

THE
Distinguishing Doctrines
OF THE
STRICT & PARTICULAR
BAPTIST DENOMINATION.

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GRAVESEND.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

Some misunderstanding having arisen in reference to the title of the]first Edition, it being concluded by some readers that the Committee of the Metropolitan Strict Baptist Association were equally committed with the author to the doctrines and arguments advanced, it is necessary for him to explain that although he believes his views to be substantially those of the Strict Baptist body, no one is immediately responsible for what he has written but himself.

In this edition some slight revision has been effected, and one or two notes added where the first edition has been misinterpreted.

This edition is further improved by the addition of a cover.

The price charged to the trade, is within a fraction of the cost, in the hope of an extensive circulation among the Strict Baptist Churches.

**THE DISTINGUISHING DOCTRINES
OF THE STRICT BAPTIST DENOMINATION.**

The appellations which distinguish the various sects and denominations of Christendom, convey a most unsatisfactory idea of the principles for which they respectively contend, and of the grounds upon which they are divided from each other.

The Strict Baptist Denomination, for instance, has, through various circumstances, acquired a title which but very partially indicates the views of truth which we hold to be important.

The rise and growth of sectarian divisions has been gradual, and may be traced throughout nearly the whole of the Christian era, and among the many features of the churches of the Apostolic age which call forth our admiration, not the least is the fact that one denominational title served to include them all.

“The disciples were called CHRISTIANS first at Antioch,” and it is as *Christians* only that we know them throughout the New Testament record, and almost so for the following two hundred years.

But their unanimity was comparatively of short duration. Even in the Apostle Paul’s time, some evidently denied the resurrection, (see Cor. xv.); and the later writings of John make it manifest that in his day some had begun to deny the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Fierce persecution from without, however, checked any extensive dissension within the church, for the first three hundred years after the introduction of the new dispensation; but the downfall of Paganism and the recognition of Christianity as the State religion by the Emperor Constantine, was immediately followed by the promulgation of a variety of errors more or less fantastical and dangerous, in consequence of which the church divided and sub-divided in a variety of ways, while—worse than all—this illegitimate union of Church and State soon had issue in the development of the Papal system — of all heresies the most pernicious, soul-destroying and God-dishonouring—in fact, without doubt, the devil’s masterpiece.

All this while, as now, all parties appropriated to themselves the name of Christian, so that, by force of circumstances, other distinguishing terms became necessary in order to indicate their differences.

Again: the Reformation, first in Germany, and later in England, was accompanied by a multitude of divisions of sects and parties, some of them differing as much from each other as from the Church of Rome.

In our own country alone, the reformed Church of England soon quarreled about the liturgy and vestments, and became divided into Conformers and Non-Conformers, the former, encouraged principally by the Stuarts, becoming ultimately the dominant power, while the latter developed into the much-maligned but ever-to-be-honoured Puritans.

Again, on the expulsion of the Stuarts and the accession of William III., the then Church party were divided into Contents and Malcontents, called respectively Jurors and Non-Jurors, some taking the oath of allegiance to William, and some refusing to do so. These subsequently gave rise to the distinction, High Church and Low Church, which in our own day is exchanged for Ritualistic and Evangelical.

Recurring again to the Reformation period, among the Anti-Anglican Reformers, John Knox is conspicuous as the founder of Presbyterianism in Scotland. This Church has in the present century divided into the Free Church, and the State-supported. Another eminent reformer was Robert Brown, who, seceding from the Church of England in the reign of Elizabeth, founded the sect of the Brownists, afterwards called Independents, and now Congregationalists. Again, in recent times, the Church of England has had offspring in the Wesleyans, and the Countess of Huntingdon's connexion. To these might be added many more too numerous, and some of them too insignificant to mention.

But what of the Baptist Denomination, and in particular of the Strict Baptiste amid all these vicissitudes? Do they owe their existence to any of these revolutions in Church and State? or do they attach themselves to any particular prophet of the middle or modern ages whom they recognize as their founder?

We answer emphatically—No! If any thing is certain, it is certain that that assembly of disciples at Antioch who first were called Christians, were STRICT BAPTISTS, and that they held the same faith and practiced the same order which the Strict Baptists hold and maintain to-day—that the Churches of Christ substantially adhered to the same principles until the accession of Constantine; that the Baptists speedily repudiated and renounced the unholy alliance between Church and State then effected; that they have handed down their doctrines and their organization, in unbroken continuance to the present time, to those their unworthy successors, who now hold them in trust for their posterity, and who are determined by the help of God to hand down the priceless legacy, uncorrupted and unimpaired, to the generations to come.

They are in no way responsible for the multiplication of sects and denominations, since they abide by the original faith and order established by Christ and his apostles; and though denominated Strict Baptists, they are the true “Primitive Methodists,” since they alone cling to the Primitive Method; they are before all others “Bible Christians,” since they derive both their faith and ritual from the Bible alone; they were “Independent” and “Congregational” centuries before the body appropriating those titles had any existence; and in their resistance to all changes authorized by human authority they are “Peculiar People,” since all others more or less accommodate themselves to the carnal policy of “keeping pace with the times.”

Their first distinctive title was false and derisive. They were called Ana-baptists—a term signifying that they had been twice baptized, and which of course assumed their sprinkling in infancy to have been valid baptism. When, in more enlightened times, those cruel laws which compelled them to have their children sprinkled, or, refusing, to forfeit all their civil rights, were relaxed,—the prefix dropped, and they were known as Baptists only. But the spread of Arminianism among them led to a further distinction, and the words Particular and General noted the difference. Again, the rise and gradual adoption of

open communion among their churches, necessitated the adoption of the word Strict as well as Particular on the part of those who resisted the innovation, and hence the title of Strict and Particular Baptists by which they are distinguished at the present time.

A brief defense of this title will, therefore, form an appropriate preface to our subject. We are distinguished as Baptists, because in conformity with apostolic authority and usage, we commence our profession of the name of Christ by being publicly immersed under water in the name of the Holy Trinity.

