only necessary, therefore, to prove that there is such a connection, and that the faith and repentance of the ransomed is secured most

61 Grace abounding, &c.

infallibly, by the blood of the Redeemer; and then the scheme of indefinite atonement will appear to be entirely false.

It has been proved that a federal union subsisted between Christ and his elect, when he died and rose again; and also that their vital, or spiritual union to him, is the effect of his dying and rising again for them. When the apostle says that the exceeding power displayed in believers is *according* to the power wrought in Christ, he means, not only that there is a *similitude* between these two instances of Almighty power, but also that there is a *connection*; and that faith is the necessary effect of the resurrection of Christ. The power of the Spirit towards them that believe, and its connection with the work of Christ, is thus illustrated by an excellent writer. "After that christians are joined to Christ, and made mystically bone in his bone, and flesh of his flesh, Christ worketh of them effectually by his Holy Spirit, and his works are principally three. First, he causeth his own death to work effectually the death of all sins, and to kill the power of the flesh. Secondly, his burial causeth the burial of sins as it were in a grave. Thirdly, his resurrection sendeth quickening power into them, and serveth to make them rise out of their sin in which they were dead and buried, to work righteousness, and to live in holiness of life."⁶² But the Spirit operates thus upon none but those who federally died and rose with Christ, otherwise the harmony of the Sacred Three, in the execution of salvation, would be destroyed, and the regeneration of a believer would no longer correspond with the resurrection of Christ. But that he does thus work upon all for whom Christ died, and *because* he died for them, is evident from the following considerations.

1. The new birth, and the sanctification of a sinner, are plainly ascribed to this, as the procuring cause, namely, that Christ died for that sinner. Thus Christ "gave himself for his church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word."⁶³ And again, the apostle says, "Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people."⁶⁴ Here we are taught not only that there is a connection between the death of Christ and the regeneration of those for whom he died, but also that his death is the *meritorious* cause thereof.

2. The deliverance of the people of God from the slavery of sin and Satan, is said expressly to have been *obtained* for them by the death of Christ:—"He entered in once, into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."⁶⁵ This redemption, which is said to have been obtained, comprehends entire deliverance from all bondage, and includes the gift of the Spirit. So that there is a meritorious power in the death of Christ to secure these blessings to all for whom he died.

3. Faith, and consequently other spiritual blessings, are freely given on the *behalf* of Christ, or *for the sake* of his death; which clearly shows a necessary connection between them. "Unto you it is given on the behalf of Christ—to believe in him."⁶⁶ Accordingly we find that the exalted Saviour hath received of the Father power to bestow spiritual blessings upon his redeemed. Psa. 68:18. Comp. Acts ii. 33. And the reasoning of the apostle in another place, on this subject, is very convincing, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us

62 Perkin's Estate of a Christian, sec. 33.

63 Eph. 5:26.

64 Titus 2:14.

65 Heb. 9:12.

66 Phil. 1:29.

all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"⁶⁷ Here we learn that all spiritual blessings—faith, repentance, sanctification, &c. are involved in the gift of Christ, and bestowed for his sake; that for whom God delivers up Christ, much more to them, will he bestow these. Now, if God gave his Son for all mankind, he will with him freely bestow (not merely offer, but freely give,) to all mankind, faith, repentance, and every spiritual blessing; but this we know he does not. Yet if God gave his Son for all his elect, he will also with him give them inferior blessings—faith, repentance, &c.; and this we know he does. But if God delivered up his Son to die for sin *indefinitely*, then there is no reason, arising from the death of Christ, why God should bestow spiritual blessings on any of the human race.

4. The Scripture distinctly ascertains the conversion of *many* transgressors, and assigns this as the reason, that Christ bear the iniquities of *many*. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify MANY; for he shall bear THEIR iniquities."⁶⁸ If we ask, therefore, why any of the sons of men are justified by faith, or by the knowledge of Christ, the answer is, because he bare their iniquities. It is impossible that only *one sinner* should be saved by the atonement of Christ, if he bare the sins of many; and it is equally impossible that the whole world should be saved by his death, unless he bare the sins of every man; because there exists a necessary connection between Christ bearing the sins of a transgressor, and the justification of that transgressor by faith. In this view, there is a glorious harmony in the plan of salvation throughout; and divine sovereignty shines in the redemption of Christ in all its transcendent glory. It is far from being true, that one sinner only might have been saved by the atonement of Christ, for "God will give his Son a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong." The reason is, he bare the sin of *many*, and died for *many*, and made intercession for *many*; and such is the merit of his death, that God will surely give him the *many* for whom he died.

5. The Scripture teaches that men are converted, or brought to Zion, in consequence of their having been redeemed. Their redemption by blood, secures their salvation by power: and because Christ hath redeemed them by his blood, he claims them, *ipso facto*, as his own. Therefore they are called the "ransomed of the Lord." "For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. THEREFORE they shall come and sing in the height of Zion."⁶⁹ "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and shall come to Zion with songs."⁷⁰ "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

Thus it appears that there is a necessary connection between the vicarious death of Christ, and the conversion of those for whom he died, which cannot be the else if the atonement be indefinite.

SIXTH. The last error I shall charge upon Mr. Fuller's principles is one which is not openly avowed in his writings, but which follows as a deduction from his general sentiments: namely, that *not the obedience of Christ, but the act of believing, is imputed to us for righteousness*. This is, in short, neither more nor less than a revival of the Neonomian error, which error consists principally in the following doctrine; viz., "That Christ, having satisfied

67 Rom. 8:32.

68 Isa. 53:11, 12.

69 Jer. 31:11, 12.

70 Isa. 35:10.

for the breach of the old law of works, hath procured and given a new law, a remedial law, which is the gospel, containing precepts, promises and threatening, and which saith, DO AND LIVE, in some milder sense than the first covenant. That faith in Christ is the principal part of that obedience which is required by the new law, and this is accepted for righteousness, instead of that perfect unceasing obedience, which the law of ten commands requires."⁷¹ This is the marrow of what has been called Neonomianism; which doctrine, as to substance, is taught in the writings of Mr. Baxter, of the Arminians, and of the most learned of the Roman Catholics. It remains, however, to be proved, that it is substantially taught in the writings of Mr. Fuller; and for this purpose I urge the following reasons.

1. All the efficacy unto justification which Mr. Fuller allows to the obedience and death of Christ is, that the Redeemer merited this great blessing for us, on the conditions of our believing the gospel; or, in other words, that the blood of Christ hath merited salvation for us, on milder terms than those required by the law of works. Mr. Fuller expressly teaches that "there is such a fulness in the satisfaction of Christ, as is sufficient for the salvation of the whole world, were the whole world to believe on him." "Now this '*fulness*' does not absolutely secure the salvation of the whole world, but only on certain terms;" accordingly it follows, that not the obedience of Christ itself is the *matter of* our justification, but our performance of the condition; for Christ hath only so merited that we should be justified on *condition* of our *obedience to the gospel*.

2. It has been proved that according to Mr. Fuller's views, the death of Christ is not vicarious; and if not his death, so also is not his obedience to the law. If Christ did not die in the *stead* of his elect, but only made an indefinite atonement for sin, it will follow that his obedience to the law was not for them, or in *their stead*, any more than his death. This being admitted, it will follow, moreover, that Christ's obedience cannot be *that very thing* which justifies a sinner, because it is necessary that Christ should be constituted a covenant head of all his people, and act as their representative ere his obedience can be imputed to them for justification. Rom. 5:14, 19. But as this is denied, it must follow, that not the *obedience* of Christ, but our *believing* is counted to us for righteousness.

3. We have before seen that Mr. Fuller denies the *transfer* of the Redeemer's obedience to the sinner as a thing impossible; Dialogues, &c. page 211. and 213.] and if so, it must follow of course that this obedience cannot be *the very thing* that justifies the sinner. Mr. Fuller does indeed speak of "the obedience of Christ *imputed*," but by this expression he only means that the *effects* of Christ's obedience are conditionally imparted, and which is saying no more than the Redeemer's obedience has *merited* our pardon, on condition of our believing; and more than this, no intelligent Arminian or Neonomian would desire.

4. The conditional sufficiency for the justification of the whole world, which Mr. Fuller ascribes to the work of Christ, places all the efficacy thereof in the *act of believing*. It is sufficient for the whole world if they believe; it is not sufficient if they do not believe; so that all the stupendous acts of Christ's mediatorial work, are, as it respects our salvation, only so many cyphers, and our believing is the initial figure which renders the whole of value! What is this, but to ascribe our justification to *faith* as that which constitutes us righteous, on easier terms than perfect obedience to the law?

71 See the preface to Beart's Eternal Law, &c.

In opposition to this doctrine, all sound Protestants have maintained that the elect of God are made righteous only by the obedience of the Lord Christ, and that this is *the very thing* which constitutes a sinner just in the eyes of the Lord. They have maintained constantly that Jesus Christ, as the representative and surety of his chosen, satisfied divine justice, and obeyed the holy law, for *them*, and in *their stead*; and that not their believing, but his most glorious righteousness imputed and transferred to them, is the very thing which constitutes them righteous. They have also maintained that the people of God are justified by faith, not as the procuring cause of justification, but only as an instrument by which the righteousness of Christ is received; so that not the act of believing, but the thing believed, is counted to the faithful for righteousness. That these are sound and wholesome words will appear from the following considerations.

1. The holy law of God is satisfied with nothing short of perfect obedience: and this must be yielded either in our own persons, or in the person of the great Surety, it ever we are justified. Now, if faith itself were reckoned to us for righteousness, a sincere obedience would be accepted in the stead of a perfect obedience; and thus the holy law, instead of being fulfilled, would be destroyed. He, therefore, who teaches that our believing is counted for righteousness, seeks to establish Antinomianism of the most dangerous description. Christ came not to destroy the law, nor to deprive it of its righteous demands, but to fulfil it as the representative of his chosen: and in the salvation of all his redeemed, the law is in all respects honored, its demands are completely satisfied, and in its most extensive latitude it is fulfilled.

2. The Lord Christ, by his obedience and blood, hath either satisfied the law for his people, or he has not. If he has, then it must necessarily follow that his obedience alone is the matter of their justification or in other words, it is the very thing which makes them righteous. If he has not, then their own obedience to the gospel, or their believing, never can make them righteous, because the law still insists upon an obedience absolutely perfect and sinless, and it cannot be satisfied until this is yielded.

3. The Scripture clearly testifies, that the believer's righteousness is the Lord Jesus himself. "And this is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness."⁷² Now, if Christ himself be our righteousness the act of believing cannot be so.

4. If the act of believing were our righteousness, then the true nature of faith would be destroyed. It is the business of faith to look for righteousness, not in itself, but in another; and it consists in the bare reception of Lord Christ. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities."

5. The word of God plainly distinguishes between the righteousness by which a sinner is justified, and the faith which receives that righteousness. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith."⁷³ "And why," says a learned and judicious writer, "is it called the righteousness of God? Because the righteousness of man is insufficient. And why a righteousness *revealed*, but because it was *another's*? For our own is known by nature, and is never said to be revealed. But this heavenly

⁷² Jer. 23:6.

