

THE
SAVIOUR'S PURCHASE,

AND THE

SINNER'S RIGHT:

OR THE

DOCTRINE OF PURCHASED BLESSINGS EXPLAINED
AND VINDICATED.

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THE
SAVIOUR'S PURCHASE,

ETC. ETC.

THAT the ever-blessed God loved his chosen people before the world began; that he blessed them with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus; that Christ has actually redeemed them to God; that they shall all be taught by the Holy Ghost, and be sanctified through the truth; and, finally, that they shall be brought safely to eternal glory, are points not now in question. But the inquiry is, whether the spiritual blessings given in Christ, blessings which are needful for us, as fallen creatures, ought to be considered and represented, as the procurement of Christ's meritorious obedience and death; Or, *whether a legal right to that grace and glory which the elect will all finally enjoy, was obtained, procured, or purchased, by the merits of Christ, for them?*

That *Arminians, Baxterians, and Socinians* should assert the negative, is no more than what might be expected; but that lovers of unconditional and infallible salvation through Jesus Christ, should unite with them in their so doing, has long appeared to me not a little extraordinary. The *Arminian* readily observes, that if he were to admit, that Christ purchased the principle of faith for all those for whom he died, he must then allow that Christ did not die for all men; because the greater part of mankind never became the subjects of faith. Therefore, rather than authorize this sentiment, he will insist upon it, that Christ purchased not faith for those for whom he died.

There are some good men who differ widely from the *Arminians*, but who nevertheless agree with them, in

denying that Jesus procured spiritual blessings by his death; and even declare that he is dishonoured by the doctrine. It is by them esteemed a sentiment incompatible with the *love of God* to his elect, inconsistent with the ancient *covenant of promise* in Christ, and irreconcilable with an absolute and *unforfeitable* interest in Christ by eternal election; as well as with the *personal right* which they suppose Christ had to all spiritual blessings, as God over all, blessed for ever. But the arguments drawn from these principles are, in my apprehension, entirely inconclusive. Let the subsequent observations be maturely weighed.

I. *The death of Christ cannot be the cause of that, of which it is itself an effect.* It therefore has no causal influence on the divine will; but, on the contrary, the divine will ordained the death of Christ, as the meritorious cause of salvation to the objects of eternal love: this idea then must not be denied in any of the subsequent observations. For the same reason, the death of Christ did not move God to love his people; nor did it at all influence his election of them to be sons and heirs of himself; but, on the other hand, because they were sons, by eternal predestination, therefore, Christ died for them.* He died for them, that they might enjoy their adoption, in their pardon and sanctification; and *because* they were his brethren in the bosom of his Father, and were loved by him, as he himself was loved.† Relationship by grace is opened through redemption; but it is not procured by it. Sin occasioned his sufferings, but love moved him to endure them.‡

II. *The love of God to his chosen, as unfallen, must not be confounded with his gifts to them as sinners.* In the *former case*, they were chosen into sonship, on the foundation of Christ's sonship; but, in the *latter condition*, they were provided for as sinners, on the basis of Christ's mediation. The merits of Jesus, therefore, procure blessings for fallen sons; but they do not procure sonship. Were we to suppose all the sons of God to stand before him, as unfallen, they must then be considered as without

* Eph. i. 5. John, xi. 52.

† John, xvii. 23.

‡ Rom. v. 8. Eph. v. 25. Gal. ii. 20.

merit, and therefore without *right* to claim any thing, as a just due, from the hand of their Maker and common Father. No creature can deserve to be, and, when called into being, has no claim on God for the continuance of his being, without a special *promise* from him. If man had a right to existence, creation on God's part would not be a voluntary act,—which it would be absurd to deny. And though the perfection of God shields innocence from suffering death, yet it does not evidently deny the possibility of annihilation; so that a *right* to continuance in being is not evident, where no promise is given by the Creator. Every state in which man can exist must be dependent, and must involve a representation of the independency of God. To earn or deserve any unpromised good at the hand of God, is a natural impossibility to the creature, in any state. But, if this be allowed, it will follow, that a *right to grace and glory*, such as God determined to give, and such as the elect shall all for ever enjoy, was never possessed by any creature, independently of the merit of Christ; because no *promise* of these spiritual blessings was ever given by God the Father, either to Christ or his brethren, but on the ground of his mediation. And where there is no promise, there can be no pactional right.