We adhere to this rite because the word of God is so explicit on the subject as to leave us no option in the matter if we accept its directions as our guide. The word admits of no other honest translation, nor would any other form fulfil the intention of baptism, viz., to illustrate by an outward rite the believer's participation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We refuse to substitute sprinkling for immersion, therefore, because sprinkling ignores the scriptural significance of baptism, and in itself has no meaning whatever; also because it exalts the authority of man above that of God, and places the Church of Rome above the New Testament.

We refuse also to change the subject, the Scriptures requiring *personal* repentance, faith, and discipleship as the qualification for baptism, and infants are incapable of either of these conditions.

We are further designated *Strict* Baptists, because we refuse to admit to communion at the Lord's table either those who are not members of any church, or those who are members of churches unscripturally constituted, and whose church-membership we cannot therefore regard as valid.

Our arguments in this case are similar to those in the former. Either the Bible is our authority, or it is not; and if not, then what is our authority? And if open or mixed communion may be established

without the Bible, and by human authority, then what may not be established in the same way?

The following is our line of argument:—1st. Dispensations! forms, ordinances, and ritual, can only be established by Divine authority. 2nd. The New Testament dispensation, being as really Divine as the old, *exact* observance of ritual in the one case is as binding as it was in the other. 3rd. The form of church organization required under the new dispensation is fully described in the New Testament, and ought therefore to be our sole guide. 4th. New Testament churches were *Strict Baptist Churches*, and we are therefore required to be *Strict Baptists*.

The two former of these propositions we shall assume to be undisputed. The two latter we thus briefly defend:

In order to show that the New Testament contains all necessary directions for the formation of churches, it will be sufficient for our purpose to refer to the proceedings of the day of Pentecost.

Those proceedings were quite unique in their character, and demand our attentive consideration. The old dispensation was formally and finally abrogated, its closing act being the observance the Passover by our Lord Jesus Christ on the night before He suffered. The Apostles had been fully authorized to institute in His name, the order of things which was to take its place. And to preserve them from the possibility of a mistake in so important a matter they were commanded to remain silent until endued with power from high. But upon the day of Pentecost, being gathered together in one place, the Holy Spirit descended upon them in a most extraordinary manner, and there and then, under His especial superintendence, they proceeded to execute their Master's commission. The result was, the formation of the *first* church of the New Testament dispensation; and seeing that it was formed by the Apostles with their Master's instruction fresh upon their memories, and also in the presence and under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, we submit that that church furnishes us with the

pattern and model for all future churches, so long as the Saviour's commission remains in force, which will be "even unto the end of the world."

But our fourth proposition will be the one most contested, vis., that New Testament churches were Strict Baptist churches, and therefore we ought to be Strict Baptists.

Let us examine, then, the church thus formed at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Three important facts are indisputable, vis.:—1. Its members were converted before being baptized. 2. They were baptized before being added to the church. 3. They were added to the church before they were admitted to communion. See Acts ii.

This covers the whole ground of the argument. Following this order, the Strict Baptists refuse to baptize any but converted persons; since to be buried with Christ by baptism into death, implies death unto sin, and faith in the death and resurrection of Christ as the only way of salvation from it.

Again, We refuse to receive into church fellowship any but baptized persons, because the Apostles did not; and they being under the guidance of the Holy Ghost in the matter, could not be wrong; moreover the churches of Christendom for nearly sixteen hundred years followed this order, and the only exceptions to-day are a section of the Baptists who have "Union" churches; since Pedobaptists require *baptism according to their views*, as a pre-requisite for membership.

And since a church is a body of professing disciples, witnessing for Christ in the world, it is difficult to see how there can be collective witnessing for Christ in the body, without individual witnessing for Christ by the members, nor how that can be witnessing for Christ, which is not in accordance with his instructions.

If Christianity were a purely selfish affair, all the purposes of the Gospel might be accomplished without Church organizations at all. The Gospel could still be preached, sinners might be converted, the

number of the elect made up, without the machinery of associated professors in churches.

But the very *raison d'être* of a church is to bear testimony to the sovereign authority of the risen and reigning Saviour, and this can only be done by the implicit obedience of his followers.

Finally, the Strict Baptists admit to the Lord's table only those who are members of churches. The Apostolic example is our authority in this also. The Lord's supper differs from baptism in this particular, that while the latter is for individuals, and implies nothing beyond the individual faith and discipleship of the candidate, and may be attended to, as in the eunuch's case, without the concurrence of any others—the Lord's supper implies communion, and cannot be attended to in an individual capacity, but requires the presence and assent of others in the same faith, and in the same expression of it. Hence baptism, though at the threshold of the church, is not strictly in it; but the Lord's supper is emphatically so; and for a church to carry the Lord's supper outside the church is to unchurch itself.

Upon the whole, then, we contend thus: if a person require us to baptize him, we must first be satisfied that he is converted; and although he may sincerely *think himself* converted, yet if he does not give scriptural proof of it, we must not baptize him. Again, If a person request to be admitted into church fellowship we must be satisfied that he has been baptized; and although he may sincerely *think himself* to have been baptized in infancy, yet that, being unscriptural, we cannot acknowledge it to be valid. Again, If a person request to commune at the Lord's table, we must be satisfied that he is a church member, and although he may sincerely *think himself* a church member, because he belongs to a church *so called* which practices sprinkling or admits to communion those who do, yet we cannot receive him, because we cannot recognize the church of which he is a member to be one in the New Testament sense of the word, and consequently cannot hold his membership to be valid.

We must always enquire, What is scriptural conversion?— What is scriptural baptism?—What is a scriptural church? and be guided by our order accordingly.

For these reasons, we are distinguished as *Strict* Baptists. But the frequent use of the term “Strict Baptists,” in controversy, has given rise to a grave error, and many ignorant persons have inferred from it, that we give undue prominence to the rite, and regard its observance as essential to salvation, whereas nothing could be farther from the truth. When a child is at the point of death, and the medical attendant has given up all hope, the persons who send off in frantic haste for a minister and work themselves up to feverish excitement until he arrives to sprinkle it—may be Romanists or Anglicans, Congregationalists or Wesleyans, but they certainly are not Baptists, much less Strict Baptists. We indeed give baptism its proper place in church order, but we stand almost alone in denying altogether its spiritual efficacy. The Church of England, following closely its Roman parentage, declares it regenerates and gives spiritual life, while Congregational and Wesleyan churches hold that it communicates the New Covenant privileges of believing parents to their children; and all agree that to withhold baptism from children is to deprive them of an important spiritual blessing. We, on the contrary, maintain, that Christian baptism is the baptism of a Christian; that a man is not baptized to make him a Christian, but because he already is one.

