

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

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

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

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

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

viewed individually, while clearly sanctioned by scriptural statements, can also be shown to be necessarily involved in the full and consistent development, even of those more defective views which the universalists would substitute in their room. The death of Christ, according to them, operates upon men's relation to God and their eternal welfare, not by its being an endurance of the penalty of the law in their room, and thus satisfying divine justice, but merely by its being suffering inflicted *vice pœnæ*, as we saw in Limborch, or as a substitute for the penalty; and as thus presenting certain views of God's character, government, and law, which, when impressed upon men's minds, would prevent any erroneous views, or any injurious consequences, arising from their sins being pardoned. Now,—not to dwell again upon the serious objection to this principle, when set forth as a *full* account of the doctrine of the atonement, from its involving no provision whatever for the actual exercise, but only for the apparent outward manifestation, of the divine perfections,—it is important to notice, that it is not easy to see how the death of Christ is fitted to produce the requisite impressions, unless it be really regarded in the light in which Scripture represents it, as the endurance of the penalty of the law in our room and stead. In order to serve the purposes ascribed to it, as an expedient of government, by producing certain impressions upon men's minds, it must unfold the holiness and justice of God,—the perfection and unchangeableness of His law,—and the exceeding sinfulness and infinite danger of sin. Now, it is not merely true, as we contend, in opposition to the Socinians, that these impressions can be produced, and the corresponding results can be accomplished, only by an atonement,—only by substitution and satisfaction, understood in some vague and indefinite sense,—but also that, in order to this, there must be true substitution, and real and proper satisfaction. The justice and holiness of God are very imperfectly, if at all, manifested, by His inflicting some suffering upon a holy and innocent person, in order that sinners might escape, unless that person were acting, and had consented to act, strictly as the surety and substitute of those who were to receive the benefit of His sufferings.

There is certainly no manifestation of the excellence and perfection of the divine law, or of the necessity of maintaining and honouring it, if, in the provision made for pardoning sinners, it was relaxed and set aside,—if its penalty was not inflicted,—if

there was no fulfilment of its exactions, no compliance with its demands. It is only when we regard the death of Christ in its true scriptural character, and include, in our conceptions of it, those more strict and definite views of substitution and satisfaction, which exclude the doctrine of universal atonement, that we can see, in the pardon of sinners, and in the provision made for effecting it, the whole combined glory of God's moral character, as it is presented to us in the general statements of Scripture, and that we can be deeply impressed with right conceptions of the perfection of the divine law, and of the honour and reverence that are unchangeably due to it. The notion, then, that the atonement operates upon the forgiveness of sinners, merely by its being a great display of the principles of God's moral government,—and this is the favourite idea in the present day of those who advocate a universal atonement,—is not only liable to the fatal objection of its giving defective, and, to some extent, positively erroneous views of the nature of the atonement, as it is represented to us in Scripture, but is, moreover, so far from being fitted to be a substitute for, and to supersede the stricter views of, substitution and satisfaction, that it cannot stand by itself,—that nothing can really be made of it, unless those very views which it was designed to supersede are assumed as the ground or basis on which it rests.

I had occasion to mention before, that there was a considerable difference in the degree to which the Arminians allowed their doctrine of the extent of the atonement to affect their representations and dilutions of its nature and immediate object, and that they usually manifested more soundness upon this subject when contending against the Socinians, than when attacking the Calvinists. It has also generally held true, that Calvinistic universalists have not gone quite so far in explaining away the true nature of the atonement as the Arminians have done. They have, however, generally given sufficiently plain indications of the perverting and injurious influence of the doctrine of universal atonement upon right views of its nature, and never perhaps so fully as in the present day. There are men in the present day, who still profess to hold Calvinistic doctrines upon some points, who have scarcely left anything in the doctrine of the atonement which a Socinian would think it worth his while to oppose. I do not now refer to those who are popularly known amongst us by the name of Mori-

sonians; for though they began with merely asserting the universality of the atonement, they made very rapid progress in their descent from orthodoxy; and though of but a very few years' standing *under this designation*, they have long since renounced everything Calvinistic, and may be justly regarded as now teaching a system of gross, unmitigated Pelagianism. There are others, however, both in this country and in the United States, who, while still professing to hold some Calvinistic doctrines, have carried out so fully and so far their notion of the atonement being not a proper substitution or satisfaction, but a mere display, adapted to serve the purposes of God's moral government, that it would really make no very essential difference in their general scheme of theology, if they were to renounce altogether the divinity of our Saviour, and to represent His death merely as a testimony and an example.

Perhaps it is but just and fair to be somewhat more explicit and personal upon this point, and to say plainly whom, among the defenders of a universal atonement in our own day, I mean,—and whom I do not mean,—to comprehend in this description. I mean to comprehend in it such writers as Dr Beman in America, and Dr Jenkyn in this country; and I do not mean to comprehend in it Dr Wardlaw and Dr Payne, and writers who agree in defending, in their way, the doctrine of a universal atonement. Dr Beman and Dr Jenkyn both teach, that the death of Christ was a mere substitute for the penalty which the law had prescribed, and which men had incurred; and that it operates upon the forgiveness of men's sins, not by its being a proper satisfaction to the divine justice and law, but merely by its being a display of principles, the impression of which upon men's minds is fitted to promote and secure the great ends of God's moral government, while they are receiving the forgiveness of their sins, and are admitted into the enjoyment of God's favour. Dr Wardlaw, on the contrary, has always asserted the substance of the scriptural doctrine of the atonement, as involving the ideas of substitution and satisfaction; and has thus preserved and maintained one important and fundamental branch of scriptural truth, in the defence of which, indeed, against the Socinians, he has rendered important services to the cause of scriptural doctrine. The injurious tendency of the doctrine of universal or unlimited atonement upon his views of its nature (for it will be recollected, that I at present leave out of view the connection between this doctrine