III. *God's loving his people does not of itself invest them with a personal right to the pardon of their sins, and so not to other spiritual blessings.* Because God loves his chosen, therefore he gives them a right to their pardon; but this effect of his love they could not have, without a promissory engagement on his part to bestow it: and it is clearly evident, that he never engaged to confer it on any one, but through the merits of Christ; that justice and grace might be equally reflected in the bestowment, and the sinner's right be founded in his Saviour's obedience and blood.

“Jacob loved Rachel,” and, in consequence thereof, she became his wife; but his loving her did not of *itself* entitle her to call him her husband, and to consider his possessions her own. It is true, right springs from love, but love itself does not suppose right, either in the person loving, or in the person loved. *Not in the person loving*, as may be illustrated by the case of Jacob; for he had to

serve seven years for Rachel, according to agreement with her father. And the same may be noted with regard to our blessed Lord, who, though he greatly loved the church, he yet had not a *legal* right to take her to himself, as his own, without *giving himself for her*, as Jacob, in a much lower sense, gave himself to Laban for Rachel.* *Not in the person loved*, for actionable right does not consist in being loved, but it must have passed over, by engagement, to the person loved: so that merely being loved, does not suppose the person loved to have any right, in the view of either party. The kindness of a friend may kindle a hope of benefit from his friendship; but his promise is essential to the acquirement of a right to his possessions. These observations are chiefly designed to obviate that course of reasoning, which some supralapsarians adopt, who *erroneously* conclude, that, because God loved and chose his people in the pure mass, as it is usually expressed, he therefore blessed them with all their spiritual blessings in Christ, as their representative, without any reference to his meritorious obedience and death, as the procuring cause of those blessings.

IV. Allowing that *the love of God was set upon his chosen, as unfallen, it follows not that the pardon of sin was their right, by virtue of love only*: for he did not love them *as* sinners, though he continued to love them *when* they became sinners. It is admitted, that the fall did not destroy their supralapsarian interest in God's love; but it nevertheless placed them under the undeniable authority of punitive justice, from whose inflexible demands, they could have no right to liberty, but by the suretyship and death of Christ, although greatly beloved by their adopting Father. Now, liberty is a spiritual blessing; and if it cost our Lord his life, the sentiment of purchased blessings, as now pleaded for, must be conceded. Grace reigns to eternal life, but then it is only through the meritorious righteousness of Christ. He is *just* to forgive us our sins.

V. *Whatever the elect have a right to enjoy, God is in righteousness bound to bestow on them: but God's love is an act of sovereignty in his own breast, and could not so*

* Gen. xxix. 18. Rom. xiv. 9. Eph. v. 25 — 57.

bind him to bestow forgiveness on his rebellious people, as that they should acquire any legal right to it, simply on that foundation; or, that he should be chargeable with *injustice*, on the supposition of his not granting that forgiveness. If, while Jacob loves Rachel, he never makes her any promise of benefits arising from his love, except through certain conditions, agreed on between him and her father, then she obtains no right from his love, but as it is expressed in and through the actual accomplishment of the supposed conditions, according to his promissory engagement. Right without compact is impossible. Pardon and peace were never promised but on the condition of our blessed Lord's meritorious service and sufferings being finished; neither did he ever pray for them on any other foundation.*

As interest in divine love did not prevent our falling into legal condemnation, so neither did it supersede the great work of atonement. But to atone for a man's sins, is to procure the blessing of pardon, or impunity, by a sacred compact, subsisting between the sinner's offended Legislator and his delivering Surety. Thus sublapsarian procurements are built on supralapsarian interest: as the *latter* was requisite to our sonship, as creatures, so the *former* was necessary to our liberty and purity, as sinners.†

VI. *Love never left the salvation of its objects to be dubious, but it moved infinite wisdom to contrive that it might be just.* Salvation must either be just, or impossible; because God is the author of it. But how can the pardon and justification of the ungodly be just acts, except these blessings be procured by the obedience and death of Christ? That which is just cannot be omitted without injustice. It is not only true, that some sinners *may be saved* by the death of Christ, but *they must never perish*. Were one of the elect finally to perish, for whom Christ died, (and he died for all the elect,) it would not only argue a suspension of promised mercy, but amount to an act of *injustice*; because, by the sufferings of Christ for them, according to the covenant of promise, they acquired by him a legal right to pardon and full salva-

* John xvii. 4, 5, 19.