⁷³ Rom. 1:17.

righteousness is altogether above sense and reason; and therefore, if it is not revealed, men are always disputing against it. And why revealed *to faith*, from one degree of it to another? Even because *faith itself*, or any work whatsoever, is not that which it justifies; nor can any thing else take it in, and close with it but faith."⁷⁴ Thus it appears that the *very thing* which constitutes a believer righteous, is not any inherent holiness of which he is the subject, nor any works of his own, either legal or evangelical, whether performed with the help of divine grace, or in his own strength; but that which makes the sinner just, is the alone work of Christ, finished on the cross, imputed to all for whom it was accomplished, and received by faith alone. This is the grand article of Christianity, the glory of the gospel, and the very foundation of Zion.⁷⁵ A departure from this is the grand apostacy so often spoken of in the New Testament, whence all the abominations of popery arise; and that church, whatever be its denomination which departs from this foundation principle, is anti-christian in the sight of God.

I have now laid before you what I have to advance in proof of the serious charge I preferred against Mr. Fuller's principles, in the commencement of this letter; namely, that they are subversive of nearly all the great doctrines connected with redemption through the blood of Jesus. Notwithstanding the speciousness and plausibility of his sentiments, they admit of an easy and triumphant confutation, because of their palpable opposition to the word of God. They comprehend all that is poisonous in universal redemption, without the same *appearance* of support from the Scriptures; and it would not be difficult to show their striking coincidence with the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church on the subjects of justification, grace and satisfaction. Indeed, it is much to be feared that the very soul of popery, in its refined and most delusive parts, is flourishing amongst us, so that we need no longer to wonder at the great decay of vital godliness which everywhere prevails, at the loss of faith and love, or at the carnal policy, the worldly-mindedness, the dead profession, which are too visible in the churches. Wherever the doctrine of imputed righteousness is given up, or held only in name, there Christ will be lightly esteemed, and human worthiness will stand exalted; there will a worldly profession obtain, and there will anti-christian principles and practices appear. And what is popery, but a *profession of christianity adapted to the course of this world?*

In my next letter I shall pursue this subject more fully, in which I shall endeavor to trace the operation of Mr. Fuller's sentiments, and to show their effects as exemplified in the sad decline of true holiness in our denomination. With that letter I shall conclude all I have to submit to your consideration on this very important controversy.

LETTER IV.

DIVINE truth, when cordially received, always produces effects corresponding to its own nature. No man who has beheld the divine glory shining in the atonement of Christ, and who has found salvation therein, can possibly exhibit, in his own character and habitual

⁷⁴ Beart's Eternal Law, &c., part 1. chap. 5.

⁷⁵ Isa. 54:14.

conduct, the dominion of principles that are the very reverse of the gospel which he has received. It is impossible for a genuine believer to be an unjust man, because he has seen in the cross of Christ, such a display of divine justice, as hath transformed his own mind into the same image. Such a one cannot be an unmerciful or an implacable man, because he has beheld in the atonement, the highest display of divine compassion towards his guilty soul; and accordingly as he is influenced by the discovery, will he be kind and tender-hearted towards others, ready to forgive injuries, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven him. A true Christian cannot be a deceitful man or a liar, because his mind has been deeply affected by the character of Jehovah, as it appears in the grand plan of salvation; he has been taught to admire the truth and faithfulness of his redeeming God, and in some measure he exhibits the same character, agreeably to the apostolic exhortation, "Be ye followers, (or imitators,) of God, as dear children." In fine, a believer in Jesus cannot live under the dominion of sin, for as the seal makes its own impression on the melted wax, so does divine truth, in the hand of the Spirit, on the mind of a sinner, when his heart is softened by the melting of divine grace; "but ye have obeyed from the heart, that form of doctrine, whereunto ye were delivered."⁷⁶

Of all the presumptuous sins which may be charged upon religious people, in this day of flaming profession, none is more awful than their charging the doctrines of grace with a licentious tendency. To assert that the truths of eternal election, free justification, imputed righteousness, efficacious redemption, and invincible grace in regeneration, lead to carelessness and an ungodly life, is to sin with a very high hand indeed. How odious soever the loose principles of the Sadducees may be, or the gross practices of publicans and harlots, the iniquity of these is far surpassed by the spiritual wickedness of self-righteous persons, who discover the enmity of their hearts against sovereign grace, in a similar manner to those referred to by the apostle in Rom. 3:8: "We be slanderously reported, and some affirm that we say, let us do evil that good may come; whose damnation is just." But this unrighteous reflection upon the distinguishing truths of the gospel, is not confined to the open opposers thereof. Many who profess attachment to the doctrines of sovereign grace do not fully and openly exhibit them, lest evil consequences should be the result. If they assert them at all, it is in so guarded a manner as betrays a secret suspicion that such doctrines are injurious in their tendency. But if those prudent men, who are so careful to *guard* the gospel, really believe that the open declaration of the doctrines thereof is dangerous, why do they profess attachment to them? Surely the doctrines which require to be thus guarded, are in themselves mischievous and can not be of God!

The apostles, however, did not deal thus with the gospel of Christ, nor act so deceitfully. Having received mercy, they renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, and by *manifestations of the truth* they commended themselves to every man's conscience. They always represented the truths of God as holy in their nature, and holy in their effects. All these truths, in the estimation of the apostles exhibit the glory of Jesus, and consequently furnish an argument for universal holiness. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image."⁷⁷

But as truth always produces effects corresponding to its own nature, so also doth error: and as the fruit of the former is holiness, the effect of the latter is unrighteousness.

⁷⁶ Rom. 6:17.

⁷⁷ 2 Cor. 3:18.

Hence the apostle contrasts the truth, not merely with error, but with iniquity: "Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;"⁷⁸ For a deviation from the truth is itself iniquity. The pernicious influence of error on the conduct of its votaries, appears in the instance of the ancient Pharisees, who are set forth as an example of that bitter opposition to the free and sovereign grace of God which self-righteous persons in all ages discover. It appears also in the character of the legal teacher who troubled the primitive churches; and, subsequently, in the effects produced by the great apostasy, so often foretold in the New Testament, which began by a *departure from the faith*. 1 Tim. iv. 1. But as erroneous principles produce unholy fruits wherever they prevail, so the influence of the false doctrine adverted to in the preceding letters may be plainly perceived in the Baptist churches of the present day. Nothing can be more applicable to our present condition than the words of the excellent Dr. Owen, when lamenting the day of evangelical holiness to his own time. Referring no doubt to the influence of Mr. Baxter's sentiments, he says, "Little did I think I should ever have lived in this world to find the minds of professors grown altogether indifferent, as to the doctrine of God's eternal election, the sovereign efficacy of grace in the conversion of sinners, justification by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ; but many are as to all these things grown to an indifferency, they know not whether they are so or not. I bless God, I know something of the former generation, when professors would not hear of these things without the highest detestation: and now high professors begin to be leaders in it, and it is too much amongst the best of us. We are not so much concerned for the truth as our forefathers; I wish I could say we were as holy."

Thus did this eminent saint mourn over the spiritual declension which began to appear among the Pedobaptist churches in his own times; but if he had lived in this day, and had intended to contrast the present with the former Baptist churches, he could not have used more appropriate language than he has done, in following exhortation: "Let us carefully remember the faith of them who went before us in this nation, in the profession of the last age. And, pray, what faith were they of? Were they half Arminian and half Socinian? were they half Papist and half I know not what? Remember how zealous they were for the truth; how little their holy souls would have borne with those public defections from the doctrine of truth, which we see and do not mourn over, but make nothing of the days wherein we live. God was with them, and they lived to his glory, and died in peace, whose faith follow and example pursue, and remember the faith they lived and died in. *Look round about and see whether any of the new creeds have produced a new holiness to exceed theirs.*"

The pernicious consequences of such a departure from the truth as the Baptist churches are generally chargeable with, may be discerned in the following instances:

FIRST. *A certain kind of insincerity and dissimulation usually attends the reception and the preaching of a perverted gospel.* Simplicity is the characteristic of truth, artfulness and tortuous winding are attendant on falsehood. As in natural things, he who is guilty of one untruth, must invent many falsehoods to conceal that one; so in spiritual matters, a departure from the simplicity which is in Christ, is marked by a course of craftiness and deceit. Our Lord assures us that the leaven, i.e. the doctrine of the Pharisees, is *hypocrisy*,⁷⁹ and his faithful

⁷⁸ 1 Cor. 13:6.

⁷⁹ Luke 11:1.

apostle calls the legal teachers "false apostles, deceitful workers."⁸⁰ Hypocrisy and unjust power are the very support of error and of antichrist, so that the power and grace of Jesus are displayed in delivering the souls of his saints from deceit and violence.

But this spirit of dissimulation has appeared visibly in the conduct of many, from whom better things might have been expected. A disposition to conceal their real sentiments, especially at such times as do not suit their purpose to advance them, and a professed attachment to doctrines which they do not heartily receive, may be often observed in many who have imbibed Mr. Fuller's sentiments. They profess to maintain *inviolably* the doctrines of eternal personal election, free justification, and efficacious grace in regeneration; yet in their public discourses these important points are seldom ever advanced, or if they are mentioned occasionally, for the sake of an orthodox reputation, it is in such a manner as shews the preacher does not cordially receive those truths nor heartily approve them. Such persons know well which way the stream of popular approbation runs; and while they bear a rooted aversion towards an honest witness for the doctrines they themselves allow, they can openly countenance the avowed foes of sovereign electing grace. The excellent and judicious Mr. Brine has drawn lively and so faithful a figure of such persons, that I feel it almost incumbent on me to quote his words.

The secret enemies of divine truth are numerous, from whom many temptations arise.

Men of his character very rarely are open and frank in declaring their sentiments. They choose to lie concealed as to their notions, until such time as they have been able to ingratiate themselves into the good opinion of those whom they intend to bring over to their sentiments. And very watchful they are for every opportunity and advantage which offer, that are favourable to their design, nor will they fail of improving them to the utmost. Doctrines which they have no relish for, it may be some in their congregations firmly believed, and therefore they dare not at once, and in plain manner, deny them; but by long silence about them, and now and then advancing principles not consistent with them, they insensibly instil them into the minds of their hearers, and draw them off from that regard they once paid to those other principles. It is very sad what influence such conduct hath had, and still hath in many places, I had almost said to the total subversion of Christianity. And in others, this sort of demeanor is very likely to be productive of the same dreadful effects. May the good Lord have mercy upon his churches, and preserve them from being seduced by these men, who *lie in wait to deceive*. If Christians are not excited to watchfulness against them, by their insinuation and address, whereof they are perfect masters, they will be in great danger of being drawn aside. For men are completely qualified from that kind of disservice to the church of God whereunto they have devoted themselves, and unto which they direct all their studies.

This sort of persons frequently declaim much against controversy in religion, and against insisting on controverted points, because, as they are pleased to say, it tends to fill men's heads with niceties and speculative notions, which have no

80 2 Cor. 11:13.

great influence on their morals to make them better; and that it is certainly best to treat on plain and practical subjects, which are calculated to promote holiness. By this means they bring their hearers to be content without discourses on the important truths of the gospel, all which are controverted points, until at length they become indifferent about them, and greatly prejudiced against them.