We repeat, therefore, our introductory observation, that our denominational title conveys but a meagre idea of our distinguishing sentiments. Clearly defined as are our differences from other denominations, on matters of church order, we differ as widely, and certainly more earnestly from many of them, in our view of the plan of salvation as revealed in the gospel. We shall endeavour to explain some of the more prominent of these points of difference.

We begin with the Scriptures themselves. Notwithstanding the criticisms of modern scholarship and the example of modern

professing churches, the Strict Baptists adhere to the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Bible.

Scholars and divines in great number have, in recent times, attacked with all their energy this ancient citadel of Christian faith. Various theories have been propounded with more or less of popular approval, attributing various degrees of Divine guidance and supervision to the sacred writers, but denying alike that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” According to them, the writers of the various books were sometimes inspired and sometimes not,—sometimes entirely inspired, and sometimes partially so; that in consequence there are intermixed with the Divine records some purely human opinions, some palpable errors, some specimens of inconclusive reasoning, some exhibitions of manifest ignorance.

To discuss this subject at length, would be too wide a digression, we simply observe that to admit this is to surrender at once our standard of faith and practice, and place ourselves in a position analogous to a vessel in mid-ocean without helm or compass, chart or instruments, drifting whither the uncertain waves may carry it. For who is to decide where the Divine influence begins and where it ends,—where the Scriptures are wholly inspired, where partially so, and where not at all? And who is to determine the particular degree of weight and authority which any given passage of Scripture ought to have upon a man’s conscience or conduct?

And when, as Dr. Gaussen observes in his admirable “Theopneustia,” human judgment has arbitrarily settled this question, can that same judgment leave the critic’s chair and take the student’s form. Can the Pope himself sincerely worship a saint whom he has himself canonized? and can a man’s mind, having first invested a passage of Scripture with Divine authority, bow to the authority of its own creation?

We need scarcely wonder that colleges and academies, where this view of the Scriptures is inculcated, should produce, year by year, a

school of divines, who quote Homer and Virgil with as much reverence as David or Isaiah, who contrast the erudition of Peter and John, with that of Milton and Shakespeare; if under their influence Christianity give place to moral philosophy; —we cannot marvel if its professors know as little, and care as little, for the gospel of Christ as the followers of Plato or Aristotle; nor if doctrines distasteful to carnal nature, as the sovereignty of God in salvation, or the endlessness of future punishment for sin, should be held up to reprobation.

In fact, give up the inspiration of the Scriptures, and nothing else in religion can be maintained; rob the sword of the Spirit of its edge, and it is useless; cast away the weapon, “It is written,” and the devil is left master of the situation. Not a doctrine that faith builds upon, but it is shaken—not a promise upon which hope relies, but it is rendered valueless; the Cross itself may be a figure of speech, and the expected felicity of heaven may be another. Hitherto the Strict Baptist Denomination has unitedly contended for the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, and has held that the Bible is altogether and entirely the word of God. Long may this continue to be the case, and in all controversy may this be our constant watchword, “What saith the Scripture?”

Keeping this watchword in mind, we now approach the consideration of the position of Strict Baptists in reference to the plan of salvation. Perhaps we ought here to fall back upon our older designation of “Particular Baptists;” for this question is distinct from any consideration of church organization or usage.

The word Particular denotes the view we take, and for which we earnestly contend, of the fundamental doctrine of the atonement; and we select the doctrine of the atonement for special consideration—not only because our limits will not permit us to discuss all our doctrines *seriatim* but also because just as there is in every city, town, village, or hamlet in England, a road that leads to the Metropolis, so also every doctrine in the Bible is more or less connected with the doctrine of the

atonement; and to be sound and clear upon that doctrine, is to be so upon almost every other.

We have no controversy with other Protestant denominations, as to the *matter* of the atonement.

That it consists in the obedience and death of Christ; that its efficacy is derived from the peculiar constitution of His Person —He being both God and man, so that the excellency of the Divine nature is communicated to the work done by Him in the human nature; that thereby His obedience is of Divine, and therefore, infinite worth, and His blood is of Divine and therefore of infinite efficacy; that in consequence the Great Lawgiver is able with perfect justice to justify the ungodly; these are not distinguishing sentiments of the Particular Baptists, they are held by them in common with all the Evangelical denominations of Christendom.

It is rather with reference to the object and intention of the atonement—with its *extent* and *application*, that we are at issue with other denominations, and it is in consequence of our belief that our Lord Jesus Christ died for particular persons, known to himself and to the other Persons in the Trinity, before all worlds, in opposition to the view that He died for all men universally and indiscriminately, that we are called Particular Baptists.

But in stating our belief in the limitation of the atonement to particular individuals, we are careful to affix no limit to the intrinsic value of the atonement itself. It has indeed been sometimes suggested that if one more soul had been ordained to salvation, Christ must have done something more, or if one soul less had been destined to salvation, He might have been less severely punished. But it is extremely doubtful whether the question of what would have happened under other circumstances, is a legitimate subject of inquiry. We might perhaps as properly ask, “What would have been the course of events if Adam had never sinned?” The question is not what Christ might, or must, or could have done under other circumstances, but

what He actually *has done* under existing circumstances. And the inspired word tells us, “He gave HIMSELF”—neither more nor less.