† John ii. 12. Heb. ix. 22.

tion. "God is the just justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

VII. *Christ's personal right is not that on which he intercedes for us; nor is it that on which our right is upheld; except, as his personal right may be considered as influencing his mediatorial right, through his performance of the required conditions of the covenant of our redemption. The Father gave him a work to do; this work he pleads, as the ground of his mediatorial right to the blessings promised in the gospel covenant.* And Paul said to the Ephesians, "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." But his claims as God, and as the Son of God, must not be confounded with his rights as the perfected Author, Prince, and Captain of our salvation. It is on the latter that the covenant of Promise proceeds; and the unforfeitable right of his brethren rests for ever secure. Were we to suppose salvation to be founded in his personal right, merely, instead of his suretyship, it would not then be by a voluntary act of God's gracious will, but merely from the essential excellence of his nature; and he would then be as necessarily and universally the Saviour of Sinners, as he is now the Legislator and Judge of the world: an idea this, which neither agrees with the law nor the gospel. His infinite worth rendered him able to save, but his suretyship makes him a Saviour; therefore, every argument drawn from his absolute possessions, as a divine person, is of no avail, to obviate the establishment of the sentiment of purchased blessings.*

VIII. *Christ and his chosen members must be considered as in union by the sovereign good will of God, in order to pardon and other spiritual blessings being acquired for them, by him, to the glory and praise of grace and justice; and that their title to those blessings should be made out in his name, or for his sake. Interest in Christ, therefore, by election, is so far from superseding his purchase of our remission by his death, that it lays the only sure and suitable foundation for the effecting of that very purchase; because it is the only relative ground of his*

* John xvii. 4.

suretyship engagements for us. It is useless, then, to reason from our election interest, to deny our blood-bought right to those blessings, which God has designed us, as sinners called by grace, to enjoy in part here, and in perfection hereafter.

IX. *Redemption and purchase ought not to be taken as entirely synonymous.* That which is redeemed may be said to be purchased; but that which is purchased is not always redeemed. Some, through overlooking this plain distinction, have pleaded, that spiritual blessings could not be purchased, because they never were lost, or forfeited, by the fall of Adam. But surely a thing may be purchased which has never been mortgaged, and to which the claimant could have no legal right, but on the ground of such purchase being made. And we know, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission." Did not the apostle mean, that we have no right to this valuable blessing, but on the footing of Jesus' meritorious death? If this be granted, I require no more.

X. *Christ's essential fulness*, which is denominated the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily, should not be commixed, in our thoughts, with his communicable fulness, which dwells in him *by the will of his Father*. The *former* indeed we cannot say he purchased, nor that it was given to him by his Father; but the *latter*, which is his mediatorial fulness, was not only given, but bestowed on the condition of his obedience and death only. The blessing of remission, which comes to all the elect gratuitously, cost their compassionate and righteous Lord the greatest price. Some of the arguments adduced against the purchase of blessings, equally oppose their being given to him, and thus they prove more than is intended by their abettors. Paul says, "By his own blood he obtained eternal redemption." Is not this a blessing? Does it not mean that he obtained or merited for his members a legal right to *pardon, liberty, and endless life*? So it appears to me.

XI. *It is admitted*, to the opposers of this doctrine, that *Christ did not procure the good will of the promiser, expressed in the promises of the covenant of redemption*; yet, the *life and salvation* therein promised were procured by his mediation: *nor were these blessings ever promised on any*

other basis. God the Father blessed his beloved and chosen people with all spiritual blessings in Christ, before the world began; but this is no proof that the mediatorial work required in that covenant was not the foundation on which the federal promise of these blessings was made, the condition of the compact, it is well known, was not actually accomplished till long after the formation of this world; but this no way contravenes my conclusion. As a Surety, he was trusted, and, in due time, he fulfilled his agreement. Thousands of his saints were glorified with him, long before he had actually laid down his life as the price of their redemption. The purchase of grace and glory was agreed on in covenant, and the blessings promised, and actually bestowed on the people, in Christ's name, though the price required and promised was not in reality paid, until more than four thousand years after the creation of the world. The blessings, therefore, might be conditionally given before the world, and yet be purchased in the world. That promise, which, through his merit, is *to us* entirely free, was truly conditional *to him*, as our Surety. To him salvation was by works and sufferings, which at once proves the dignity of his person, and the harmony of the divine attributes in our salvation.