Then the fit time being come for them to be *open* and *unreserved*, they throw off the mask, and can dare to enter upon the stage of controversy and with downright blows oppose those doctrines they never believed, but till now were shy of letting it be known. Now they become zealous defenders of principles which before they but whispered softly in the ears of some trusty friends. In this their success they glory, as if it were a very honorable achievement. Let them expect their reward from him whose servants they pretend to be.⁸¹

SECOND. *The direct tendency of a "yea and nay" gospel is to produce a worldly profession of Christianity.* Every attempt to render the gospel more acceptable to men, by softening down any of its offensive doctrines, is in itself an act of conformity to the world in the very worst form. The command of God is, "let them return unto thee; but return not unto them."⁸² The offence of the cross never can cease in this world, but by a corruption of the doctrines thereof; and wherever such corruption exists, conformity to the world in other respects will proportionately prevail. "True Christianity is," as an acute writer has observed, "an insult on the taste of the public; yea, the most respectable part of the public, and that in the most important matters." This, it is evident, must always be the case, so long as that which is "highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." While a church of Christ is keeping the word of his patience, and faithfully holding forth the doctrines of the cross, it will meet with sufficient reproach from the world to illustrate those consolatory words, "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Romans viii. 17.

But if it be true that all who live godly in Christ Jesus *shall suffer persecution*, what must we think of Mr. Fuller's reflection on the older Baptist churches, comparing them *almost to a perfect dunghill in society*? A censure like this can have weight with those only who know not the nature of Jesus' kingdom. Such censure is in fact a commendation: it was intended indeed for a curse, but God hath turned it into a blessing. If the older churches were despised, they had fellowship with their Lord in his sufferings; and the joyful hope of reigning with him at last induced them to reject with abhorrence the only method of escaping the cross, namely a *compromise of the truth*. The very little reproach which now attends our profession proves not that the world is better disposed towards Christ than it was, but rather that our profession is lifeless and that we are conformed to the world. Were an inspired apostle to appear amongst us from the dead, he would cry out against some of our most *popular* ministers and our most *respectable* churches, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship the world is enmity with God?"

But as in a bodily consumption the patient often indulges flattering expectations, and is not alive to his real danger, so is it in spiritual declension. *Grey* hairs are here and there upon us, yet we know it not, nor will we believe it. It is a sure mark of the Laodicean state, when we

81 Treatises on various subjects, 8vo. 1756, p. 324.

82 Jer. 15:19.

talk more of what we have done for God, than of what he hath done for us, and when our minds are occupied rather with our own splendid exertions to promote the kingdom of Christ, than with his most glorious person and work. We dream that we are rich and increased with goods, but we know not that we are poor and miserable. In how many instances are we elated with our respectability, our wealth, our influence and with the great things we have done for the Lord in missionary exertions! How often is it publicly declared from a stage or a pulpit that our forefathers were asleep; that their missionary zeal was contemptible in comparison with ours; and that there never was such a day of wonderful works as at the present! But who, that knows what primitive Christianity is, cannot discern an awful declension of spirituality amongst us? Who that is taught of God cannot perceive that our flaming zeal is perfectly compatible with opposition to the righteousness of God and to the sovereignty of his grace?

If it be inquired wherein consists that worldly profession of Christianity which the prevalence of Mr. Fuller's principles has promoted amongst us, the answer is given in the following facts:

1. The precious truths of the gospel which were once the glory of our churches, and which always expose the professors of them to reproach, are now very rarely heard amongst us. Covenant engagements, precious promises, eternal election, immutable love, free pardon, and complete justification, are subjects seldom insisted on. We still profess these things in our circular letter, but the open preaching of them is judged by no means expedient, and, as is taught, can answer no other end than to discourage practical religion, and to bring us into disrepute. Instead of those glorious truths of which the apostle Paul has given a catalogue, in Ephesians, chapters i. and ii., as constituting the substance of his own preaching, human piety, human worthiness, human greatness, and human influence stand exalted, so that the glory of Jesus is eclipsed amongst us. It affords no small proof that we have left our first love, when we grow cold towards the doctrines of grace, and when human excellence occupies so high a place in our esteem. And it is remarkable that our very *missionary fire* is of such a nature, as to be extinguished, rather than increased, by the free declaration of those immortal truths, which are connected with the honor of God and shew forth the glory of Jesus.

2. With so general a departure from the truth, it is no wonder that there is reason to lament the scarcity of a searching, faithful ministry amongst us, and to regret the prevalence of an *accommodating* ministry, inoffensive to the world and to the carnal mind. The case of many of our churches is truly pitiful; who, instead of being fed from time to time with sound and wholesome words, are induced to listen to powerless discourses, without unction, without savour. Some of our preachers, despising the majestic simplicity of the Scripture, imitate the language of worldly philosophy. Others deliver discourses which are little better than moral essays. Some of the more popular kind, with much noise and bombast, exhibit their abilities as on a stage, and, with great swelling word of vanity, preach themselves, and not Christ Jesus the Lord. Others are so cautious and crafty, and so concerned not to give offence, that it is difficult to tell what their real sentiments are. But there are now comparatively few of those faithful men to be found, whose only aim is to exalt Christ and to lay the sinner low: who tremble to connect their own worldly interest with the interest of Christ; and who would rather suffer the loss of all temporal advantages, than keep back the despised truths of the gospel. A worldly spirit is the very ruin of us. Aversion from bearing the cross, a determination to avoid the afflictions of the gospel, is one chief cause of those doctrinal corruptions which

have obtained amongst us; and God hath visited this sin upon us, by giving us up to further worldly conformity and to more iniquity, so that we have every reason to fear that our candlestick will soon be entirely removed, unless we repent.

3. This lifeless profession appears, moreover, in the constitution of our churches. We do not lay the stress we ought on *regeneration*, as absolutely necessary to communion of saints. Persons who are *seriously inclined*, whose moral character is good, especially if they are zealous in the missionary cause, and possess a high opinion of their minister, are judged very proper subjects for fellowship; without much inquiry whether they are dead to the law, and possess a living faith in Jesus, or whether they have ever been brought as lost sinners, by the Holy Spirit, to the blood of sprinkling. In this manner are carnal persons introduced into the church of God, and in this way the machinations of Satan to connect the church and the world are answered. Then are the designs of the great adversary accomplished, when carnal, unrenewed persons are induced to profess Christianity, and when the truth is corrupted to meet their carnal views.

The same disregard of Scripture appears in reference to offences. We judge of these, not so much by the Word of God, as by the rule of respectability among men. Hence scandalous offences and open immorality are noticed, and the delinquents sometime excluded, because sins of this description disgrace a society in the eyes of the world. But the lusts of the mind, which are equally abominable to God, are almost wholly overlooked. Covetousness, pride, self-righteousness, and love of this present world, are quite compatible with the character of an eminent professor. Persons may be manifestly under the dominion of such lusts as these, yet if they preserve a pious exterior, and contribute freely to the missionary cause, they are highly extolled. And with all this, we cry out against Antinomianism, and are afraid that unless the doctrines of grace are *well guarded*, they will lead to licentiousness!

4. The dead and worldly state of the Christian profession amongst us appears conspicuously in the carnal views of Christ's kingdom, which have for some time prevailed. The churches seem to have forgotten that the Redeemer's kingdom is not of this world. They cannot understand how the church of Christ can be in a flourishing state, unless it makes a *respectable* figure in society. They do not consider that the special presence of Christ with his people constitutes the alone ground of their excellency and glory; nor do they consider that the prosperity of a church consists not in external things, but in the things of the Spirit only; nor do they know that a company of believers may be truly glorious though they have no *reverend gentlemen* to keep them in countenance, nor wealthy professors to support the cause. Hence the anxiety of many to engage human power of the side of the church; hence the difference paid to rich men; and hence the carnal policy which, in many instances, directs religious proceedings. According to the proportion in which this spirit prevails, will professors be ashamed of that contemptible appearance which Christ hath made, and which his followers always must make in the world; so that it is no wonder that such professors look upon those churches who are suffering for their attachment to the despised truths of the gospel, "*as a perfect dunghill in society.*"

These carnal notions have had the most pernicious influence on our profession. There is now but little of that unity, that simplicity, that gospel fellowship which the earlier churches

enjoyed. Formerly believers were hated of the world, and, being separate from it, they found comfort in the fellowship of Zion: but now we are conformed to the world, and the love of many waxes cold. We shall one day find that our apparent prosperity is a poor compensation for the word of faith, the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and the communion of saints. Whoever is alive to the things of God, must acknowledge that the Spirit is remarkably withdrawn, divine consolations are but little enjoyed, and primitive Christianity is comparatively unknown. These complaints are not applicable exclusively to our own denomination. The Independents are as different from what they once were, as we are; they even take the lead of us in respectability. There is a degree of reproach which still cleaves to us, because of believers' baptism, and this clog to our feet renders it difficult for us to keep pace with those who practice infant baptism. But some of our churches and ministers have contrived to liberate themselves, in a great degree, from this impediment, by the practice of open communion, so as to become almost as respectable as their Pedobaptist brethren. Alas! alas! There is little occasion for all the contempt which has been cast upon the former churches. The comparison of what we are, with what we were, is truly affecting. We may justly appropriate a smart reply of the celebrated Thomas Aquinas to Pope Innocent IV. The former visiting the latter, found himself surrounded with heaps of gold. "Lo! Thomas," said his Holiness, "the church cannot now say, as of old, silver and gold have I none." "No," says the surly Doctor, "nor can she say to the lame, *arise and walk!*"

5. A worldly spirit has so far prevailed as almost to extinguish brotherly love amongst us. The decay of this grace answers to the influence of idolatry under the Old Testament. A desire to be like the neighbouring nations was the great sin of the Old Testament Israel, and was the source of all their idolatrous departures from God. Under the New Testament, the love of the world is idolatry, and nothing tends so effectually as this to destroy the unity of saints and brotherly affection. The decay of mutual love is proof indisputable of spiritual declension, even as the prevalence of it is an evidence of prosperity. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."⁸³

But who that is spiritual can doubt of the feebleness of this grace in the churches? So little is it in exercise, that many cannot tell wherein it consists; nor have they any distinct idea of what it is that holds them together as a church. They seem to have no notion of spiritual love, beyond that *friendly feeling* which exist among the members of an earthly society. Some are drawn together because they must go to a place of worship, and they assemble where they and their fathers have been accustomed to meet. Others are united by the spirit of a party: a quarrel from some frivolous cause, having separated them from their former religious connections. Others seem to be united by the good opinion which they unanimously form of their minister; they agree in a blind adoration of their favorite preacher, so that when he dies there is an end of their union. This kind of subjection is of the same nature as that *one mind*, which the antichristian nations have for the Bishop of Rome, Rev. xvii. 13. But because the truth itself is fallen in our streets, therefore the love of the brethren for the truth's sake faileth also.

There is, however, a kind of charity prevalent amongst us, a spurious charity, *which rejoiceth not in truth*. It is now thought an evidence of a bigoted spirit, to contend earnestly for the peculiar doctrines of grace; and it is considered the mark of a candid disposition to

83 John 13:35.

bear with doctrines opposed to the truth, and to cover such opposition with the mantle of charity and forbearance. But how often does it occur that those amiable persons, who can easily forbear when only the honour of God and the glory of his Christ are concerned, have very little forbearance when *their own* dignity is wounded or their pride mortified. O how indignant are they when personally offended! how wroth, how implacable! Who would think that these amiable creatures, who are so charitable when the honour of Christ is wounded, could exercise so little forbearance when their own dear selves are injured?