and the peculiarities of the Calvinistic system), appear chiefly in these respects: first, the exaggerated importance which he sometimes attributes to the mere manifestation of the general principles of the divine moral government, as distinguished from the actual exercise of the divine perfections, and the actual fulfilment and enforcement of the divine law, in the great process adopted for pardoning and saving sinners; and, secondly, in occasional indications of dissatisfaction with some of the more strict and definite views of substitution and satisfaction, without any very distinct specification of what it is in these views to which he objects.\* It is not, indeed, to be supposed, that these statements bring out the *whole* of the perverting influence of the doctrine of universal atonement upon Dr Wardlaw's views on this subject, for, while this is the whole extent to which he has developed its effects upon his views of *the proper nature and immediate effect* of the atonement, he of course supports the important error (as every one who holds an unlimited atonement must do), that Christ, by dying, did not purchase or merit faith and regeneration for His people; and that, consequently, so far as depended upon anything that the atonement effected or secured, all men might have perished, even though Christ died to save them. But it must be recollected, that this department, too, of the subject I set aside, as one on the discussion of which I should not enter, confining myself to some illustration of the inconsistency of the doctrine of universal atonement, with right views of the nature and immediate effect of the atonement, and of its powerful tendency to lead men who, in the main, hold scriptural views upon these subjects, to dilute them or explain them away.

It is very common for men who hold loose and erroneous views in regard to substitution and satisfaction, to represent the stricter and more definite views of these subjects, which are necessarily connected with the doctrine of a limited atonement, as leading to Antinomianism. But there is no great difficulty in defending them against this objection; for it is easy enough to show that the highest and strictest views upon these points, which have received the sanction of Calvinists, do not afford any ground for the general position that the law is abrogated or set

\* On the second point, *vide* Wardlaw's Discourses on Nature and Extent of Atonement.—Review of Reviews in Preface to Second Edition, pp. 41, 55, 83, 87.

aside, even in regard to believers,—and are perfectly consistent with the truth that they are still subject to its obligation, as a rule of life, though they are not under it “as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned;” \* while it can also be easily shown that they afford no countenance to the notions of some men—who approximate to Antinomianism—about the eternal justification of the elect, or their justification, at least, from the time when the sacrifice of Christ in their room was first accepted,—notions sufficiently refuted by these general positions: first, that the substitution and satisfaction of Christ form part of a great and consistent scheme, all the parts of which are fitted to, and indissolubly linked with, each other; and, secondly, that it is one of the provisions of this great scheme, that, to adopt the language of our Confession, † though “God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect; and Christ did, in the fulness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification: nevertheless they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them.”

*Sec. XII.—Extent of Atonement, and Calvinistic Principles.*

We have considered the subject of the extent of the atonement solely in connection with the scriptural statements bearing upon this particular point,—and in connection with the views taught us generally in Scripture with regard to the nature, objects, and effects of the atonement itself,—without much more than merely incidental allusions to the connection between this and the *other* doctrines that are usually controverted between the Calvinists and the Arminians. We have adopted this course, because we were anxious to show that the doctrine of particular redemption,—or of an atonement limited in its destination, though not in its intrinsic sufficiency,—which is commonly reckoned the weakest part of the Calvinistic system, and seems to be regarded by many as having no foundation to rest upon *except* its accordance with the other doctrines of Calvinism,—is quite capable of standing upon its own proper merits,—upon its own distinct and independent evidence,—without support from the other doctrines which have been commonly held in combination with it. It is proper,

\* Confession, c. xix., s. 6.

† C. xi., s. 4.

however, to point out more distinctly, as a not unimportant subject of investigation,—though we can do little more than point it out,—the bearing of this doctrine upon some of the other departments of the Calvinistic or Arminian controversy.

The Arminians are accustomed to argue in this way: Christ died for all men,—that is, with a purpose, design, or intention of saving all men; leaving it, of course, to the free will of each man individually to determine whether or not he will concur with this purpose of God, embrace the provision, and be saved. And if Christ died for all men, then it follows that there could not be any eternal decree by which some men were chosen to life, and others passed by and left to perish. Thus, upon the alleged universality of the atonement, they founded a distinct and independent argument against the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination; and this argument, as I formerly had occasion to mention, is strongly urged by Curcellæus and Limborch, and others of the ablest Arminian writers. The Calvinists meet this argument by asserting that Christ did not die for all men, but only for some, in the sense in which I have had occasion to explain these statements; and by establishing this position on its own proper evidence, they not only refute the argument against predestination, but bring out an additional confirmation of its truth. All this is plain enough, so far as the general sequence and connection of the argument is concerned. But the question occurs, What do the Calvinistic universalists make of it? They believe that Christ died for all men, and they also believe in the eternal, absolute election of some men to salvation. Of course they are bound to maintain that these two things are consistent with each other, and on *this* particular point,—namely, the consistency of these two doctrines,—they have both the Arminians and the great body of the Calvinists to contend against; for Calvinists, in general, have admitted that, if the Arminians could establish their position, that Christ died for all men, the conclusion of the falsehood of the Calvinistic doctrine of election could not be successfully assailed.