There is certainly one sense in which the sufferings of Christ were proportioned to the number of the souls for whom He died, inasmuch as they were all the objects of His peculiar love, were all the members of His mystic body, were “His jewels,” “His sheep,” “His bride,” “His portion,” “His inheritance;” so that he had a distinct personal knowledge of every one of them, and a distinct sense of each one’s guilt laid upon Him, and a consciousness that each one of them was costing Him the anguish and suffering provoked by Divine wrath against their respective sins; but this knowledge in the Saviour’s own soul, in no way affects the intrinsic worth of His work as a whole. To suppose that the value of that sacrifice depended upon the number of stripes inflicted by the soldiers, or the length of time He hung upon the cross before He died, is to miss the mark altogether. These incidental things simply exhibited the barbarous cruelty of *man*; it was the majesty and worth of His person as God that satisfied Divine Justice, and gave to His sacrifice that eternal efficacy that constitutes the very soul of the atonement. [It is not suggested, however, that these painful sufferings might have been dispensed with; but, only that while they would have been of no saving utility unless Christ had been a Divine Person, so they are by virtue of his Divinity of infinite value.] In what sense, then, is the atonement limited? We reply that it is limited in its original intention, and in its application to those persons only, of whom He was the appointed representative and federal Head. And we rely in support of this view upon the following argument.

The death of Christ was a punishment—was the outpour of penal wrath by Divine Justice. Christ could not have been so punished except for sin; and He could not have been punished for sin unless the sin for which he was punished had been imputed to Him. Sin could not have been imputed to Him, so as for Him to be held accountable for it, without a previous knowledge of the persons, whose sin it was and for whom he was substituted. There could be no atonement at all,

therefore, without a previous appointment of the Saviour to represent certain known individuals. Furthermore, sin can only be sufficiently punished ONCE. Christ having been sufficiently punished for sin, that sin cannot be charged again. If, therefore, He was sufficiently punished for all the sins of all men, all men in equity may claim immunity from punishment. But hell itself being witness, salvation is not universal; therefore, the punishment was not universal—therefore the imputation was not universal—therefore the atonement was not universal.

To this view it is objected, that if the atonement is unlimited in its intrinsic value, there is nothing to prevent its application to the salvation of all men, except a supposed want of benevolence on the part of God. But if this be regarded as an objection, there is nothing gained by accepting the universal theory, since those who contend for universal redemption acknowledge that some are lost. And the universal theory has this additional objection that not only would it (*if the argument were sound*) equally suggest want of Divine *benevolence* in the damnation of the lost, but a want of Divine *justice* also, since it supposes God to receive payments for debts which He does not cancel, satisfaction for sins which He does not pardon,—to have imputed the sinner's guilt to Christ and sufficiently punished Him for it, and then to impute it to the sinner again and to punish him for it also.

We deny, however, the justice of the objection, inasmuch as salvation is neither withheld from, nor denied to, any who have a sincere and heartfelt desire to be saved in God's way. True, benevolence is a prominent feature in the plan of salvation, but it is not the *only* feature. None of God's perfections exist at the expense of others, nor are to be so magnified as to obscure the others; but each is harmoniously blended with all the rest, so as to exhibit in their due proportion and relation to each other the glory of their Divine original and possessor. Moreover salvation is not a primary object. The glory of God is the primary object, and salvation is the means to the end.

And that it may the more completely fulfil the design of its great Author, it is so contrived as to exhibit in degree, all His perfections and attributes. Power, sovereignty, equity, justice, wisdom, righteousness, faithfulness, truth, appear in combination with love, mercy, benevolence, compassion, tenderness, and pity; and as in a picture the light assists the shade, and the background displays to more advantage the foreground,—as in a well-arranged garden, the flowers, though possessing each in form, colour, foliage, or bloom, a distinct beauty of their own, yet seems to be additionally beautiful when seen in combination with other varieties, so the perfections of God, though each possessing a glory of itself, seems yet more glorious when blended with its co-existent attributes. Thus where justice seems the most severe, mercy seems the 14 most attractive; where equity most rigidly exacting, love smiles with the utmost benignity. The Cross shows that God is most gracious where He is most terrible: where His anger is most manifest, His goodness is also most conspicuous.

To depreciate God's goodness, therefore, because all men are not saved, would be as reasonable as to deny that God is Love, because he has provided no Saviour for the angels that sinned, and has sent no gospel of mercy to the devil.

Finally—since the Gospel invites " whosoever will " to take of the water of life freely, and assures all that come to the Saviour of undoubted acceptance,—no sinner can attribute his condemnation to the want of benevolence in God; and if this free welcome to all comers, this promise of certain salvation to "every one" that hungers and thirsts after it, is secured by a limited atonement, may we not ask what more is gained, either to God or to man by the universal argument.

[The reader will be careful to observe this distinction between Redemption and Atonement, is only between the *words* describing the same transaction: The expression—"Christ hath *redeemed* us from the *curse* of the curse of the law," is an example of the agreement between the two terms. But this agreement does not affect the argument that

the word “*commercial*” is suitably applied to the one, and is not suitably applied to the other.]

A second objection, used more often in derision than in argument, charges us with taking a *commercial* view of the atonement. We protest at the outset against this phraseology, which, to say the least, is ambiguous, and savours of dishonesty. Its object appears to be to perplex the minds of simple people, better acquainted with religion than with theology, and to make them suspect an absurdity in their creed, when in reality the 1S in the phrase itself, as will be manifest from the consideration.

All civilized communities recognize two distinct and separate branches of, jurisprudence, viz., the civil and the criminal. When Jehovah Himself legislated for the Jewish nation, He embodied this distinction in the laws given to Moses. One set of them related to the ownership of property, and provided for its transfer by sale or mortgage. Another and a different set related to criminal offences, am} adjusted the penalties to be inflicted upon the transgressor. Now the Holy Spirit, that the nature of the work of Christ might be fully explained in the Scriptures has made use of both these branches of law to illustrate the sinner’s relation to the Law of God, and his deliverance by Christ from the curse and penalty of it. When therefore the civil code is the basis of illustration, the work of Christ is called redemption,—when again the *criminal* code is made use of, that work is called an atonement. [The reader will be careful to observe this distinction between Redemption and Atonement, is only between the *words* describing the same transaction: The expression—”Christ hath *redeemed* us from the *curse* of the law,” is an example of the agreement between the two terms. But this agreement does not affect the argument that the word “*commercial*” is suitably applied to the one, and is not suitably applied to the other.]