6. Our conformity to the world appears in antichristian manners and institutions which have been introduced among us. Of these I shall take notice only of two instances.

(1.) The Popish distinction of *clergy* and *laity* has been of late much revived in the churches, although there was a time when this distinction was generally set aside among baptized believers, as constituting one of the pillars of Antichrist.

That the great head of the church hath mercifully appointed pastors and teachers for the edifying of his people is beyond all doubt, but these are never in the New Testament termed *priests* or clergy in distinction from their brethren, nor are the believing brethren ever termed the *people* or laity in order to distinguish them from their pastors. Under the Old Testament, indeed, there was a distinct clergy or priesthood separate from the rest of Israel, and as this appointment was by the special command of God, none of the common people could lawfully invade the sacred office. But the death of Christ hath elevated the whole body of the saints to the dignity of priests. Jesus hath "washed us from our sins in his blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." For thus saith the prophet Isaiah, when he foretold the glory of New Testament saints. "But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord, men shall call you the ministers of God." Hence the people of God in general are a "holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices." Hence they are called "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood," constituted such through the precious righteousness of the Son of God. This is the priesthood which God hath ordained, and every other is antichristian.

But no sooner do Christian churches lose sight of the glory of imputed righteousness than they are brought into bondage. Then they become an easy prey to false teachers; and the more ignorant of the Scriptures religious persons are, the more entirely are they under the dominion of their clergy. So bewitching is this deception, that the people of God themselves are sometimes ensnared by it. The church at Corinth despised the apostle because he usurped no lordship over them, but preached the gospel unto them freely, and supported himself by his own labor. But when false teachers came among them preaching a perverted gospel, and thus exalted themselves, these they gladly received. "For we suffer," said the holy Paul, "if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face." In this manner did the mystery of iniquity begin to work so early; but it afterwards became fully developed in the coming of the man of sin. And who does not see, that if opposition to the righteousness of Christ be essential to popery, the dominion of the clergy is not less so.

It is truly affecting, however, to trace the operation of this spirit in our own churches. We have departed from the simplicity of the faith and are desirous to make a *respectable* figure in the world. Accordingly we have begun to talk of our *clergy* and our *laity*. Ours indeed

is but a pitiful imitation of the original, but it is an imitation. In the church of Rome the dominion of an antichristian priesthood appears in all its grandeur, but ours has neither antiquity no splendor to support it. "Theirs," says the ingenious Robinson, "is nature in the theatre of the metropolis, we are strollers, uttering bombast, in cast-off finery, in a booth at a fair."⁸⁴

O that the ministers of Christ would adhere to the simplicity of the gospel! When will they cease to imitate the hateful language and manners of Antichrist? Their true wisdom is to stand fast in the simplicity which is in Christ Jesus; for as they have neither authority nor antiquity to urge in favor of their pretensions to clerical dignity, they will always be despised by the *original clergy*, even as ancient Israel, when it departed from God, was held in contempt by those very nations from whom it had borrowed its idolatry.

NOTE.—It is well known what hot disputes have been carried on between the clergy of England and of Rome, respecting the validity of the ordinations of the former. It is admitted on both sides, that no man can lawfully exercise the priestly office, unless duly called, and properly authorized. Now the validity of the Catholic priesthood is without dispute. Every Roman Catholic priest is regularly ordained by his bishop, who also receives his ordination from the head of his church, at Rome; and the pope himself, who is the fountain of all clerical dignity and authority, says he derives his power by regular and unbroken succession, from St. Peter, to whom Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and on whom (says his holiness) he declared he would build his church. Now all this is as clear and satisfactory as the nature of the case is capable of. The clergy of England admit the validity of the Catholic priesthood, but the Catholics are not so sure of the validity of the English ordinations; and, to say the least, it is very doubtful whether the clergy of the church of England have ever been regularly ordained at all.

But whatever may be concluded relative to the Episcopalian clergy of England, the Dissenters have not the least ground for their pretensions to the high dignity. Ask a young dissenting minister, instructed in the pious trade, who gave him authority to exercise the clerical office? He replies, that he was set forth and ordained by the Rev. Dr. -----, Tutor of -----College. But if further inquiry be made into the authority of the Rev. Dr. himself, it will be found to rest on the authority of some other such Rev. Doctor; and if it be traced to its source, it will probably be found that its origin is with some preaching mechanic, in the days of Oliver Cromwell, or later. A sorry imitation truly!

The ministers of Jesus would do well to consider how hateful in his eyes are all those *little arts*, by which false teachers keep up their dominion over the people. He hates these things, because they are of all others most inimical to his kingdom, and induce the highest contempt of his righteousness. What but *self-righteousness* could ever induce a preacher to imagine that he belongs to a different order from the church in general; and what but *pride* of the very worst description could lead him to expect his brethren to call him "*Reverend?*" This spirit of self-righteousness and pride in the ancient scribes called forth the severest invective from the patient and lovely Jesus. He even notices their carriage and their dress. "Beware of the Scribes, who love to go in long clothing." Not that their clothing was in itself of any importance, but as it indicated a spirit of clerical self-righteousness, it provoked the eyes of his

84 Sermon on John 18:36.

glory. They *loved* to go in long clothing, they *loved* the chief seats, they *loved* to be called Rabbi, Rabbi. It was therefore on account of the spiritual pride of their hearts that our Lord uttered his solemn "Woe to the Scribes." It well becomes men to tremble when they hear a *woe* from the mouth of incarnate love! The "*woe*" of Jesus falls not upon men in this life, but in the world to come. Many, who are too righteous in their own eyes to imagine they are under his *woe*, live respectably and their death is honourable and hopeful in the sight of the world. Our Saviour himself has given us a solemn instance of this.⁸⁵ A certain rich but carnal professor, a nominal son of Abraham, was of elevated rank and enjoyed abundantly the fatness of the earth. There is reason to believe that his religious character stood high and that he cast of his abundance into the treasury. It is certain that he contributed to the necessities of a poor saint, though not from a right motive. It came to pass, however, that he died and was buried. It is highly probable that a sort of funeral eulogium from the lips of some chief priest recorded his pious and liberal actions and elevated him to the third heaven. But he died under the woe of God and the next account we have of him is, that *in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments!*

(2.) The stress which is now laid on academical tuition as a necessary qualification for the Christian ministry is another proof of the prevalence of antichristian principles. No truth is more clearly taught in the New Testament than this, namely, that it is the sole prerogative of the Holy Ghost, by his own gifts, and *by them alone*, to give pastors unto Zion and to constitute them able ministers of the New Testament. The question relates not to the value of human learning in its own place. The question is not whether it be *desirable* that a Christian minister should study the Scriptures in the Hebrew and Greek. Most certainly it is desirable, not only that ministers of the word, but also that all the Lord's people if they have time and opportunity, should study the Scriptures in their original languages; and it would be well for some who make great pretensions to learning and who think it essential to the ministry, were more extensively and more critically acquainted with sacred literature than they really are. But the question relates solely to the *power* by which the ministers of Jesus are furnished for their great work. Now, nothing is more certain than that this power is derived immediately from the exalted head of the church. "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. AND HE GAVE some, apostles; and some, prophets, and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."⁸⁶ The same power, therefore, which constitutes some apostles, qualifies others to be pastors and teachers; and this we know was the power of the *Spirit alone*, Acts i. 8, for many of the apostles were destitute of human learning, even after the day of Pentecost, Acts iv. 13. The apostles and primitive pastors were qualified for their work not by the tuition of Gamaliel, or any other theological tutor, but only by the communication of the Holy Ghost. "Our sufficiency is of God; who hath made us able ministers of the New Testament."⁸⁷ How little do they know of the gospel ministry, and of the kingdom of Jesus, who imagine that academical instruction is sufficient for them whose weapons are "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;"⁸⁸ who are "unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them who are saved, and in them that perish. To the one, the savor of death unto death; and to the other, the savor of life unto life." Well may the holy apostle add, "and who is sufficient for these things?"⁸⁹

85 Luke 16:19-31.

86 Eph. 4:11.

87 2 Cor. 3:5, 6.

88 2 Cor. 10:4.

89 2 Cor. 2:16.

The promise of the Spirit was given not only for the sake of the apostles, but also to furnish ordinary pastors and teachers, to the end of time, with power for their work, Matt. 28:19, 20. Accordingly the elders or bishops of the church at Ephesus were fitted for their office by the ever-blessed Spirit. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the HOLY GHOST HATH MADE YOU OVERSEERS to feed the church of God."⁹⁰ The sacred Spirit pervades the whole body of Christ and by the fulness of his gracious gifts, is absolutely sufficient for all offices in the church. As the spirit of life animated the cherubim and the wheels and directed all their motions, so doth the Holy Ghost animate all the members of Christ and direct all the affairs of the Christian ministry. "Whithersoever the Spirit was to go, they went; thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them; for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels." This communication of the Spirit is both the foundation of all spiritual gifts in the church of Christ and is *of itself* sufficient for all the purposes of the Christian ministry. "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit," &c. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."⁹¹ "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry," &c.⁹² Hence the Holy Spirit in his official character and in reference to the fulness and perfection of his gifts, is compared to "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne;" and not only is the blessed Spirit sufficient to qualify his ministers for their work, who for this reason are called *ministers of the Spirit*, but also all the operations of the Christian ministry are under his absolute and sovereign control. He opens, and no man shuts; he shuts and no man opens. He sends his ministers to some countries, to others he suffers them not to go. Thus Paul and his companions "WERE FORBIDDEN OF THE HOLY GHOST to preach the word in Asia. Afterwards "they assayed to go into Bithynia; BUT THE SPIRIT SUFFERED THEM NOT."⁹³ Under his Almighty influence the gospel prevailed in primitive times. The first Christians erected no human machinery for the spread of the gospel. They never sought the support of the great and the rich; nor did they ever complain of the want of pecuniary means, nor suggest that adequate funds would enable them to convert the world.

But afterwards, when Christianity became corrupted, nominal conversions took the place of regeneration and the kingdom of the clergy began to rise. The nations professing Christianity had no love for the truth, and as for the Spirit they knew him not. The simple gospel was exchanged for a scholastic theology founded on the philosophy of this world and the wisdom of Aristotle. Then were universities instituted, that by them men might be fitted for the Christian ministry. These have been the nurseries of the clergy in all ages, vomiting forth their antichristian divinity like the smoke of the bottomless pit, out of which a carnal priesthood, like locusts, have proceeded and overspread the earth. Schools of learning considered simply as a means of knowledge are good, but when they are employed to invade the prerogative of Jesus Christ, when they are instituted to accomplish what none but the Spirit can effect, they become an engine of Satan and are abominable to God.

⁹⁰ Acts 20:28.

⁹¹ 1 Cor. 12:7, 8, 13.

⁹² Rom. 12:6, 7.

⁹³ Acts 16:6, 7.