The way in which this matter naturally and obviously presents itself to the mind of a believer in the doctrine of election is this,—and it is fully accordant with Scripture,—that God must be conceived of as, first, desiring to save some of the lost race of men, and electing or choosing out those whom He resolved to

save,—a process which Scripture uniformly ascribes to the good pleasure of His will, and to no other cause whatever; and *then*,—that is, according to our mode of conceiving of the subject, for there can be no real succession of time in the infinite mind,—decreeing, as the great mean in order to the attainment of this end, and in consistency with His perfections, law, and government, to send His Son to seek and save them,—to suffer and die in their room and stead. The mission of His Son, and all that flowed from it, we are thus to regard as a result or consequence of God's having chosen some men to everlasting life, and thus adopting the best and wisest means of executing this decree, of carrying this purpose into effect. If this be anything like the true state of the case, then it is plain that God never had any real design or purpose to save all men,—or to save any but those who are saved; and that His design or purpose of saving the elect continued to exist and to operate during the whole process,—regulating the divine procedure throughout, and determining the end and object contemplated in sending Christ into the world, and in laying our iniquities upon Him. This view of the matter, Calvinists, in general, regard as fully sanctioned by the statements of Scripture, and as fully accordant with the dictates of right reason, exercised upon all that we learn from Scripture, or from any other source, with respect to the divine perfections and government. The course which the Calvinistic universalists usually adopt in discussing this point,—in order to show at once against the Arminians, that, notwithstanding the admitted universality of the atonement, the doctrine of election may be true, and to show, against the generality of Calvinists, that, notwithstanding the admitted doctrine of election, the universality of the atonement may be true,—is this, they try to show that we should conceive of God as *first* decreeing to send His Son into the world to suffer and die for all men, so as to make the salvation of all men possible, and to lay a foundation for tendering it to them all; and then, foreseeing that all men would reject this provision, if left to themselves, decreeing to give to some men, chosen from the human race in general, faith and repentance, by which *their* salvation might be secured.

Now, the discussion of these topics involves an investigation of some of the most difficult and abstruse questions connected with the subject of predestination; and on these we do not at

present enter. We would only remark, that the substance of the answer given to these views of the Calvinistic universalists, may be embodied in these positions,—leaving out the general denial of the universality of the atonement, which is not just the precise point at present under consideration, though sufficient of itself, if established, to settle it.—First, that the general will or purpose to save all men conditionally is inconsistent with scriptural views of the divine perfections,—of the general nature and operation of the divine decrees,—and of the principles by which the actual salvation of men individually is determined; and really amounts, in substance, to a virtual, though not an intentional, betrayal of the true Calvinistic doctrine of election into the hands of its enemies. Secondly, and more particularly, that this method of disposing and arranging the order of the divine decrees,—that is, according to our mode of conceiving of them, in making the decree to send Christ to die for men, *precede* the decree electing certain men for whom He was to die, and whom, by dying, He was certainly to save,—is inconsistent with what Scripture indicates upon this subject. This is, indeed, in substance, just the question which used to be discussed between the Calvinists and the Arminians upon the point,—whether or not Christ is the cause and foundation of the decree of election—the Arminians maintaining that He is, and the Calvinists that He is not,—a question of some intricacy, but of considerable importance, in its bearing upon the subject of election generally, which will be found discussed and *settled* in Turretine,\* on the decrees of God and predestination. I may also observe, that, in the last Quæstio of the same Locus,† under the head of the *order* of the decrees of God in predestination, there is a very masterly exposure of the attempts of Calvinistic universalists to reconcile their doctrine, in regard to the extent of the atonement, with the doctrine of election, by deviating from what Calvinists have generally regarded as the right method of arranging the order of the divine decrees,—according to our mode of conceiving of them,—by representing atonement as *preceding* election in the divine purpose; and, what is very interesting and instructive, his arguments fully meet and dispose of all the grounds taken by the best writers on the opposite side in our own day. In the portion of this Quæstio to which

\* Turretin. Loc. iv., Quæst. x.

† Quæst. xviii.

I more immediately refer, he is arguing, of course, with the school of Cameron and Amyraldus,—the hypothetic or conditional universalists, as they were generally called by the divines of the seventeenth century. Of the various and discordant parties composing the defenders of unlimited atonement in our own day, Dr Wardlaw is the one whose views most entirely concur with those of the founders of that school. His views, indeed, exactly coincide with theirs,—he has deviated no further from sound doctrine than they did, and not nearly so far as most of the modern defenders of an unlimited atonement. Accordingly, the statement which Turretine gives of the views and arguments of those who defended universal atonement, in combination with election, embodies the whole substance of what Dr Wardlaw has adduced in defence of his principles, in his work on the nature and extent of the atonement,—and the argument is put at least as ably and as plausibly as it has ever been since; while Turretine, in examining it, has conclusively answered all that Dr Wardlaw has adduced, or that any man could adduce, to reconcile the doctrine of an unlimited atonement with the Calvinistic doctrine of election.\*

I think it useful to point out such illustrations of the important truth, that almost all errors in theology,—some of them occasionally eagerly embraced as novelties or great discoveries when they happen to be revived,—were discussed and *settled* by the great theologians of the seventeenth century.

There is only one point in the representations and arguments of Calvinistic universalists, to which I can advert more particularly. It is the practice of describing the atonement as intended for, and applicable to, all; and representing the whole speciality of the case, with reference to results, as lying, not in the atonement itself, but merely in the application which God, in His sovereignty, resolved or decreed to make, and does make, of it; and then calling upon us, with the view of giving greater plausibility to this representation, to conceive of, and to estimate, the atonement *by itself*, and *wholly apart* from its application,—or from the election of God, which, they admit, determined its application, to individuals. Now, this demand is unreasonable,—it implies misconception, and it is fitted to lead to greater misconception.

\* Loc. iv., Qu. xviii., s. xiii. Wardlaw, pp. 77-92.