XII. *A redemption of persons from all evil to all good, necessarily includes a procurement of spiritual blessings.* Therefore, the common observation, that he purchased persons, and not things, is nothing to the purpose. He that paid our debts, by the same act procured our liberty. He that suffered for us, endured the cross to obtain our impunity. He who wrought righteousness for us, by so doing doubtless intended to acquire for us *a right to justification*. He that gave himself for us, that he might "*sanctify and present us to himself*," undoubtedly procured our purification, safety, acceptance, and glorification. "He suffered the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Is it not *a blessing* to be brought to God, and to be "made nigh by Jesus' blood?" Surely, if he suffered for this end, he procured this end and benefit by his sufferings, for all those for whom he vicariously suffered. If, as Peter says, we are redeemed from our vain conversation, with the precious blood of Christ, his death must have

purchased our conversion. And does he not herein "see of the travail of his soul?" Surely he intended, by obeying the law, to procure *the deliverance* of his people from it. Is not this liberation a blessing? "If the Son make you free, then are you free indeed." "Stand fast in the *liberty* wherewith Christ has made us free," Could he make us free, and yet never purchase our liberty? When he obeyed the law for us, did he not do it with the merciful view of procuring our justification? Is not justification from all legal charges, a real and a most comprehensive *blessing*? Is it not a mere quibble, to say that he wrought the righteousness, but did not obtain our discharge by it? He paid the price of life and liberty; did he not purchase those blessings by so doing? If he did not procure our justification, then may his righteousness be rejected by the Justifier, when pleaded by the sinner, *without any injustice!* For however excellent this righteousness may be in itself, and in the sight of God, if it do not entitle us to acquittal at the divine bar, we may deceive ourselves by relying upon it. This is an awful consideration. Was not Jesus justified by works? Was it not, then, to him a matter of debt? Then, had he not, through his obedience, *a right*, as our Mediator, to his justification; or did he obtain mercy? If he, as the Head, procured *his* own discharge, does it not follow, that he purchased the justification of his members, at the same time, and by the same acts? If he did not purchase their discharge, I see not how he could procure his own. Surely the truth is hence made manifest, and the doctrine of purchased blessings firmly established.

XIII. *As the blessings referred to proceed from the hand of impartial justice to guilty men, they must be meritoriously procured;* for divine justice can only bestow *what is due*, or inflict *what is deserved*. To justify those people who are made the righteousness of God in the obedience of Christ, is an act of justice. God is just, in justifying all who believe in Jesus, as the end of the law for righteousness.* When our meritorious Lord was justified in the spirit, it was not by an act of grace, but of justice; for he did not obtain mercy. That which, in one view, is an act of free grace, in another view is an act of justice.

* Rom. iii. 24.

Considered as in ourselves, we are ungodly ; but viewed in Christ, we are righteous, by an act of sovereign grace ; and are uncondemnable, having a right to our discharge, on the same footing as that on which our representative had a right to his ; that is, perfect righteousness. Justice is the sinner's friend, in Jesus !

When Jesus died for his people, to save them from their sins, it was to make satisfaction to divine justice, according to the purpose of divine grace. It was not at the hand of Sovereign Grace that he sought his captive bride, but at the hand of offended Justice. The law by which she was condemned, was not the instrument of grace, but of justice ; therefore, from the authority and power of indignant justice, he purchased the salvation of his beloved ; and *this salvation is a blessing* of unutterable value, and of eternal duration.

XIV. Spiritual blessings, being said to be *through Jesus Christ, by him, and for his name's sake, or through his name*, denotes, that he has *acquired* them, by his merits, for all his people ; or, that they have a pactional right to them, through his obedience and death as their Surety. The contrary sentiment seems to deny that Christ merited any thing for his people. It represents justice as having received satisfaction, and sheathed her sword : but not as united with grace in giving a crown ; as disarmed of her vindictive power, but not as any way engaged to advocate the cause of the redeemed by claiming any positive good for them. But, *through Jesus Christ*, doubtless, means, through his invaluable sacrifice, which he offered according to his suretyship engagement with his Father. By the blood of the everlasting covenant, the blessings of that covenant were procured, and its promises became valid, to all the heirs of salvation. To say that Christ's mediation is merely the medium or channel through which remission flows, but it has no *causal* influence on the bestowment of that blessing, is attempting to uphold a distinction, concerning which the Scriptures are totally silent. What was given through his death, was given on account of his death, or for the sake of it ; so that the blessing given was to be the right of Christ, as the Mediator, and of all his brethren, for whom he engaged in that sacred covenant with his Father. How, indeed, can we have redemption and pardon *through* his blood, otherwise

than through the worth of it? and how can its value avail for us, except as it was constituted the price of our forgiveness by the covenant of grace and salvation? God determined, that his elect should enjoy spiritual blessings, not only through the *means* but through the *merit* of Christ's death. The heavenly blessings that pass through him to them, were never promised to them, or to him as their Mediator, on any other foundation than that of his "finishing the work which was given him to do." And this his work, thus required, as the deserving condition of the pardon and sanctification of his brethren, became the pactionally meritorious price of those blessings. Therefore, they are said to be ours through and by him, or in his name, and for his sake.