In this respect also, our Baptist Churches have begun to imitate the antichristian apostacy. As we have our *clergy* and our *laity*, so also have we our *colleges* for preparing and qualifying pious young men for the Christian ministry. It has been often affirmed, that, although we have our colleges and academies, these are not for the purpose of *making ministers*, but for affording young men those literary advantages which they could not so easily obtain in any other way. But this is only another instance of that deceitfulness which always attends a departure from the simplicity of truth. Are not young men sent to Stepney or to Bristol for the purpose of being *fitted* for the ministry? Are they not, while there, considered to be in a course of *training for* the ministry? It is true that our seminaries were not instituted to make men pious, but it is undeniable that they were intended to make pious young men *ministers*. Mr. Robt. Hall, in the preface to his Sermon on "The Discouragements &c., of the Christian Minister," says, "To the Bristol Academy, the only Seminary they⁹⁴ possessed till within these few years, they feel the highest obligations, *for supplying them with a succession of able and faithful pastors*, who have done honor to their churches." Now, why should we owe such a debt of gratitude to the Bristol Academy for *supplying* us with pastors, unless that Academy hath *made* these pastors what they are? If they are so able and faithful, thanks be to the Bristol Academy which hath *supplied* them!

In the report of the Bradford Academy for 1830, the writer says, page 4, "It cannot be too well understood, that we disclaim all idea of *making ministers*." Yet in the very same page he says, "most of our churches seem to think that the young persons whom they call to the work of the ministry should avail themselves of the best advantages that are to be obtained for preparing them for, and assisting them in, the important undertaking." Now what can the writer mean by disclaiming all idea of making ministers and at the same time acknowledging that the academy prepares young men for the ministry? If the latter words mean any thing they mean that the Society furnishes young persons with that kind of education without which they would not be fitted or prepared for the ministry; and this is only saying, in other words, that the Society makes them ministers. Exalted Saviour! and have thy people yet to learn that thy Spirit, and He alone, is sufficient for this? Do they not know that thou holdest the seven stars in thy right hand? Surely the true Christian divinity cannot be taught as human sciences are taught. How can a theological tutor impart to his neighbor that knowledge which is necessary for the Christian ministry? How can he teach him to understand the mystery of godliness, as it is opened in the wonderful person of Christ, in all the steps of his humiliation, sufferings, and death, and in unspeakable wonders of his blood and righteousness? Alas! the tutor cannot teach himself these things, yet both the *knowledge* of these and *utterance* to make them known are absolutely necessary for the Christian ministry and are imparted by the Spirit through the medium of his ordinances. "All my divinity," said Luther, "consists in this, that I believe that Christ alone is the Lord concerning whom the Scriptures speak, and neither my grammar nor Hebrew language taught me this but the good Spirit of the living God." The words of the honest reformer are in accordance with the Scripture and with the nature of the Redeemer's spiritual kingdom, so also are the following sentiments of an old English writer: "Christ under the New Testament hath erected and constituted a new ministry, not through any ecclesiastical ordination, but *merely through the unction of His Spirit*, without any regard at all to a man's outward calling or condition in the world; but whether a man be a scholar, or clergyman, or gentleman, or tradesman, if Christ call him and pour forth his Spirit on him,

94 i.e., the Baptists.

that, and that only, makes him a true minister of the New Testament." How forcible are right words, but how little understood and regarded!

Knowledge, in its most unlimited extent comprehending universal learning, is, in itself, good and the acquisition of it desirable. If, however, the attainment of sound learning could possibly be opposed to the simplicity of the gospel and consequently be pernicious, our denomination in the present day would not be in imminent danger from that cause. If the acquisition of learning were a sin, our guilt would not be *very* heinous. But the sin of the churches consists in this, that *they heap to themselves teachers*, instead of waiting on the Lord for the fulfilment of his promise to give pastors unto Zion. The work is entirely the Lord's, but instead of looking unto Him in the way of *his own* ordinances, they vainly imagine they can provide for themselves ministers by ordinances which he hath not instituted, but which are of *their own appointing*, in imitation of the universities of antichrist. Thus do the churches despise the promise of the Spirit. In this manner do they trust in an arm of flesh, in respect to the ministry, and cease from trusting in the Lord, and thus do they grieve that adorable Comforter by whom the saints are sealed unto the day of redemption.

THIRD. *A perverted gospel tends directly to scatter the people of God by destroying their bond of union.* The Lord Jesus Christ, to whom all the saints are united, is the only foundation and bond of spiritual union. The whole family meet and centre in him. That which unites them in his glorious person and work, and that which demands their obedience is his voice. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me." This voice which they hear is the truth of the gospel which they receive and love and which produce among them brotherly love for the truth's sake. In the exercise of his grace they have fellowship with each other, they are despised by the world and are separated from it. "Lo! the people shall dwell alone, and shall nor be reckoned among the nations."

If, therefore, the people of God are united in the bond of truth, it is evident that nothing is so effectual to scatter them as the influence of erroneous doctrine, especially such as affects the righteousness of Christ which is the ground of their unity, concord and hope. Hence the zeal of the apostle against legal doctrines and false teachers. Hence the connection between unsound doctrines and divisions in the church. "Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them."⁹⁵ As amongst the nations of this world, sedition and treason are punished more severely than private offences because the former cut asunder the very bonds of society itself, and injure not an individual, but the whole community; so in the kingdom of Christ the advancement of doctrines which obscure the glory of imputed righteousness and exalt human merit, is an offence of the most malignant kind, because it tends directly to abase the Lord Jesus and to destroy unity and brotherly love among his people. For this reason it is, that so much is said in Scripture against the teachers of such doctrines. "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord."⁹⁶ So indignant was the holy Paul against them that he cried out, "I would they were even cut off who trouble you."⁹⁷

The effect of a legal ministry is not only to produce divisions and offences amongst the

⁹⁵ Rom. 16:17, 18.

⁹⁶ Jer. 23:1.

⁹⁷ Gal. 5:12.

people of God, but also to *exalt the preacher*. The apostle abased himself, that the brethren might be exalted, 2 Cor. 11:7; but the false teachers exalted themselves, and brought the saints into bondage, 2 Cor. 11:20. Self-exaltation is a mark which invariably distinguishes the preachers of a perverted gospel. While their doctrine has a direct tendency to obscure the glory of Christ it tends to magnify themselves; and their votaries, instead of hearing the voice of Christ, are brought into subjection to the minister and he becomes the bond of union among them. "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to DRAW AWAY DISCIPLES AFTER THEM."⁹⁸ This spirit which began to work in the days of the apostles, is the foundation of all that clerical dominion which constitutes the very strength of antichrist and the support of his accursed kingdom.

But we greatly mistake the mind of the spirit in the Scriptures if we imagine that the marks of a false church are to be found nowhere except within the pale of the Papacy. The Lord does not judge of men according to the *names they bear*, but according to *the fruits they bring forth*. Whenever antichristian doctrines are received, there antichristian fruits will appear. For as the mystery of iniquity began to work before the man of sin was revealed, so it is found working in churches which are not nominally under his dominion. "—AND ALL THE CHURCHES shall know that I am he who searcheth the reins and hearts; AND I WILL GIVE UNTO EVERY ONE OF YOU ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS."

It ought, therefore, to be a matter of solemn inquiry, whether the marks of antichrist be not plainly visible upon many of our churches and ministers. It has been proved in the course of these letters that the doctrine now prevailing amongst us relative to the glorious atonement and righteousness of Christ is quite a different thing from that which is handed down to us in the Scriptures, and it has also been shewn that such doctrine induces worldly conformity and a dead profession. It might therefore be inferred, *a priori*, that the natural tendency of such principles is to scatter the people of God and to destroy the unity of the Spirit. For wherever the precious doctrines of grace are kept back in the public ministry of the word, there, though carnal professors may be pleased, the saints will be deprived of that rich provision which God hath laid up for them; they will decline in the exercise of faith and love, and communion of saints will degenerate into formal worship. That this is the sad condition of many of Zion's children in the present day is beyond a doubt. Many who sit under a legal, insipid ministry are in a lean and famishing state for want of the pure word and ordinances of the Lord, and are crying out in a soul distress, "Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat." Micah. vii. 1.

FOURTH. *The doctrine of indefinite redemption is greatly injurious to the comforts and joys of believers.*

1. The notion that the death of Christ is conditionally sufficient for all mankind, that is if all mankind were to believe in it, leads the sinner at once to the performance of *some duty* which he imagines will give efficacy to the death of Christ and render it available to him. By this means he is led to draw comfort from his duties instead of the finished salvation of Christ. This error is the fruitful cause of the disquieting fears and legal bondage of many professors. They are constantly in fear lest they have not performed the requisite condition and, after much toiling, their uneasy spirits are as far from rest as ever, and again they utter

⁹⁸ Acts 20:30.

the old complaint, "What lack I yet?" They have no notion that the alone work of Christ made manifest to the heart by the Holy Spirit, is sufficient to give joy unspeakable without the performance of some duty on their part, and therefore they are in constant perplexity lest this important duty should not have been performed. "I find," said Mr. Owen Stockton, "that though in my judgment and profession, I acknowledge Christ to be my righteousness and peace, yet I have secretly gone about to establish my own righteousness and have derived my comfort and peace from my own actings. For when I have been disquieted by the actings of sin, not God speaking peace through the blood of Christ, but the intermission of temptation and the cessation of those sins have restored me to my former peace. When I have been troubled at the evil frame of my heart, not the righteousness of Christ, but my feeling of a better temper hath been my consolation. I have prayed against, and resolved against sin, striven with sin, and avoided occasions of sin; all which a natural man may do. But how to fetch power from the death of Christ, how to believe in God for the subduing of sin, and how to do it by the Spirit, have been mysteries to me."

In this state of bondage are many precious souls detained because they cannot see the absolute perfection of the work of Christ. They allow that Christ has done a great deal for sinners, but something they imagine must be done on our part to render his blood available; and that something not being able to satisfy divine justice and being too weak to purge their guilty conscience, they are disquieted. But when the soul is driven from every other refuge to trust in Christ alone then it finds rest. It no more asks, "What lack I yet?" knowing that the law is magnified, justice satisfied, and God the Father well pleased in his beloved Son: "for we who do believe have entered into rest."⁹⁹ "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned."¹⁰⁰

2. The knowledge which believers have that Christ died in their stead, and gave himself particularly for them, is full of the sweetest consolation to their ransomed spirits. Who can describe the inward peace which fortified the mind of the Psalmist, when he uttered those memorable words, "My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul which thou hast redeemed?" Psa. 72:23. Or can we express the comfort which is poured into the heart of an afflicted saint, when the Holy Spirit brings powerfully to his mind such a precious promise as this? "But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel; Fear not, for I have redeemed thee—thou art mine."¹⁰¹ No small part of the consolation comprehended in such promises arises from distinguishing love and special redemption. But if Christ died for sin abstractedly, he died no more for one man than another, and the comfort derived from particular redemption is vain.