Our duty, of course, is just to contemplate the atonement, as it is actually presented to us in Scripture, in all the connections and relations in which it stands. We know nothing of the atonement but what the Bible makes known to us; and, in order to know it aright, we must view it just as the Bible represents it. The scheme of salvation is a great system of purposes and actings, on the part of God, or of truths and doctrines which unfold to us these purposes and actings. The series of things, which are done and revealed with a view to the salvation of lost men, constitute a great and harmonious system,—devised, superintended, and executed by infinite wisdom and power, and complete in all its parts, which work together for the production of glorious results. And when we attempt to take this scheme to pieces, and to separate what God has joined together, we are in great danger of being left to follow our own devices, and to fall into error, especially if we do not take care to base our full and final conclusions, in regard to any one department of the scheme, upon a general survey of the whole. We admit that the atonement, viewed by itself, is just vicarious suffering, of infinite worth and value, and, of course, intrinsically sufficient to expiate the sins of all men. There is no dispute about this point. This admission does not satisfy our opponents, and does not in the least incommode us. The question in dispute turns upon the destination or intended object, not the intrinsic sufficiency, of the atonement. We cannot conceive of anything intermediate between intrinsic sufficiency on the one hand, and actual or intended application on the other. The actual application of the atonement extends to those only who believe and are forgiven. And Calvinists,—although they may think it convenient, for controversial purposes, to argue for a time, as Dr Wardlaw does, upon the supposition of atonement without election,—*must* admit that this actual application of the atonement was, in each case, foreseen and fore-ordained. There could be no *intended* application of the atonement, contrary, or in opposition, to that which is actually made, and made because it was intended from eternity. The doctrine of the atonement may be said to consist of its intrinsic sufficiency and of its intended application. These two heads exhaust it; and when men hold up what they call the atonement, *per se*, viewed by itself and apart from its application, and yet will not admit that this description corresponds to, and is exhausted by, its infinite intrinsic sufficiency,

they *must* mean by this,—for there is no medium,—an *intended application* of the atonement different from the application that is in fact made of it, in actually pardoning and saving men. But this is manifestly *not* the atonement, *per se*, viewed by itself, and apart from its application; so that the supposition on which they are fond of arguing has really no meaning or relevancy, and tends only to perplex the subject, and to involve in doubt and obscurity the sovereign election of God in the salvation of sinners.

The truth is, that the atonement, apart from its application, actual or intended, cannot be conceived of in any other sense than with reference merely to its intrinsic sufficiency; and the question truly in dispute really amounts, in substance, to this,—whether, besides the actual application of the atonement to some men, in their actual pardon and acceptance,—which, of course, our Calvinistic opponents must admit to have been intended and fore-ordained,—there was a different *intended*, though never realized, application of it to all men,—some design, purpose, or intention, on God's part, of saving all men through its means. And it was just because the question really turned, not upon anything we know, or can know, about the atonement viewed in itself, and apart from its application, but upon the purpose or design of God in giving His Son, and of Christ in giving Himself, for men, that the whole subject was frequently discussed, in the seventeenth century, under the head of universal grace,—that is, the universal love or kindness of God, in designing and providing, by sending His Son into the world, for the salvation of all men; and I am persuaded that it is chiefly from overlooking the consideration, that the whole question does, and must, turn upon the purpose, or design, of God and Christ in the matter, and the consequent destination of what they did,—and from getting themselves entangled in the consideration of what they call the atonement *per se*,—that any men who hold the doctrine of election have succeeded in persuading themselves of the universality of the atonement. The investigation of the will or decree—the purpose or design—of God, in the matter, belongs properly to the head of predestination; and under that head Calvinistic divines have fully proved that no such will, purpose, or design, to save all men, as the doctrine of universal atonement necessarily implies, can be reconciled with what is taught in Scripture, and confirmed by right reason, with respect to the divine decrees.

The history of theology affords abundant evidence of the tendency of the doctrine of universal atonement to distort and pervert men's views of the scheme of divine truth, though, of course, this tendency has been realized in very different degrees. There have been some theologians in whose minds the doctrine seemed to lie, without developing itself, to any very perceptible extent, in the production of any other error. With these persons, the doctrine, that Christ died for all men, seems to have been little or nothing more than just the particular form or phraseology in which they embodied the important truth of the warrant and obligation to preach the gospel to every creature,—to invite and require men, without distinction or exception, to come to Christ, and to embrace Him, that they might receive pardon, acceptance, and eternal life. In such cases, the error really amounts to little more than a certain inaccuracy of language, accompanied with some indistinctness or confusion of thought. Still it should not be forgotten that all error is dangerous, and that *this* is a point where, as experience shows, error is peculiarly apt to creep in, in subtle and insidious disguises, and to extend its ravages more widely over the field of Christian truth, than even the men who cherish it may, for a time, be themselves aware of.