Now the merest novice in legal matters is aware that a criminal offence cannot be viewed in a *civil* sense, so that it is impossible to take a commercial view of guilt, while it is equally impossible not to

take a commercial view of property, and of the liabilities arising in connection with it. When we speak, therefore, of the work of Christ as an atonement, commercial ideas are altogether excluded; but when we speak of it as redemption, commercial ideas and commercial terms are indispensable. To the oft repeated query, then, Do we take a commercial view of the atonement! we answer, No; because the terms are self-contradictory; we take a judicial view of it,—we regard it as a retributive punishment, for crimes committed against the law of God. But if we are asked whether we take a commercial view of redemption, we answer without hesitation, Yes; for redemption is essentially a commercial term, describing a commercial transaction, and is peculiarly appropriate to the Saviour's work, as we propose to shew. So that to object to the commercial view of redemption is equivalent to objecting to the military view of fighting, or the locomotive view of running, or to the educational view of learning. Unless words are to be taken in their proper signification, there is no truth that can be satisfactorily established —no error that can be satisfactorily refuted. The essential feature which distinguishes redemption from other commercial transactions is, that it supposes a previously existing right to the property redeemed. To purchase, therefore, is not to redeem; because the purchaser thereby *acquires* property which did not belong to him before: whereas the redeemer recovers that which was originally his, and no one is or can be allowed to redeem property but the owner.

This one argument alone establishes the doctrine of particular redemption beyond all question.

There are two senses in which the work of Christ is suitably described by the word redemption. First, as it respects the persons of the elect, and secondly, as it respects their heavenly inheritance. It is appropriate in respect of their persons, for they are all the Saviour's undisputed property. Thus He says, "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me;" and for this reason He calls them *His sheep*, and

declares that they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand.

But they, through sin, have contracted a vast debt to the Divine law, and Justice and Equity demand that the uttermost farthing of this debt shall be honourably paid. So far, however, from this debt dissolving His eternal right in them, it creates on His part the obligation to redeem: thus we read, “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?” an obligation which could not exist without previous engagements, voluntarily entered into by Him. He died for His people, therefore, not to make them His, but because they *were* His already, and He had covenanted to lose *none* of them, but to raise them up at the last day.

The term is equally suitable as it respects the position of the elect, as the heirs of the kingdom of heaven: for when the Father chose His people in Christ, He by a sovereign act constituted them His sons. “Behold what *manner* of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” And as a son is the natural heir of his father, so the sons of God are the natural heirs of their Father, who has bestowed upon them all the bliss and glory of heaven itself to be theirs for ever, with this peculiarity, that as their sonship is founded in that of Christ; who is the Firstborn among many brethren, and is secured by their union with Him; they have all of them the rights and privileges of a firstborn son, and so are called the church of the *firstborn* which are written in heaven, meaning that, being joint-heirs with Christ, they inherit equally with the Firstborn Himself. Now this right of inheritance being created by the act of the Father before all worlds, was anterior to the fall, and therefore could not be derived from the work of redemption, which was the consequence and not the cause of previous relationship. But sin lay in the way of the inheritance much as an entail upon an estate. The ownership or heirship is undisputed. But a debt has accumulated which must be paid before the heir can unreservedly enjoy the revenues. Sin is a debt, which must be fully paid before the heirs of God can take possession of the

inheritance given to them before the world began, redemption then does not create a right to the kingdom of glory, but it opens the way to it, removing the bar which sin and death had set up. The same acts of sin, which involved the persons of the elect, entailed also their inheritance; and the same act which released the one, released the other.

A reference to the narrative in the Book of Ruth will best illustrate this reasoning. Ruth with her mortgaged inheritance, which she could by no means redeem but in which her right was nevertheless inalienable, is a figure of the church involved in the consequences of sin. Boaz, whose right to redeem was derived from his kinsmanship to Ruth, is a figure of Christ, and it is to be noted that the words Kinsman and Redeemer in the Old Testament are synonymous. His exercise of his prerogative in the redemption of the inheritance, involving as an essential the espousal of Ruth to whom it belonged, illustrates the act of Christ in redeeming the inheritance of the church in virtue of His near Kinsmanship, including his betrothal of the church unto Himself for ever, saying, "I am married unto you." Isaiah liv. and lxii. attentively studied will throw further light upon this interesting transaction, by reason of which the church is no more to be termed Forsaken, nor her land Desolate, but she is to be called Hephzibah and her land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in her, and her land shall be married.

The very nature of redemption, therefore, shows it to be special and particular, as opposed to the universal system. For if redemption were universal, Christ must be the Husband and Kinsman of all mankind, in which case many of His kindred must be supposed to perish. Again, he must have the same proprietary interest in all mankind, and then much of his property must be admitted to be irrecoverably lost. In many thousands of instances His blood must have been shed in vain, which would render it impossible that He should see of the travail of His soul, and be *satisfied*; for how could He be satisfied with failure, with disappointment, with blighted hopes and thwarted purposes, with

an object achieved so greatly beneath the object proposed, with a result obtained so far below the result intended. Furthermore, He could not have *obtained* eternal redemption for His people, if it was still a doubtful question, which the day of judgment alone could decide—who and how many were redeemed. For that is not redemption which does not actually and entirely redeem: it is the actual release and deliverance which constitutes redemption, and not the mere attempt or design. One cannot be redeemed from the curse of the law, and yet left to perish under it; or be redeemed from all iniquity, and yet remain chargeable with it at the bar of God. So then; “the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

Having distinguished between the terms, redemption, and atonement, we now add a few observations upon the latter term more particularly. In speaking of the atonement, instead of redemption, the same great work is simply regarded from another point of view. Sin is treated as a *crime*, instead of as a debt, and the work of Christ as a punishment, instead of as a payment. Most persons would acknowledge that the payment and the punishment affected precisely the same persons; so that if the payment was special and particular, the punishment was special and particular also. This, however, is not universally admitted. The late Mr. John Howard Hinton, for instance, contended that while redemption was particular, the atonement was universal; or in other words, that Christ died specially the elect, and conditionally for all mankind. The basis of this contention was the unlimited value of the atonement intrinsically considered, which We have unreservedly admitted. But this basis does not support the reasoning, inasmuch as mere intrinsic value or worth, however great, effects nothing, secures nothing until put in operation. The fact that Great Britain possessed wealth enough to emancipate all her West Indian slaves, did not emancipate them, until the money was actually voted and applied to that object. In like manner the worth of the work