3. A spiritual conviction of union to Jesus, in his death, resurrection, and exaltation, is essential to a believer's joy. The comfort of a saint is, that he is dead judicially with Christ. He rejoices in this, that Jesus is alive from the dead to die no more, having made an end of sin, and as the sins of his people are no more found upon him death hath no dominion over him, but he lives evermore unto God. Now, the Spirit assures a believer's heart that Christ and he are one. A saint, through the Spirit, reckons himself to be "dead indeed, unto sin, but alive

99 Heb. 4:3.

100 Isa. 40:1, 2.

101 Isa. 43:1.

unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He is crucified with Christ, dead with Christ, risen with Christ, and exalted to sit in heavenly places in Christ, and all this is the spring of his joy. "Your spirits," says the holy Mr. Walter Cradock, "will never be heightened and raised to live the life of Paul by beholding any thing that is in you *personally* in your possession, but what you are by *relation* and *marriage to Christ*. Reckon yourselves *dead with Christ*; and so conceive, I am a just man; I was bound once to the law of God, a terrible law; and there are thousands in hell paying the debt, and cannot pay it; and yet I have payed every farthing, and the law cannot ask me more. I have offered a perfect righteousness to God; and I am now sitting at God's right hand in heaven, by my union with Jesus Christ."¹⁰² Another of the precious sons of Zion thus expresses his faith in a living Redeemer, and exercises the confidence of his ransomed spirit. Referring to the cross of Christ, he says,

"My full receipt may there be view'd,
Graven with iron pens and blood,
In Jesus' hands and side;
I'm safe, O death, O law, and sin,
Ye cannot bring me guilty in,
For Christ was crucified."—CENNICK

In this manner do believers joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom they have received the atonement. But all this proceeds on the supposition of union to Jesus, when he died and when he rose again; but no such union existed between Christ and any of Adam's race if the indefinite scheme be true.

4. The covenant interest which God has in his people and they have in him, is a fruitful source of consolation to the saints. It constitutes the grand promise of the new covenant: "I will be their God, and they shall be my people;" and it is the bulwark of their security: "Fear not: for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God." An afflicted saint possesses a peace which passeth all understanding when the Holy Ghost enables him to say, "The Lord is my God." This dries his tears, brightens his countenance and cheers his mournful heart. It comprehends all he can desire in time and to eternity. "They shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I have said, It is my people, and they shall say, Jehovah is my God."¹⁰³

But the advocates of indefinite and universal redemption seem not to acknowledge this covenant union. They believe that God has a peculiar regard for *pious people*, but as for that conjugal covenant relationship, which flows from electing love and everlasting kindness, they know nothing of it. This federal connection arises out of discriminating love and is consistent only with special redemption, because all the blessings of the everlasting covenant are ratified by that blood which was *shed for many*.

FIFTH. I shall only add, in the last place, that *indefinite redemption is too weak to support the mind in the solemn hour of dissolution*. Nothing short of a personal application of the atoning blood can destroy the fear of death. To die joyfully we must possess the assurance that Christ hath loved us and given himself for us, but his assurance we cannot have if Christ died only for sin and not for particular persons. Our safety, indeed, does not depend upon this

¹⁰²W. Cradock's works, page 25.

¹⁰³Zech. 13:9.

assurance, but our joyfulness does.

The most striking manner of confirming this argument is, by adducing instances of the dying experience of the saints. Many instances are on record of professors who held legal sentiments during life who were glad to renounce them when they came to die. But I never heard or read of an individual, who had been led into the glories of sovereign grace, who did not cling to the same truth as his only support in the hour of death. I never heard that any such when they came to die regretted that they had carried the doctrine of grace too far or exalted Christ too much. I never knew an instance of such a one forsaking his principles and taking refuge in Arminianism or indefinite redemption, for no man "having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new; for he saith, the old is better."

An obstinate adherence to any particular sentiments is indeed no proof that those sentiments are right, yet the confidence of a dying believer affords a strong argument for the truth of those principles which enable him thus to triumph. The dying testimonies of the Lord's people are highly delightful in themselves, consolatory to the brethren, and honorable to God. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Every testimony which the true believers are enabled to give to the truths of the gospel and the faithfulness of God is valuable in the sight of the Lord, but their dying testimonies are peculiarly so, being usually attended with a richer communication of the Spirit.

It must, however, be confessed that the Lord's dealings with his people are very mysterious and past finding out. It is not always in a joyful frame of spirit that they must be witnesses to the truth. Sometimes the Lord withdraws the light of his countenance from them and gives them to understand that he does so in fatherly displeasure because they have grieved his Holy Spirit. This is especially the case if they have dealt deceitfully respecting his truth. Toplady, that valiant man of God, relates the following memorable instances of the Lord's fatherly displeasure, and covenant faithfulness. "I was formerly," says he, "well acquainted with two worthy persons in the ministry who were eminently pious and extensively useful. One of them died in 1759, the other in 1761. I thought that if ever any men in the world were faithful to the light God had given them these were. And yet in their last illness they had such a feeling sight of their past unfaithfulness as almost reduced them, for a time, to despair of salvation. The former of them said he only wished to live that he might have an opportunity of preaching the gospel in a fuller manner than he had ever yet done. The latter cried out in an agony of distress, 'God hides the light of his face from my soul and is putting me to bed in the dark because out of a dastardly compliance to some of my hearers I have not dwelt enough upon the doctrines of grace in the course of my public ministrations, particularly the doctrine of election, in which doctrine I now see such a glory as I never saw before.' Yet both were good men and went off comfortably at last; though not until they had been led through a dismal, tedious wilderness of keen remorse and distressing conflicts."¹⁰⁴ True it is, that we cannot always interpret the Lord's dealings with others and should therefore "judge not;" yet God often interprets his own ways to his own people and teaches his disobedient children that he will honor them who honor him.

But in what manner soever the minds of the saints are exercised at last, whether they rejoice, they are made to bear witness more or less to the truth. Herein consists no small part

¹⁰⁴Works, vol. 3, page 133, note.

of the preciousness of their death. For herein is God glorified and his word magnified, when the gospel appears all sufficient to support the soul in life and in death. The following examples will serve to illustrate this subject.

DR. THOMAS GOODWIN was, it is well known, one of the ablest writers in defence of eternal election and particular redemption that this country ever produced. During a great part of his long life, he held fast of these doctrines with uniform consistency and died in the fullest assurance of their truth. In the account of his life and death, prefixed to the 5th vol. of his works, we have the following particulars of his triumphant departure. "In February, 1679, a fever seized him which in a few days put an end to his life. In all the violence of it he discoursed with that strength of faith and assurance of Christ's love, with that holy admiration of free grace, with that joy in believing, and such thanksgivings and praises, as extremely moved and affected all that heard him. He rejoiced in the thoughts that he was dying and going to have full and uninterrupted communion with God. 'I am going,' said he, 'to the Three Persons with whom I have had communion; they have taken me, I did not take them. I shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye; all my lusts and corruptions I shall be rid of, which I could not be here; these croaking toads will fall off in a moment. I could not have imagined I should ever have had such a measure of faith in this hour; no, I could never have imagined it. My bow abides in strength. Is Christ divided? No, I have the whole of his righteousness; I am found in him, not in my own righteousness, which is of the law, but in the righteousness which is of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Christ cannot love me better than he doth; I think I cannot love Christ better than I do; I am swallowed up in God.' With this assurance of faith, and fulness of joy he left this world in the 80th year of his age."

DR. TOBIAS CRISP, like many others of the Lord's people, was, in his earlier years, a zealous Arminian and very indefatigable in his ministerial duties. But it pleased God several years before his death to lead his mind into the heights and depths of free grace and everlasting love and to establish his soul in an extraordinary manner in the faith of imputed righteousness. This soon procured for him the surname of Antinomian, though all who knew him, both professors and profane, were witnesses to his uncommon devotedness to God and to the holiness of his life. After his strength was greatly spent by constant and laborious preaching, praying, &c., often whole nights, to the ruin of his health, he died in 1642. But the same truths which were his support in life were his triumph in death. "He manifested," says Mr. Lancaster, "such faith, such joy, such a quiet and appeased conscience, such triumph over death and hell, as made the standers-by amazed. And withal he forgot not to profess before some present the steadfastness of his faith to this effect; 'that as he had lived in the free grace of God through Christ, so he did with confidence and great joy, even as much as his present condition was capable of, resign his life and soul into the hands of his most dear Father.' His son, Mr. S. Crisp, informs us that a few moments before his departure out of this world he said to friends by his bed-side, 'Where are all those that dispute against the free grace of God and what I have taught thereof? I am now ready to answer them all;' and so he fell asleep."

MR. THOMAS COLE was a minister of the Independent denomination in London, and the author of an excellent work on Regeneration, Faith, &c. He ably advocated the doctrines of sovereign grace, especially imputed righteousness, and zealously opposed the Neonomian error. For the account of his last illness and death, which took place in 1697, I am indebted to

Mr. Wilson's History of Dissenting Churches. We are informed that, "in the prospect of his approaching end, his mind was the most happy imaginable and he conversed with different persons in a manner that gave great satisfaction to those about him. Mr. Traile, who was present, said to him, 'Sir, you know what opposition hath been made against the truths of the gospel and what contending there hath been, &c. But have you no kind of repenting that you have given occasion of this contention?' Mr. Cole replied, 'Repenting, no; I repent I have been no more vigorous and active in defending those truths, in the confidence of which I die; and if I have any desire to live it is that I may be further serviceable to Christ in vindicating his name in the pulpit. But he can defend his own truth when his poor creatures and ministers who contended for them (as well as they could) are laid in the dust.' Mr. Traile said, 'We desire to know the peace and comfort you have of these truths, as to your eternal state?' He replied, 'It is my only ground of comfort. Death would be terrible else. I should not dare to look death in the face if it were not for the comfortable assurance which faith gives me of eternal life in Christ. Not what I bring to Christ, but derive from him, having received some beginning of it which I see springing up to eternal life. They do not know the constraining power of the love of Christ, who can be wicked and licentious under such a comfortable doctrine. None feel the power of it but those whom God enableth to believe, and it will be abused by every one that does not believe.'

"The following are some of his occasional sayings at several times on his death-bed. 'I wait for a peaceable dismissal, I long to see his salvation: ere long I shall be where I shall be free from all pain. The Spirit saith, Come, and the Bride saith, Come, O Come! Lord Jesus, come quickly.' To one that came to see him, he said, 'God hath made me a man of contention; but I would have all the world know, that the doctrine I have been preaching I can comfortably die in.' One friend said to him, 'You have been one of those that tormented the earth as was mentioned this day in prayer.' He replied, 'The gospel will torment them more and more. God will have his witnesses, a competent number in all ages. Blessed be God, he hath called me to his heavenly kingdom! I long to be with Christ. It is a pleasant thing to die; I am waiting for thy salvation!' To Dr. Chancey, who was present, he said, 'Though they would not suffer me to preach the doctrine of free grace quietly, yet God suffereth me to die in the comfort of it.' In this resigned and happy manner, Mr. Cole departed to the world of spirits, September 16, 1697, in his 70th year of age."

MR. JOSEPH HUSSEY, who is best known by his works entitled, "God's Operations of Grace, but no Offers of Grace," and his "Glory of Christ Unveiled," was, in the latter part of his life, a most zealous opponent of Arminianism, in all its branches. In his dying moments, though in extreme pain, he was honored to bear some precious testimonies to the truths of discriminating grace, of which the following are a few. "One of the church asking him how his faith was exercised with regard to those doctrines he used to preach, he answered, 'I am in the firm and full persuasion of all those truths I have preached, and die in the firm belief of them all.' Many of the church being in his chamber, he often dropped some spiritual observations that expressed the feelings of his mind on the occasion. A person asking him how he did, 'I am,' said he, 'waiting for my happy change, to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.' 'What do you take, sir?' 'I have no palate for anything here, but my spiritual one is as good as ever to relish the doctrines of the gospel.' Being asked how he found it in his soul as to those doctrines he had delivered, he answered; 'O bravely! They are my main supports under my trials and pains. I find now the truth of what I have preached. They are not my notions or fancy, but the

power of Christ to my soul.'