The first and most direct tendency of this doctrine is to lead men to dilute and explain away—as I have illustrated at length—the scriptural statements with respect to the true nature and import of the substitution and satisfaction of Christ, and their bearing upon the redemption and reconciliation of sinners. And this introduces serious error into a most fundamental department of Christian truth. There are men, indeed, who, while holding the doctrine of universal atonement, still make a sound profession in regard to the true nature and immediate effects of Christ's death. But this is only because they do not fully comprehend their own principles, and follow them out consistently; and, of course, their tenure even of the truth they hold rests upon a very insecure foundation. But the progress of error in many cases does not stop here. The idea very naturally occurs to men, that, if Christ died for all the human race, then some provision must have been made for bringing within all men's reach, and making accessible to them, the privileges or opportunities which have been thus procured for them. And as a large portion of the human race are, undoubtedly, left in entire ignorance of

Christ, and of all that He has done for them, some universalists have been led, not very unnaturally, to maintain the position,—that men may be, and that many have been, saved through Christ, or on the ground of His atonement, who never heard of Him, to whom the gospel was never made known, though Scripture surely teaches—at least in regard to adults—that their salvation is dependent upon their actually attaining to a knowledge of what Christ has done for men, and upon their being enabled to make a right use and application of the knowledge with which they are furnished. It is very easy and natural, however, to advance a step further, and to conclude that since Christ died for all men, He must have intended to remove, and have actually removed, not only some, but all, obstacles to their salvation; so that all, at least, to whom He is made known, must have it wholly in their own power to secure their salvation. And this naturally leads to a denial, or at least a dilution, of the doctrine of man's total depravity, and of the necessity of the special supernatural agency of the Spirit, in order to the production of faith and regeneration; or—what is virtually the same thing—to the maintenance of the doctrine of what is called universal sufficient grace—that is, that all men have sufficient power or ability bestowed upon them to repent and believe, if they will only use it aright.

Calvinistic universalists can, of course, go no further than universal grace in the sense of God's universal love to men, and design to save them, and universal redemption, or Christ dying for all men. The Arminians follow out these views somewhat more fully and consistently, by taking in also universal vocation, or a universal call to men,—addressed to them either through the word, or through the works of creation and providence,—to trust in Christ, or at least in God's offered mercy, accompanied, in every instance, with grace sufficient to enable them to accept of this call. In like manner, it is nothing more than a consistent and natural following out of the universal grace and universal redemption, to deny the doctrine of election, and thus to overturn the sovereignty of God in the salvation of sinners; and it is not to be wondered at, that some have gone further still, and asserted the doctrine of universal salvation,—the only doctrine that really removes any of the difficulties of this mysterious subject, though, of course, it does so at the expense of overturning the whole authority of revelation. Men have stopped at all these various

stages, and none are to be charged with holding anything which they disclaim; but experience, and the nature of the case, make it plain enough, that the maintenance of universal grace and universal atonement has a tendency to lead men in the direction we have indicated; and this consideration should impress upon us the necessity of taking care lest we should incautiously admit views which may, indeed, seem plausible and innocent, but which may eventually involve us in dangerous error.

I must now terminate the discussion of this whole subject, and proceed to consider the other leading doctrines involved in the controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians. I have dwelt longer upon this doctrine of the atonement than upon any other. The subject is of fundamental importance, both theoretically and practically; both in its bearing upon a right comprehension of the scheme of Christian truth, and upon the discharge of *the duties* incumbent upon us, viewed either simply as men who have souls to be saved, or as bound to seek the salvation of others. And there is much in the present condition of the church, and in the existing aspects of our theological literature, to enhance the importance of thoroughly understanding this great doctrine,—having clear and definite conceptions of the principal points involved in it,—and being familiar with the scriptural evidence on which our convictions regarding it rest. The atonement forms the very centre and keystone of the Christian system. It is most intimately connected, on the one side (or *a priori*), with all that is revealed to us concerning the natural state and condition of men, and concerning the nature and character of Him who came in God's name to seek and to save them; and, on the other hand (or *a posteriori*), with the whole provision made for imparting to men individually the forgiveness of their sins,—the acceptance of their persons,—the renovation of their natures,—and, finally, an inheritance among them that are sanctified; and it is well fitted to guard against defective and erroneous views upon the subject of the atonement, that we should view it in its relation to the whole counsel of God, and to the whole scheme of revealed truth. The atonement is the great manifestation of God,—the grand means of accomplishing His purposes. The exposition of the true nature, causes, and consequences of the sufferings and death of the Son of God,—the unfolding of the true character, the objects,



and effects, of His once offering up of Himself a sacrifice,—constitutes what is more strictly and peculiarly the gospel of the grace of God, which, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, is to be proclaimed to all nations for the obedience of faith. The only legitimate herald of the cross is the man who has been taught by God's word and Spirit to understand the true nature and application of this great provision,—who, in consequence, has been led to take his stand, for his own salvation, upon the foundation which has been laid in Zion,—and who is able also to go round about Zion, to mark her bulwarks, and to consider her palaces,—to unfold the true nature and operation of the great provision which God has made for saving sinners, by sending His own Son to suffer and die for them. And with special reference to the peculiar errors of the present time, there are two dangers to be jealously guarded against : first, the danger of attempting to make the cross of Christ more attractive to men,—to make the representations of the scheme of redemption better fitted, as we may fancy, to encourage and persuade men to come to Christ, and to trust in Him, by keeping back, or explaining away, anything which God has revealed to us regarding it,—by failing to bring out, in its due order and right relations, every part of the scheme of revealed truth ; and, secondly, the danger of underrating the value and the efficacy of the shedding of Christ's precious blood, of the decease which He once accomplished at Jerusalem, as if it were fitted and intended merely to remove legal obstacles, and to open a door for salvation to all, and not to effect and secure the actual salvation of an innumerable multitude,—as if it did not contain a certain provision—an effectual security—that Christ should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied ; that He should appear at length before His Father's throne, with the whole company of the ransomed,—with all whom He washed from their sins in His own blood, and made kings and priests unto God, saying, “ Behold, I and the children whom Thou hast given Me !”

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE ARMINIAN CONTROVERSY.