of Christ can accomplish nothing but what it is applied, directed, and appointed to accomplish by God Himself. And if the atonement of Christ Was applied to all men, and appointed to effect their salvation, it must infallibly accomplish that end; but beyond all question all men are not saved, and therefore the atonement cannot be universally applied. Moreover, the atonement being a punishment in which retributive Justice inflicts her full penalty upon the Substitute, the appointment must *precede* and not follow the infliction. Divine Justice cannot punish promiscuously; the Saviour must be regarded as a federal Head, as the representative of certain individuals for whom he had covenanted to stand, for whose sins He had consented to be held accountable: so that He died with a definite object, and by His death that object was accomplished. “He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him and wherever the first of these Statements is true, the second is true. His righteousness and all the benefits of his mediation are imputed to every sinner whose guilt was imputed to Him. His atonement, therefore, could only have been co-extensive with His accountability, and His accountability with His relationship to those given to Him in covenant by the Father before the world was. Finally, all that Christ did in salvation He did as the expression of His own and Of the Father’s love. “Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Now love in God is a perfection; it cannot have a beginning, it cannot change or fluctuate, it cannot increase or decrease, it cannot cease or expire. But upon the universal theory, the love of God must be in all Cases conditional, and in some cases temporary. In fact, God must once have loved the damned; and those to whom he will ultimately say, “Depart, ye cursed,” must originally have occupied the same place in his mind and in his affections as those to whom he will say, “Come, ye blessed.” Now this must suppose a change in the mind of God, which we maintain is inconsistent with the perfection of his nature; for “He is in one mind,

and none can turn Him; and what His soul desireth, even that He doeth.”

To sum up the argument, then—the Strict or Particular Baptists hold that the atonement of Christ is the result of a compact entered into between the Persons of the Trinity, having reference to particular persons called the elect,—that its object and intention was the Salvation of the elect from all the consequences of sin, original and actual,—and that it did really accomplish that object, so that “there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus” who are to be identified by their not walking after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The Apostle Paul thus summarizes the matter :— “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate; whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? Who shall lay anything in the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.”

We shall now endeavour to state and explain the position of Strict Baptists in reference to the *terms* in which the gospel is to be preached in the world. We cordially agree with other denominations that it is to be preached on all fitting occasions, in season and out of season, and to the utmost of our ability in the ears of *every creature*. [The impartial reader will observe that the objection that the Strict Baptists do not preach to sinners is unfounded. Believing that the Holy Spirit can alone *apply* the blessings of the gospel, they do not feel it consistent to *offer* them; but they hold themselves bound to preach the gospel, and the whole of the gospel as extensively as Divine Providence may enable them.] But we are distinguished from other denominations in our view of what *preaching the gospel* means, and in protesting against the use of indiscriminate offers of salvation, of general exhortations to the acquisition of spiritual graces, and of universal invitations to the acceptance of spiritual blessings.

The advocates of this system of universal offers and invitations defend their practice on various and totally opposite grounds; so that if the reasoning of the one was sound, that of the other must be false.

From those who adopt this method of preaching on the basis of universal redemption, our difference is clear and easily defined. And we must at least acknowledge that their system is intelligible and consistent with itself, although we believe it to be inconsistent with the Word of God. If redemption were universal it would certainly be reasonable to urge and exhort all men to avail themselves of the blessings of it; but we deny universal redemption for the reasons already given, and therefore object to universal offers, because they represent God in the absurd position of pressing the acceptance of salvation upon those for whom he has not provided it,—of entreating them to receive that which he has never designed them to possess—apart from all reference to the necessity for the work of the Holy Spirit, to which we must presently allude.

We cannot recognize the same harmony and consistency in the system of those advocates of universal offers already referred to — who argue that the atonement was special in one sense, and universal in another and a different sense; that it was for the elect only, and that it was also for the non-elect world.

We are entitled to ask; What object is ascribed to God in this secondary view of the atonement? Did he intend anyone to be saved by it? and if so, why not include them at first among the elect, if he was equally concerned for their salvation? Or did he merely *hope* that some person or persons would be saved by it, and so intended it only for an experiment? In that case the Divine perfections are assailed; for a Being who makes experiments and waits to see results, is not a Being of infinite intelligence or of infinite power. And if he did not intend any one to be saved by it, knowing from the beginning that it was impossible without the gift of the Spirit, which he had not designed to bestow, and he only introduced it into the gospel to anticipate the harsh view which men might take of election and covenanted grace,

by offering salvation to all who chose to accept it,—then we answer that this object is infinitely better attained by the system for which we contend, in which “whosoever is willing” — though he be “without money or price,” is assured, not that he *may* be saved on certain conditions, but that he *shall certainly* be saved without any conditions, not on the ground of a secondary sense of the atonement, rendering it *possible*, but on the ground of its primary intention making it absolute.

We do not yield for one moment to our opponents in the fervour of our assertion, that no lost soul can attribute his condemnation to Divine sovereignty and fore-appointment: no lost soul shall be able to assert that he would have been saved but for election,—that he wept over his sins and begged for mercy,—that he sought the Saviour and prayed for pardon, but that mercy and pardon, grace and salvation, were denied him, because he was not predestinated to receive them. But we maintain, in distinction from them, that to weep for sin, to beg for mercy, to seek the Saviour, is a state of things due solely to the Holy Spirit’s regenerating grace, that it is the evidence of interest—the pledge and earnest of possession of all that God has covenanted to give to his people.

Leaving Universalists and their theories, with these brief remarks, we have yet to encounter another and a totally different school of theologians, who although, like ourselves, contend for particular redemption, and do not hold the atonement to be universal in any sense whatever, yet adhere to the practice of universal offers and invitations notwithstanding. This system, if system it may be called, is as inconsistent with itself, as it is with the Word of God.