"Dosing at time, when he waked, he would drop such words as follow: 'I have often sung the praises of God in the low lands, but, oh! how long will it be before I come to the height of Zion, to sing to God and the Lamb upon the throne. Oh, blessed death, it is a sweet thing to die, for Christ will then be all in all. O Lord, gather thine elect out of this sinful world unto thyself.' He would occasionally break forth with many short sentences, such as these: 'Blessing, glory, honor, and praise be to God and the Lamb, for ever and ever. Sin is dreadful, but grace triumphs through Jesus Christ. Lord, be with me in my last conflicts, and leave me not. O let me have an abundant entrance into glory, to sing thy praise.' Thus he continued testifying of Jesus Christ, and praising him, until Tuesday, Nov. 15, 1726, when he slept in the Lord, in the 67th year of his age."¹⁰⁵

Mr. A. M. TOPLADY. If ever a believer of modern times finished his course with joy, and was honored to bear his dying testimony to the truths of the gospel, it was the celebrated Mr. Toplady. For nearly two years before the Lord took his highly favored servant to himself, he was pleased to fill him most remarkably with the Holy Spirit, and to give him extraordinary foretastes of glory. He was delivered from all doubts and fears, and possessed the fullest assurance of an eternal salvation in Christ. In public ministrations he was sometimes carried out beyond himself, and appeared almost in an ecstasy while discoursing on everlasting love, full redemption, free grace, and absolute salvation. The divine consolations with which he was favored increased the nearer he approached his end. About a month before his decease, in consequence of a wicked report that he had changed his sentiments, circulated by the followers of Mr. John Wesley, he published his dying avowal of those precious truths which he had so zealously and so ably defended. In this avowal he say, "Should any hostile notice be taken of this paper, I do not intend to make any kind of reply. I am every day in view of dissolution. And in the fullest assurance of my eternal salvation, I am waiting, looking, and longing for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In conversation with a gentleman of the faculty, not long before his death, he frequently disclaimed with abhorrence the least dependence on his own righteousness, as any cause of his justification before God, and said that he rejoiced only in the free, complete, and everlasting salvation of God's elect, by Jesus Christ, through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. The same medical gentleman has related the following particulars of their conversation. After observing that a remarkable jealousy was apparent in his whole conduct, for fear of receiving any part of the honor due to Christ alone, he adds, "His feelings were so very tender on this subject, that I once undesignedly put him almost in an agony, by remarking the great loss which the church of Christ would receive by his death, at this particular juncture. The utmost distress was immediately visible in his countenance and he exclaimed to this purpose: 'What, by my death? No! By my death? No! Jesus Christ is able, and will, by proper instruments, defend his own truths. And with regard to what little I have been enabled to do in this way; not to me, not to me, but to his own name, and to that alone, be the glory.'

"Conversing on the subject of election, he said; 'That God's everlasting love to his chosen people, his eternal, particular, most free, and immutable choice of them in Christ

¹⁰⁵ Abridged from Wilson's History.

Jesus, was without the least respect to any work or works of righteousness wrought, to be wrought, or that should ever be wrought in or by them; for God's election does not depend upon our sanctification, but our sanctification depends upon God's election and appointment of us unto everlasting life.' At another time, he was so affected with a sense of God's everlasting love to his soul, that he could not refrain from bursting into tears.

"A short time before his death, at his request, I felt his pulse; and he desired to know what I thought of it. I told him that his heart and arteries evidently beat weaker and weaker. He replied immediately, with the sweetest smile upon his countenance, 'Why, that is a good sign that my death is fast approaching; and, blessed be God, I can add, that my heart beats every day stronger and stronger for glory.'

"To another friend, who, in conversation with him on the subject of his principles, had asked him whether any doubt remained upon his mind respecting the truth of them, he answered; 'Doubt, sir, doubt! Pray use not that word when speaking of me. I cannot endure the term; at least while God continues to shine upon my soul in the gracious manner he does now. Not but that I am sensible, that while in the body, if left of him, I am capable, through the power of temptation, of calling in question every truth of the gospel. But that is so far from being the case, that the comforts and manifestations of his love are so abundant, as to render my state and condition the most desirable in the world. And, with respect to my principles, those blessed truths which I have been enabled in my poor measure to maintain, appear to me, more than ever, most gloriously indubitable. My own existence is not, to my apprehension, a greater certainty.'

"Speaking to another friend on the subject of his 'Dying Avowal,' he expressed himself thus: 'My dear friend, those great and glorious truths which the Lord in rich mercy hath given me to believe, and which he hath enabled me (though very feebly) to stand forth in the defence of, are not (as those who believe not or oppose them say) dry doctrines, or mere speculative points. No. But being brought into the practical and heartfelt experience, they are the very joy and support of my soul; and the consolations flowing from them carry me far above the things of time and sense.'

"Another of his friends, mentioning likewise the report of his recanting his former principles, he said, with some vehemence and emotion, 'I recant my former principles! God forbid that I should be so vile an apostate.' To which he presently added, with great apparent humility, 'And yet that apostate I should soon be, if I were left to myself.'

"Another time he cried out, 'O what a day of sunshine this has been to me! I have not words to express it. What a great thing it is to rejoice in death!' Speaking of Christ, he said, 'his love is unutterable.' He was happy in declaring that the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, verse thirty-third to the end, were the joy and comfort of his soul. Upon that portion of Scripture, he often descanted with great delight, and would be frequently ejaculating, 'Lord Jesus! why tarriest thou so long?'

"Within the hour of his death, he called his friends and his servant, and asked them if they could give him up. On their answering in the affirmative, since it pleased the Lord to be so gracious to him, he replied, 'O what a blessing it is you are made willing to give me up into

the hands of my dear Redeemer, and to part with me; it will not be long before God takes me, for no mortal man can live (bursting, while he said it, into tears of joy,) after the glories which God hath manifested to my soul.' Soon after this, his redeemed spirit took its flight, on Tuesday, August 11, 1778, in the 38th year of his age."

MR. JOHN MACGOWAN, known to the world as the author of 'Dialogues of Devils,' and other ingenious works, was a Baptist minister, and pastor of the church meeting in Devonshire-square, London. In the early part of his life he was in connection with the Wesleyan Methodists, but after his mind was enlightened to see the glory of sovereign grace, he zealously and publicly preached all those important truths which the Particular Baptists at that time steadily maintained.

Mr. Macgowan's views of the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel may be collected from the following pathetic lines, which he composed on the death of Dr. Gill. I quote them with much approbation, excepting the allusion to Elijah and Elisha, which appears to savour too much of the legal dispensation. Dr. Gill was worthy of all the love and esteem which his brethren manifested towards him, but he should not be regarded in any other character than a *faithful and beloved brother*. Those who are of the truth, acknowledge no *leader* but Christ himself. Few men understood this principle better than Mr. Macgowan; but being a young man when Dr. Gill died, and having lost a venerable friend, whom he loved exceedingly for the truth's sake, and from whom he had derived great spiritual advantage, the ardour of his mind led him to compare his situation with that of Elisha, when his aged companion was transported to heaven; so that he gave vent to the feelings of his soul in the following verses:

"Sad was the day, to young Elisha sad,
When Great Elijah from his head was taken;
Not less to me, O Gill! thy head now laid,
And this my mansion now by thee forsaken.

Those days were precious, when the lure of truth
Unmixed, by thee proclaimed, our willing feet
Drew thither, and the genial dew of youth
Shed on our hearts, and made our joys complete.

But now thy pulpit's dumb, thy voice no more
From thence proclaims illustrious truth divine;
Better employed on yonder blissful shore;
And here to mourn in solitude is mine.

Yet still methinks, I hear the solemn sound
Of sovereign love, as preached by thee of yore;
Of boundless heights and depths beyond profound,
Brimless and bottomless, without a shore.

O! the sweet theme! how hast my heart been warm'd
With holy gratitude to hear thee tell
Of grace foreknowing, grace selecting, arm'd

At all events to rescue me from hell!"

To Mr. Reynolds, a sound minister, who succeeded Mr. Brine, we are indebted for the account of the dying testimony of Mr. Macgowan. "I frequently visited him," says Mr. Reynolds, "in his last sickness, when he took occasion as opportunity offered, of opening to me his whole heart.

"At one time he was in great darkness of soul, and lamented exceedingly the withdrawals of the presence of God. Two things, he said, had deeply exercised his thoughts. The one was, how those heavy and complicated afflictions which God had seen fit to lay upon him could work so as to promote his real good. And the other was, that God, his best friend, should keep at a distance from his soul, when he knew how much his mind was distressed for the light of his countenance. 'O!' said he, turning to me, and speaking with great earnestness, 'My soul longeth and panteth for God, for the living God; his love visits would cheer my soul, and make this heavy affliction sit light upon me. The wonted presence of Jesus, my Redeemer, I cannot do without. I trust he will turn to me soon, yea, I know he will in his own time; for he knows how much I need the influence of his grace!' In this conversation he often mentioned the depravity of his nature, and what a burden he found it. 'My heart,' said he, 'is more and more vile. Every day I have such humiliating views of heart corruption as weighs me down. I wonder whether any of the Lord's people see things in the same light that I do.' And then turning to me he said, 'And do you find it so brother?' On my answering him in the affirmative, he replied, 'am glad of that.'

"The next time, which was the last of my conversing with him, I found him in a sweet and heavenly frame; his countenance indicated the serenity of his mind. On my entering the room, he exclaimed, 'O, my dear brother, how rejoiced am I to see you! Sit down, and hear of the loving-kindness of my God. You see me as ill as I can be whilst in this world, and as well as I can be whilst in the body. Methinks I have as much of heaven as I can hold.' Then tears of joy, like a river flowed from his eyes; and his inward plausible frame interrupted his speech for a time. He broke silence with saying, 'The work will soon be over; but death to me has nothing terrific in it. I have not an anxious thought. The will of God and my will are one. 'Tis all right, yet mysterious. You cannot conceive the pleasure I feel in this reflection; viz., that I have not shunned to declare (according to the best of my light and ability), the whole counsel of God. I can die on the doctrines that I have preached. They are true; I find them so. Go on to preach the gospel of Christ, and mind not what the world may say of you.' All the while I sat silent; and rising to take my leave, fearing he would spend his strength too much, he immediately took me by the hand, and weeping over each other, we wished mutual blessings. On parting, he said, 'My dear brother, farewell; I shall see you no more.'

"Thus I left my much esteemed friend and brother; and the next news I heard from his was, that on Saturday evening his immortal spirit left the body, to go to the world of light and bliss, and keep an eternal Sabbath with God, angels and saints.

"Mr. Macgowan departed this life, November 25, 1780 in the 55th year of his age."