#### *Sec. I.—Arminius and the Arminians.*

WE have had occasion to show that the fundamental principles of Calvinism, with respect to the purposes or decrees, and the providence or proceedings, of God, were believed and maintained by Luther and Zwingle, as well as by Calvin. The opposite view of Zwingle's opinion,—though given both by Mosheim and Milner,—is quite destitute of foundation ; and its inaccuracy has been demonstrated by Scott, in his excellent continuation of Milner. Luther and Melancthon had repeatedly asserted God's fore-ordaining whatever comes to pass, and His executing His decrees in providence, in stronger terms than ever Calvin used. There is no evidence that Luther changed his opinion upon this subject. There is evidence that Melancthon's underwent a considerable modification, though to what extent it is not easy to determine, as, in his later works, he seems to have written upon these subjects with something very like studied ambiguity ; while, in his letters to Calvin, he continued to make a sort of profession of agreeing with him. The Reformers were substantially of one mind, not only in regard to what are sometimes spoken of in a somewhat vague and general way, as the fundamental principles of evangelical doctrine, but also in regard to what are called the peculiarities of Calvinism ; though there were some differences in their mode of stating and explaining them, arising from their different mental temperaments and tendencies, and from the degrees in the extent of their knowledge and the fulness of their comprehension of the scheme of divine truth. The principal opponent of Calvinistic doctrines, while Calvin lived, was Castellio, who had no great weight as a theologian. The Lutheran churches, after the death of Melancthon, generally abandoned Calvin's doctrine in

regard to the divine decrees, and seem to have been somewhat tempted to this course, by their singularly bitter animosity against all who refused to receive their doctrine about the corporal presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The Socinians rejected the whole system of theology which had been generally taught by the Reformers; and Socinus published, in 1578, Castello's Dialogues on Predestination, Election, Free Will, etc., under the fictitious name of "Felix Turpio Urbevetaus."\* This work seems to have had an influence in leading some of the ministers of the Reformed churches to entertain laxer views upon some doctrinal questions.†

The effects of this first appeared in the Reformed Church of the Netherlands. The Reformation had been introduced into that country, partly by Lutherans from Germany, and partly by Calvinists from France. Calvinistic principles, however, prevailed among them; and the Belgic Confession, which agrees with almost all the confessions of the Reformed churches in teaching Calvinistic doctrines, had, along with the Palatine or Heidelberg Catechism, been, from about the year 1570, invested with public authority in that church. It was in this country that the first important public movement against Calvinism took place in the Reformed churches, and it may be dated from the appointment of Arminius to the chair of theology at Leyden in 1603. An attempt, indeed, had been made to introduce anti-Calvinistic views into the Church of England a few years before this; but it was checked by the interference of the leading ecclesiastical authorities, headed by Whitgift, who was at that time Archbishop of Canterbury. And it was only as the result of the labours of Arminius and his followers, and through the patronage of the Church of England falling into the hands of men who had adopted their views, that, at a later period, Arminianism was introduced into that church. Before his appointment to the chair of theology, Arminius—whose original name was Van Harmen—who had studied theology at Geneva under Beza, and had been for some years pastor of a church in Amsterdam, seems to have adopted, even then, most of the doctrinal views which have since been generally associated with his name, though he was only sus-

\* Spanhemii Elenchus, p. 238. Ed. 1701. | des Eglises Réformées, P. iii., c. iv., tome ii., p. 262.

† Basnage, Histoire de la Religion

pected of heterodoxy, or of holding views inconsistent with the doctrine of the Reformed churches, and of the Belgic Confession, and had not yet afforded any public or tangible proofs of his deviation from sound doctrine. Although he seems, in general, even after he was settled as Professor of Theology at Leyden, to have proceeded in the promulgation of his opinions with a degree of caution and reserve scarcely consistent with candour and integrity, yet it soon became evident and well known that he had embraced, and was inculcating, opinions inconsistent with those which were generally professed in the Reformed churches. This led to much contention between him and his colleague, Gomarus, who was a learned and zealous defender of Calvinism. The Church of the United Provinces soon became involved in a controversy upon this subject, which got entangled also with some political movements. Arminius was with some difficulty prevailed upon, in 1608, to make a public declaration of his sentiments on the points in regard to which he was suspected of error. He died in 1609. After his death, Episcopius was considered the head of the party; and he ultimately deviated much further from the path of sound doctrine than Arminius had done.

The followers of Arminius, in 1610, presented a remonstrance to the civil authorities of the United Provinces, stating, under five heads or articles, the opinions they had adopted, asking a revision or correction of the symbolical books of the church,—the Belgic Confession, and the Palatine or Heidelberg Catechism,—and demanding full toleration for the profession of their views. This fact procured for them the designation of the Remonstrants, the name by which they are most commonly described in the theological writings of the seventeenth century; while their opponents, from the answer they gave to this paper, are often called Contraremonstrants. A conference was held between the parties, at the Hague, in 1611,—usually spoken of as the Collatio Hagien-sis,—at which the leading points in dispute were fully discussed, but without any approach being made towards an agreement. The orthodox party were very anxious to procure a meeting of a national synod, which might take up the subjects controverted, and give a decision upon them. The Arminians laboured to prevent this, and had influence enough with the civil authorities to succeed in this object for several years. At length, in November 1618, a national synod was held at Dort, at which were present

also representatives or delegates from almost all the Reformed churches of Europe, including even the Church of England. This synod sat for about six months,—unanimously condemned the doctrinal views of the Remonstrants,—and adopted a body of canons upon those points at issue which have been ever since regarded as one of the most valuable and authoritative expositions of Calvinistic theology. By the sentence of the synod, the Remonstrants were deposed from their ecclesiastical offices; and by the civil authorities they were suppressed and exiled. But in a few years—in 1626—they were allowed to return to their country, were tolerated in the performance of public worship, and permitted to establish a theological seminary at Amsterdam. This seminary has been adorned by men of distinguished talents and learning, especially Episcopius, Curcellæus, Limborch, Le Clerc, and Wetstein,—whose labours and writings contributed, to no small extent, to diffuse Arminianism among the Reformed churches.