Different arguments are relied on in support of this inconsistency—as elaborate as a spider’s web, and as unsubstantial. The more general is the following. Adam was the federal head of his race. His obligations are therefore binding upon all his posterity. He was a spiritual person, therefore his obligations were spiritual; therefore his posterity may justly be required to possess spiritual life and perform spiritual acts, and equally with justice condemned for the non-

performance, on these grounds. Man is to be exhorted to the acquisition of spiritual graces and to the performance of spiritual duties—and the penalty for noncompliance is to be constantly held before him, notwithstanding his total loss of all his ability, by the fall. Now we acknowledge this method of reasoning to be sound; and if the premises were good, the conclusions would be irresistible. But we deny the premises, and therefore cannot accept the conclusion. Against the doctrine that Adam was a spiritual person, we reply that it is a bare assertion, and that all presumptive evidence points in an opposite direction. No spiritual duties were imposed upon him, no spiritual promises were made to him, no spiritual revelations were communicated to him, no spiritual expectations were held out to him. Nothing in scripture suggests that he was ever encouraged to think of a future state, or to aspire to anything beyond his then present condition. On the contrary—all that is recorded implies, that both his duties and his expectations were limited to the perpetuity of the state in which he was then placed. Moreover, that state and condition was one of perfect happiness and satisfaction, in which every wish or desire was gratified by existing circumstances. Whereas every spiritual person is witness, that *that condition* and those circumstances, would by no means harmonize with *spiritual* wants and *spiritual* aspirations. Hence, says the Apostle, “They desire a *better* country”—and lest it should be supposed that the insufficiency of the present world, is only a result of the fall—he adds, “that is a *heavenly*” meaning that no earthly state, however perfect *in its kind*, would fulfil the desires and expectations of spiritual persons.

Indeed, if Adam was a spiritual person, the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit would only restore its subjects to that condition from which they fell in him; whereas on the contrary—that which is born of the flesh is not altered, although brought into subjection by the new birth, while that which is born of the Spirit is something altogether new and different. Again, if Adam was a spiritual person, and yet he fell from that condition, we must abandon the doctrine of final

perseverance, because it is manifestly possible to fall from a spiritual state, and to forfeit thereby all spiritual hopes and expectations, and, as in his case, to stand in need of being made spiritual a second time,—a thing for which we have no single warrant or promise throughout the Bible.

Now we submit that these premises being fallacious, the conclusions are necessarily so, and that man cannot therefore be required to be a spiritual person and to perform spiritual acts on the basis of the federal headship and spirituality of Adam.

Another school, still more ingenious, defend their general invitations thus: Adam was the creature of God. As such he was not only bound to be, and to do, all that God required of him at the time, but he was also bound to be and to do anything that God might require of him subsequently; and since God by a subsequent revelation, requires man to repent, believe and be in every respect a spiritual man, he is bound to obey—because Adam would have been bound to do so, if God had made a similar demand upon him.

It requires some patience to discuss such an argument as this, yet as it is seriously advanced, we seriously meet it. In the first place, we observe that Adam's obligations to God, and God's promises to Adam, have the nature and force of a covenant, and although the phrase "covenant of works" is not to be found in scripture, its existence is as indisputable as the "covenant of grace," which is also not mentioned in scripture in so many words. Now it is an essential in any covenant that neither party can impose any new conditions upon the other after the covenant has been ratified, so that God could no more exact new and additional conditions from Adam, than Adam could CLAIM new and additional promises from God, under the covenant of works. Secondly, we submit, that in every covenant between God and his creatures there is some relation between the blessings promised and the conditions demanded; but the blessings promised to Adam of perfect *terrestrial* happiness, and continued enjoyment of the Eden state, have not the remotest relation to

repentance of sin, or faith in Christ, since Adam in Eden was not supposed to sin, and so not to need a Saviour. Thirdly, we deny as a monstrous absurdity, that either before or after the fall, God could have required Adam to believe anything which he was *naturally* incapable of comprehending, or to do that which he was *naturally* incapable of doing.

God, as the author and giver of life, has placed a natural division between each species of it. Vegetable life is divided and distinguished from animal life. Mere animal or brute life is divided and distinguished from rational and intellectual life. Intellectual life is divided and distinguished from angelic life; there is a barrier between the tree and the brute, the brute and the man, the man, and the angel. Not less real, and not less distinct is the barrier between the *natural* and the *spiritual*. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God *neither can he know them*, because they are SPIRITUALLY discerned.” Observe, that the *natural* man is here spoken of, and not the *carnal*; for these words are as applicable to the state of Adam before the fall, as to his posterity after it. Now for God to require either Adam or his posterity to be what the Holy Spirit «done can make the Christian, would be to require him to change his nature; and therefore if this argument were good, that the creatures of God may be required to be or to do anything, simply because they are creatures, a man might be required to be a brute, or a brute a man. Balaam’s ass might be required to be Balaam, or Balaam to be Balaam’s ass, or either to be the angel in the way, or all to become vines in the pathway where they stood; because vine and ass, fortune-teller and angel were all the creatures of God, the one Author of their life and existence. The argument is simply impossible, because it is unrighteous; and anything that is unrighteous is impossible with God.

Yet another school of teachers using universal invitations, has of late years sprung into existence under the leadership of a great living preacher, whose largeness of heart, earnestness of purpose, integrity of character, and indefatigable industry in the work of the Great

Master, we most cheerfully recognize. Holding firmly the view of the atonement for which we have contended, these latter do not attempt to reduce their views to a system, but openly acknowledge that there is an apparent inconsistency between the doctrines they hold and the addresses they use to their congregations. But they allege that this apparent inconsistency is to be found in the Scriptures themselves, and that if real, God himself is the Author of it.

From these teachers and their views we are broadly and distinctly separated. We maintain that truth cannot be inconsistent with itself—that one part of Scripture must be interpreted in harmony with every other part, and that if, as they acknowledge and confess, redemption is particular, and the atonement special, the blessings of the atonement cannot be offered to all men universally without discrimination.

The passages of Scripture they rely upon in support of their theory are in no case inconsistent with particular redemption, for although the words *world*, *whole world*, *all*, *all men*, *all flesh*, and *all people* are used, they are invariably used in a restricted sense, their application being determined by the connection in which they stand. And if we once admit the Scriptures to be even *apparently* inconsistent with themselves, we concede at once all that the infidel argues,—we justify those who deny the one authorship and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, and permanently weaken its authority upon our own minds as a standard of faith.