MR. SAMUEL MEDLEY was for twenty-seven years the pastor of a Baptist church in Liverpool, but as he frequently preached in the metropolis, he was well known there, and in

many parts of the country, where his labours were extensively useful. His views of divine truth were nearly the same as those of Dr. Gill; and although he was far removed from a party or bigoted spirit, he was too faithful to escape the revilings of many, who were willing to bury the doctrines of the gospel under the pretence of universal charity. In the latter part of his time, the sentiments of Mr. Fuller were beginning to prevail, but had not then obtained an entrance into the church at Liverpool, a circumstance for which Mr. Medley, in conversation with a friend expressed his thankfulness to God. In a letter written with his own hand during his last illness, to my near and honoured relative, he thus declares the foundation of his hope. "I know no other name, I want no other foundation for my hope and salvation for time or for eternity, but that of Jesus, and everlasting love. This has never failed any of God's chosen and called yet, and I am persuaded it never will. I do not love trimming and half-way preaching nor professing either. You can and will, my dear brother, I trust, bear me witness, that ever since you have known and loved me in the bonds of the gospel and in the bowels of Christ, that I have, as I trust by grace enabled, uniformly set my face against all such mingle mangle. I know, and daily feel I am a poor, dark, weak, and worthless worm; but I trust I would not walk willingly in craftiness, nor knowingly handle the word of God deceitfully, for all the world, or all the men in the world, whether professors or profane, whether they frown or smile. And these things I write not to aggrandize or set up myself, O no! God forbid, but to bear my sincere and humble testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus."

The following account of Mr. Medley's dying testimony to the glorious truths of the gospel is extracted from the memoirs of him, published by his son, "From the first of his illness he laboured under great depression of spirits, arising partly from the nature of his disorder, but more especially from the frame of his mind, which was in general low and dark, mourning much on account of the loss of sensible comforts. During this trial he would sometimes say he 'feared he had only been instrumental in the salvation of others as a scaffold to the building, which, when completed, is taken down as of no further use.'

"This dejected frame did not long continue, though the change that took place was gradual. He was somewhat cheered by the following passage: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness,' &c., &c. As his bodily infirmities increased, the gloom and darkness under which he had laboured were dispelled, and the delightful dawn of an eternal day began to break forth. His confidence and comfort in God, as his covenant God in Christ Jesus, constantly increased; and he became more and more resigned to the sovereign of his heavenly Father, casting himself on the Rock of ages, and patiently waiting the termination of his troubles. The 17th chapter of John was peculiarly precious to him. He often read it during his illness. 'It is indeed the Lord's prayer,' he would say, 'none but Christ could use that prayer.'

"In a letter which he wrote a few days before his death, he said, 'Blessed be God, he supports and upholds my mind on and by his good word and the Holy Spirit. Though I have no ravishing frames, or flights of soul, yet I humbly trust the eternal God is my refuge, and underneath are his everlasting arms.' He then repeated those words in the 130th Psalm, 'I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.'

"To a clergyman with whom he had lived some time in the habits of friendship, he said, 'Farewell, God bless you: remember I die no Arminian, Arian, or Socinian. I die a poor sinner,

saved by sovereign, rich and free mercy.' To another, whose occupation had formerly been in the sea-faring line, he said, 'I am now a poor shattered bark, just about to gain the blissful harbour; and O how sweet will be the port after the storm!'

"On the day before he died, he exclaimed, 'Is there not an appointed time to man? Sweet Jesus, thou art my strength, my support, my salvation, my salvation. Tell my dear friends I am going: Jesus is with me, and I am not dejected. I am full of comfort and consolation, and able yet to recollect God's precious word. I never saw so much of my own unworthiness, or so much of the excellency, glory, and suitableness of Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour. As to my sentiments,' he continued, 'I am no ways altered. The doctrines I have preached, I am fully persuaded, are of the truth. They are now the support and consolation of my mind. That Jesus, whom I have so long recommended to poor sinners, is my only comfort in my dying hours. His salvation is every way perfect and complete.'

"Early in the morning of the day on which he died, he said, with a serene and smiling countenance, 'Look up, my soul, and rejoice, for thy redemption draweth nigh!' He then added, 'I am looking up to Jesus—but a point or two more, and I shall be at my heavenly Father's house.' Though his bodily agonies were sometimes extreme, yet the views he had of the finished salvation of Jesus raised him above them all, and in this happy frame of mind did he continue, till, with a smiling countenance, he yielded up his spirit into the hands of his heavenly Father, on July 27, 1799."

Now, what shall we say to these things? Here we have many witnesses, who testified, with one accord, that the sovereign mercy of Israel's Triune God, displayed in eternal election, special redemption, and spiritual revelation, was their support in life, and their only consolation in death. It would be easy to enlarge the catalogue with a cloud of witnesses; but the time would fail to tell of Owen, of Gill, of Brine, of Hervey, of Romaine, of Hawker, and of a thousand others, who lived and died in the faith of these truths. The Lord himself had instructed them with a strong hand; he had shown them the infinite evil of sin, and humbled them with such views of their real character, as condemned sinners, that they were convinced that nothing short of a finished and absolute salvation would meet their wretched case.

"They therefore preached the gospel fix'd and free,
Not 'yea and nay,'—it may or may not be;
Such gospel God had taught them to detest,
And in the certain gospel gave them rest."

But can indefinite redemption yield so strong consolation? Can a 'yea and nay' gospel thus support the mind? Let the dying confession of Mr. Fuller himself answer the question.

It is with mingled emotions of pleasure and fear that I appeal to Mr. Fuller's last words. Of fear, because of the delicacy of the subject; of pleasure, because his last confession of hope, affords abundant reason for thanksgiving to God on his behalf. It would have been a gloomy circumstance indeed, if Mr. Fuller had gone out of the world expressing the same confidence in the doctrine he had taught, as Cole, Toplady, &c. did, in the immortal truths which supported their minds.

It seems pretty evident, that, during the whole of his last illness, the Lord was instructing him by means of his complicated afflictions and giving him to understand, in a clearer manner than he had ever known before, that it was not *for his own righteousness' sake that he was about to go into and possess the land*. He was subject not only to great bodily suffering, but of much darkness and depression of spirit; a state of mind, to which the most eminent saints are liable, and with which all the elect of God are, at one time or other, made acquainted. While thus exercised, he appears to have been surrounded by miserable comforters, who reminded him of his eminent goodness, and the consequent reward. One of this description said to him, "I know of no person, sir, who is in a more happy situation than yourself; a good man on the verge of a blessed immortality." But Mr. Fuller was not in a state of mind to be consoled by the consideration of his goodness, though his biographer says, he "humbly acquiesced, and hoped it was so." But we are informed that "he afterwards lifted up his hands and exclaimed, 'I am a great sinner, and if I am saved, it must be by great and sovereign grace—by great and sovereign grace.'"¹⁰⁶ Thanks be to God for such an exclamation as this!

Another friend, a Mr. Burls, who witnessed his last hours, thus writes:¹⁰⁷ "Respecting our dear friend, many will *be disappointed as to his dying experience*; so little being known as to the feelings of his mind. While he was able to converse, the substance of what he said was,—he had no raptures, no despondency. His feelings were not so much in exercise as his judgment." No doubt many would be disappointed as to the dying experience of Mr. Fuller. Doubtless many of his friends expected that so good, so pious a man, would, when he came to die, reflect with joy upon his well-spent life, and express the utmost confidence that his sincere and humble efforts would be acceptable through the merits of our Saviour. But it please God in mercy to disappoint their foolish expectations. It pleased him to convince Mr. Fuller that he was altogether an unclean thing, and that there was no hope for his guilty soul, but on the foundation of sovereign mercy alone. The friends of truth have no reason to be disappointed at the dying experience of Mr. Fuller, but rather to thank God on his behalf. There is abundant reason to believe he was fully convinced, that if he was saved, it would not be because he was so good, so pious, so useful a man, but because Jesus bore his sins and died in his stead. Accordingly, he expressed himself in these appropriate words: "I am a poor guilty creature; but Jesus is an Almighty Saviour. I have no other hope of salvation than arises from mere sovereign grace, through the atonement of my Lord and Saviour. With this hope, I can go into eternity with composure."

These last expressions are contained in a very interesting and affecting letter, which he wrote to Dr. Ryland a few days before his death. Would to God that the whole course of Mr. Fuller's ministry had been doctrinally in unison with that letter! He there seems to acknowledge divine sovereignty in all its parts. In the same letter are the following remarkable words: "I have preached and written much against the abuse of the doctrine of grace; BUT that doctrine is all my salvation, and all my desire." Now, although this is not a *formal* renunciation of his former principles, yet it evidently betrays a secret suspicion that he had gone too far in his opposition to the abuse of the doctrine of grace. He bears no dying testimony to the truth of his former principles, like Cole, Toplady, Macgowan; he makes no reference to them as his support in death, but rather he discovers a latent uneasiness, lest all

¹⁰⁶Morris' Memoirs, 8vo, 1816, page 470.

¹⁰⁷Bap. Mag. 1815, page 248.

had not been quite right. Else what means that significant conjunction, *but*? Or why did Mr. Fuller advert exclusively to the controversy with his Baptist brethren, especially in a letter to Dr. Ryland, who he knew had formerly held different sentiments from those which at that time he maintained. Mr. Fuller had written against the Socinians; he had written against the Sandemanians; he had written against Mr. Dan Taylor, the General Baptist; and against Mr. McLean, of Edinburgh; but he makes not the slightest allusion to any thing he had written against these. His mind was quite at rest as to the parts he had taken in their controversies. But he had written against what he considered the *abuse of the doctrine of grace*; and if, as a dying man, he alluded to what he had taught on this subject, it might at least have been expected that he would have set his last seal to it, had he possessed the confidence that his doctrine would stand the test. Instead of this, we have a significant *but*, wherein much is implied which is not expressed; and the whole sentence evidently discovers *a secret suspicion, if not a persuasion, that what he had written against the abuse of sovereign grace, had a tendency to subvert sovereign grace itself*; yet through the tender compassion of God, he is made freely to confess, that *sovereign mercy, and sovereign mercy alone, in all its bearings, is the only hope for his guilty and polluted soul*.

How painful soever it may be in some respects, to contrast the dying experience of Mr. Fuller with that of the precious sons of Zion already referred to, the painfulness is swallowed up in the delightful consideration, that the most subtle opponent of sovereign grace that ever appeared in our denomination, was himself a monument of that very grace which his writings had a tendency to destroy. There is abundant reason to hope, that he who once laboured to prove that *guilt is untransferable*, is now singing a different song. "Unto him that loved us, AND WASHED US FROM OUR SINS in his own blood." We have reason to indulge the pleasurable reflection, that he who formerly denied the *vicarious nature* of the death of Christ, who taught that Jesus died *indefinitely*, is now joining with the innumerable multitude bought with blood, to celebrate particular redemption before the throne, and to sing with one accord to the exalted Lamb, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

And now, my dear sir, adieu! May sovereign mercy be your support in life, and your consolation in death. Glad shall I be to hear of your becoming a more decided preacher of it, and of that glorious righteousness which is revealed in the gospel. But, if you should be thus honored, rest assured that you will not escape persecution. Opposition to the truth has now become too common, not only in the world, but amongst professors to allow you to escape. But the faith of that glorious righteousness will make you strong in weakness, joyful in tribulation, and triumphant in the awful moment of death. If, in your last conflict with the king of terrors, it should please the Holy Ghost to irradiate your soul with the glory of that righteousness, you will meet the monster with a smile, and triumphantly exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting,? O grave, where is thy victory?"

WILLIAM RUSHTON, JUN.
LIVERPOOL, AUG. 31, 1831.