These are the leading facts connected with the origin and progress of Arminianism, and the reception it met with in the Reformed churches;—facts of which, from their important bearing upon the history of theology, it is desirable to possess a competent knowledge.

As there was nothing new in substance in the Calvinism of Calvin, so there was nothing new in the Arminianism of Arminius;—facts, however, which do not in the least detract from the merits of Calvin as a most powerful promoter of scriptural truth, or from the demerits of Arminius, as an influential disseminator of anti-scriptural error. The doctrines of Arminius can be traced back as far as the time of Clemens Alexandrinus, and seem to have been held by many of the fathers of the third and fourth centuries, having been diffused in the church through the corrupting influence of pagan philosophy. Pelagius and his followers, in the fifth century, were as decidedly opposed to Calvinism as Arminius was, though they deviated much further from sound doctrine than he did. The system of theology which has generally prevailed in the Church of Rome was substantially very much the same as that taught by Arminius, with this difference in favour of the Church of Rome, that the Council of Trent at least left the Romanists at liberty to profess, if they chose, a larger amount of scriptural truth, upon some important points, than the Arminian creed, even in its most evangelical form, admits of,—a truth strik-

ingly confirmed by the fact, that every Arminian would have rejected the five propositions of Jansenius, which formed the ground of the Jansenistic controversy, and would have concurred in the condemnation which the Pope, through the influence of the Jesuits, pronounced upon them.

The more evangelical Arminians, such as the Wesleyan Methodists, are at great pains to show that the views of Arminius himself have been much misunderstood and misrepresented,—that his reputation has been greatly injured by the much wider deviations from sound doctrine which some of his followers introduced, and which have been generally ranked under the head of Arminianism. They allege that Arminius himself agreed with all the leading doctrines of the Reformers, except what they are fond of calling the peculiarities of Calvinism. There is, undoubtedly, a good deal of truth in this statement, as a matter of fact. The opinions of Arminius himself seem to have been almost precisely the same as those held by Mr Wesley, and still generally professed by his followers, except that Arminius does not seem to have ever seen his way to so explicit a denial of the doctrine of perseverance, or to so explicit a maintenance of the possibility of attaining perfection in this life, as Wesley did; and it is true, that much of what is often classed under the general name of Arminianism contains a much larger amount of error, and a much smaller amount of truth, than the writings of Arminius and Wesley exhibit. Arminius himself, as compared with his successors, seems to have held, in the main, scriptural views of the depravity of human nature,—and the necessity, *because of men's depravity*, of a supernatural work of grace to effect their renovation and sanctification,—and this is the chief point in which Arminianism, in its more evangelical form, differs from the more Pelagian representations of Christian doctrine which are often classed under the same designation. The difference is certainly not unimportant, and it ought to be admitted and recognised wherever it exists. But the history of this subject seems to show that, whenever men abandon the principles of Calvinism, there is a powerful tendency leading them downwards into the depths of Pelagianism. Arminius himself does not seem,—so far as his views were ever fully developed,—to have gone further in deviating from scriptural truth than to deny the Calvinistic doctrines of election, particular redemption, efficacious and irresistible grace in conversion, and to doubt, if

not to deny, the perseverance of the saints. But his followers, and particularly Episcopius and Curcellæus, very soon introduced further corruptions of scriptural truth, especially in regard to original sin, the work of the Spirit, and justification; and made near approaches, upon these and kindred topics, to Pelagian or Socinian views. And a large proportion of those theologians who have been willing to call themselves Arminians, have manifested a similar leaning—have exhibited a similar result.

It is quite common, among the writers of the seventeenth century, to distinguish between the original Remonstrants,—such as Arminius and those who adhered to his views, and who differed from the doctrines of the Reformed churches only in the five articles or the five points, as they are commonly called,—and those who deviated much further from scriptural truth. The latter class they were accustomed to call Pelagianizing or Socinianizing Remonstrants; and the followers of Arminius very soon promulgated views that fully warranted these appellations,—views which tended to exclude or explain away almost everything that was peculiar and fundamental in the Christian scheme; and to reduce Christianity to a mere system of natural religion, with only a fuller revelation of the divine will as to the duties and destinies of man. The followers of Arminius very soon began to corrupt or deny the doctrines of original sin,—of the grace of the Spirit in regeneration and conversion,—of justification through Christ's righteousness and merits. They corrupted, as we have seen, the doctrine of the atonement,—that is, the substitution and satisfaction of Christ; and some of them went so far towards Socinianism, as, at least, to talk very lightly of the importance, and very doubtfully of the validity of the evidence, of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ. Something of this sort, though varying considerably in degree, has been exhibited by most writers who have passed under the designation of Arminians, except the Wesleyan Methodists; and it will be a new and unexampled thing in the history of the church, if that important and influential body should continue long at the position they have hitherto occupied in the scale of orthodoxy,—that is, without exhibiting a tendency to imbibe either more truth or more error,—to lean more to the side either of Calvinism or Pelagianism. Pelagian Arminianism is more consistent with itself than Arminianism in its more evangelical forms; and there is a strong tendency in

systems of doctrine to develop their true nature and bearings fully and consistently. Socinianism, indeed, is more consistent than either of them.