In allusion to the apostle's words, in Heb. ix. 16, 17, concerning the testator and his testament, it has been said, neither a testator nor an executor needs purchase the legacies bequeathed or dispensed. I answer, all men know that the legatees must have a testamentary right to the legacies supposed; and the executor also must be duly authorized to distribute them according to their right; though he may not be said to purchase the legacies because he is not the testator. But our ever-living Lord is both Testator and Executor; and that may be said of him, according to the allusion chosen, which cannot be affirmed of any other person. It is well known that a will is of no force at all while the testator liveth; nor have the legatees any actual right to its contents, but through his death. It will be said, his death is not the price of them. True, in a proper sense, it cannot be so considered. But is it not *that* which gives to the legatees an actionable right to the benefits contained in the testament, and which were never given on any other condition? This will hardly be denied; and the same may be said concerning Christ's death, who is the Testator alluded to by the apostle, in the words before cited. Besides, it may be here subjoined, that the notion of a will does not fully express the dispensation of blessings through Christ, as our Mediator. A right to the benefits bequeathed, must precede the dispensatory act of bequeathing them. Therefore, if we understand Christ to be the Testator, as well as the executor, of the heavenly will or testament, we must include the idea of *a compact* also, as that, by

the performing of the conditions of which, he obtained a right to all spiritual blessings; on the ground of which procured right, he has accordingly bequeathed those blessings, in his gospel word, as valuable legacies to all who are his relatives by adopting grace.

XV. *The following Scriptures are thought to fully establish the point for which I am pleading:—*

1. For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.

2. The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. God sent his only begotten Son, that we might live through him.

3. For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

4. Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God, even our Father.

5 God sent forth his Son,—to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

7. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly *places*, in Christ.

8. But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father.

9. God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. Your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

10. Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish.

11. Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.

12. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

13. By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

14. 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.

15. Wherefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

16. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ.

17. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.

18. For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.

19. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

20. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

In the preceding extract, many important blessings are enumerated, and they all are ascribed to the influence and value of Christ's sufferings and death. I have numbered the passages for the convenience of referring to them in my subsequent remarks.

No. 7. *All spiritual blessings*, which (Paul informs us) were given in Christ before the world began, according to a gracious election, must not be confined to blessings that might have been enjoyed, as some have supposed, if the church had never fallen; such as immutable holiness, adoption, communion with God in Christ, and a gracious acceptance in Christ. *Doctor Goodwin* thought, that these blessings might have been bestowed on the elect in Christ, had the fall never taken place; and perhaps no man would wish to spend his time in refuting his assertions. But can it be reasonably concluded that, by *all spiritual blessings*, Paul only intended the *four* just mentioned? I think it much more safe to understand him, as speaking of blessings which shall all be enjoyed by God's

elect in Christ, for ever; blessings which they would never have needed, and which would therefore never have been given, but for the fall. It is now certain, by the Scriptures, that God never intended any of Adam's race to inherit grace and glory, but through the once hidden mystery of endless redemption, and by the everlasting righteousness brought in by Jesus Christ, as the Mediator of the eternal covenant. It must therefore be utterly useless to spend our time in disputing about what *might* have been, since we know it never was designed to take place. But it is worse than useless to assert that God gave certain, yea, all spiritual blessings, to his elect, as unfallen, when the far greater part of them, at least, could never be enjoyed by them, but through their becoming objects of *mercy* and *redemption*; and such objects they never could become, but through the entrance of moral evil. It is true, God might have shewn grace without the creature's becoming sinful, as he has done in the case of the elect angels; and, by this thought, divine favour may be illustrated in its freeness and sovereignty; but we must not forget, that infinite wisdom has preferred another way of displaying grace, and which is the only way in which we are capable of enjoying it by faith. Therefore, as all spiritual blessings were given in Christ, as the Mediator of the covenant of redemption, to all the chosen and eternally adopted sons of God, according to their election by grace; so those blessings become the procured right of all the elect, through the merit of the Mediator's accomplished work. *He is all and in all.*

No. 2. As Christ gave his flesh for the life of the chosen world; as he came that they might have life more abundantly; and as his Father sent him that they might live spiritually and eternally, *δι' αὐτοῦ on account of him*; so we must admit him to be the procuring cause of their life, they live, because he lives, who died for them. He gave his flesh, or himself, as the pactional price of their life. They have an endless *right* to live, for whom the Mediator suffered and died. The eternal Father and his eternal Son are both united, by this view of the subject, in the bestowment of life: what the *former* gives conditionally, the *latter* procures meritoriously.