The Pelagians of the fifth century did not deny formally the divinity and the atonement of our Saviour, but they omitted them,—left them out in their scheme of theology to all practical intents and purposes,—and virtually represented men as quite able to save themselves. The Socinians gave consistency to the scheme, by formally denying what the Pelagians had practically set aside or left out. Many of those who, in modern times, have passed under the name of Arminians, have followed the Pelagians in this important particular, and while distinguished from the Socinians by holding in words—or rather, by not denying—the doctrines of the divinity and atonement of Christ, have practically represented Christianity, in its general bearing and tendency, very much as if these doctrines formed no part of revelation; and all who are Arminians in any sense,—all who reject Calvinism,—may be proved to come short in giving to the person and the work of Christ that place and influence which the Scriptures assign to them. The Papists have always held the doctrines of the divinity and atonement of Christ; and though they have contrived to neutralize and pervert their legitimate influence by a somewhat more roundabout process, they have not, in general, so entirely omitted them, or left them out, as the Pelagians and many Arminians have done. This process of omission or failing to carry out these doctrines in their full bearings and applications upon the way of salvation, and the scheme of revealed truth, has, of course, been exhibited by different writers and sections of the church, passing under the general designation of Arminian, in very different degrees. But, notwithstanding all this diversity, it is not very difficult to point out what may fairly enough be described as the fundamental characteristic principle of Arminianism,—that which Arminianism either is or has a strong and constant tendency to become; and this is,—that it is a scheme for dividing or partitioning the salvation of sinners between God and sinners themselves, instead of ascribing it wholly, as the Bible does, to the sovereign grace of God,—the perfect and all-sufficient work of Christ,—and the efficacious and omnipotent operation of the Spirit. Stapfer, in his "Theologia Polemica," states the *πρωτον ψευδος*, or originating false principle of the Arminians, in this way:

“Quod homini tribuunt vires naturales obediendi Evangelio, ut si non cum Pelagianis saltem cum semi-Pelagianis faciant. Hoc est, si non integras vires statuunt, quales in statu integritatis fuerunt, tamen contendunt, illas licet ægras, ad gratiam oblatam tamen recipiendam sufficientes esse.”\* The encroachment they make upon the grace of God in the salvation of sinners varies, of course, according to the extent to which they carry out their views, especially in regard to men’s natural depravity, and the nature and necessity of the work of the Spirit in regeneration and conversion; but Arminianism, in any form, can be shown to involve the ascription to men themselves,—more directly or more remotely,—of a place and influence in effecting their own salvation, which the Bible denies to them and ascribes to God.

While this can be shown to be involved in, or fairly deducible from, Arminianism in every form, it makes a very material difference in the state of the case, and it should materially affect our judgment of the parties, according as this fundamental characteristic principle is brought out and developed with more or less fullness. This distinction has always been recognised and acted upon by the most able and zealous opponents of Arminianism. It may be proper to give a specimen of this. Ames, or Amesius,—whose writings upon the Popish controversy, in reply to Bellarmine, cannot be spoken of except in the very highest terms of commendation,—has also written several very able works against the Arminians. He was present at the Synod of Dort, though not a member of it,—was much consulted in drawing up its canons,—thoroughly versant in the whole theology of the subject,—and a most zealous and uncompromising advocate of Calvinism. In his work, “De Conscientia,” under the head De Hæresi, he puts this question, *An Remonstrantes sint hæretici?* And the answer he gives is this, “*Remonstrantium sententia, prout à vulgo ipsis faventium recipitur, non est proprie hæresis, sed periculosus error in fide, ad hæresin tendens. Prout vero a quibusdam eorum defenditur, est hæresis Pelagiana: quia gratiæ internæ operationem efficacem necessariam esse negant ad conversionem, et fidem ingerendam.*”† Ames, then, thought that Arminianism, in its more mitigated form, was not to be reckoned a heresy, but only a dangerous error in doctrine, tending to heresy; and that it should be

\* C. xvii., s. xii., tom. iv., p. 528.

† Lib. iv., c. iv., Q. 4.

stigmatized as a heresy, only when it was carried out so far as to deny the necessity of an internal work of supernatural grace to conversion and the production of faith. And the general idea thus indicated and maintained should certainly be applied, if we would form anything like a fair and candid estimate of the different types of doctrine, more or less Pelagian, which have passed under the general name of Arminianism.

### Sec. II.—Synod of Dort.

The Synod of Dort marks one of the most important eras in the history of Christian theology; and it is important to possess some acquaintance with the theological discussions which gave occasion to it,—with the decisions it pronounced upon them,—and the discussions to which its decisions gave rise. No synod or council was ever held in the church, whose decisions, all things considered, are entitled to more deference and respect. The great doctrines of the word of God had been fully brought out, in the preceding century, by the labours of the Reformers; and, under the guidance of the Spirit which accompanied them, they had been unanswerably defended against the Romanists, and had been cordially embraced by almost all the churches which had thrown off antichristian bondage. In the beginning of the seventeenth century, some men appeared in different churches, who, confident in their own powers, and not much disposed to submit implicitly to the plain teaching of the word of God, were greatly disposed to speculate upon divine things. They subjected the system of doctrines, which had been generally received by the Reformers, to a pretty searching scrutiny, and imagined that they had discovered some important errors, the removal of which tended, as they thought, to make the scheme of scriptural doctrine more rational, and better fitted to command the assent of intelligent men, and to promote the interests of practical religion. They were men abundantly fitted, by their talents and acquirements, to give to these views, and to the grounds on which they rested, every fair advantage. After these alleged improvements upon the theology of the Reformation had been for some time published, and had been subjected to a pretty full discussion, the Synod of Dort assembled to examine them, and give an opinion upon them. It consisted not only of the representatives of the churches of one