Perhaps the majority of those who make use of universal offers and invitations do so because they consider that they are thereby placed in a more advantageous position in their addressee to the ungodly, and are enabled more directly to appeal to the sinner's conscience. In that case we are entitled to ask, What advantage they possess over ourselves, who, with the invitation, endeavour to indicate the character to whom we believe it to be addressed in the Scriptures. Do these universal offers better commend the love of God to men? We affirm the contrary; for those who use them on the ground alleged, that God gave his Son to die for all, and gives his Spirit to influence

all, must, by the use of these offers and exhortations, imply that God has not done enough withal to save a single soul, without the soul itself does something in addition. The love of God is far better shown in our system in which God is acknowledged to have accomplished and secured the salvation of millions without any contingency. Again, those who use them, believing that God has given his Son to die for all, but only gives his Spirit to quicken and convert the elect, are in no better position; for where is the difference whether God withhold the Son or withhold the Spirit, if *both* are essential to salvation? If the love of God depended upon universal redemption, it would depend equally upon universal regeneration. Again, those who use them, but believe neither in the universal gift of Christ, nor of the Spirit, are in the worst position of all; for they must represent God as having love enough to offer what he does not mean to give—love enough to expect the fruits without having planted the vineyard.

We ask, in the second place, Do these universal offers exhibit the work of Christ in a more attractive and advantageous light? Do they not rather becloud its glory? For at the very outset they destroy its sole sufficiency. Thousands, according to this scheme, for whom Christ died, are perished. The finally damned are as really redeemed as the finally saved, the distinction being that the latter did something for themselves, without which, all that Christ did for them, would have been ineffectual and inoperative. Not one more soul is to be saved, according to the universal scheme, than according to the particular; but according to the universal scheme, the soul is partly saved by its own act, instead of being entirely saved by the work of Christ. Thus, in order to extend the comfort of the gospel to all, they take it away from all; since no man can be saved without some act or acts of his own. In proposing to offer the gospel to those who do not want it and do not desire it, they crush the rising hopes of those who do, since they interpose conditions between the Saviour and the sinner, whereas every really converted sinner feels his inability to perform any.

We ask further, do these general invitations, and offers glorify in any way the work of the Holy Spirit? On the contrary, do they not on the very face of them *conceal*, if they do not *deny*, the necessity for its existence and exercise? That share in the plan of salvation, which in Scripture is ascribed to the Holy Spirit, is in these offers and exhortations, devolved as a duty upon the sinner, while the real fact that he is dead, blind, naked, helpless, an alien from God, and at enmity with God, is skillfully veiled; that the invitation may seem the less inconsistent. How much more God-glorifying is the truth taught everywhere in the Bible, that the Holy Spirit alone quickens and renews the soul, and gives a man those spiritual characteristics which entitle him to the promises and invitations of the gospel.

We ask finally, do these universal offers shed any additional lustre on the gospel ministry? On the basis of particular redemption, and a special atonement, flowing from electing grace, the servant of Christ is authorized to proclaim full salvation, without conditions, to all that need, desire, thirst, seek, or are made willing to receive it; because such desire, thirst, and willingness, are the work of the Holy Spirit, and the evidence of interest in it. What can the universalist do more? True, he may offer it to those who do not want it, do not desire it, do not feel any need of it, and are not willing to receive it. But what can be the result of his doing so? And if he answers, The Holy Spirit can and may apply it,—we inquire, Cannot the Holy Spirit just as easily apply the truth as He has revealed it; and is He not, at least, as likely to do so?

But if we ask in vain for the advantages of the system of universal offers, it is at least easy to distinguish its *disadvantages*, which are as numerous as they are grave and solemn. It is a system which represents the God of salvation in such terms, that *if carried to their logical conclusion*, would deprive us of all faith in His perfections, and of all reverence for His character; and the general adoption of this system in the present day, accounts in no small degree for the growth and spread of infidelity among and around us. The sceptic need not

take the trouble to assail the existence of a perfect God when the theologian does the work for him.

This system assails the foreknowledge of God; for as a tradesman waits till the end of the year to take stock, and see whether he is richer or poorer, so God must wait till the day of judgment before he can estimate the result of his mighty work, or the product of his unparalleled expenditure.

It reflects upon his wisdom; for since the glory of God is the great end in salvation, and man's acceptance of it is represented as the condition upon which it rests, God must be supposed to make the most momentous of all issues—in which he cannot afford to fail—hinge upon the most precarious of all eventualities, in which failure is inevitable.

It denies His omnipotence; for He is ever supposed to be waiting upon the will of man, and courting his dispositions; and the infidel laughs, as well he may, at the idea of a *God* who *would* if He *could*—who is ever anxious and solicitous for men's salvation, yet ever helpless and powerless to effect it; who sitting in heaven upon a doubtful throne, is chafed and vexed from day to day, by seeing His benevolent intentions frustrated, His purposes thwarted, His aims defeated, and His anxious desires disappointed.

Worse still, it impeaches His righteousness. In the name of universal love it represents Him as a Being capable of the most revolting cruelty and injustice. Universalists do not hesitate to allege, but make a great point of declaring, that men are not damned for their sins, or not exclusively so, but are damned doubly, over and above what their sins deserve, for not being what the grace of God could alone make them. He who inspired that pertinent question: “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things that are needful for the body, what doth it profit?” is daily described as doing something infinitely more

unreasonable, as saying to the destitute and naked sinner, “ Depart in peace, be ye born again; have faith; acquire grace, and be a Christian! and yet not giving the Holy Spirit, without whom these things are impossible. Nay, worse still, for the wealthy brother in the illustration is not represented as condemning and punishing the indigent one for not having the things which he withheld? but God is described as heaping up the damnation of eternal fire upon sinners, not because they are sinners, but because they do not acquire that which He alone can communicate—for not possessing that which He alone could give them—for not being that which He alone could make them—in short, of reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he has not sowed—of offering salvation to a sinner whom He knew could not possess it—for whom, in fact, He had never designed it, with the sole purpose of giving Himself a pretext for his double damnation.

This system not only dishonours God Himself—it is an incalculable injury to man; for it conceals from him what he really is, and represents him to be what he is not, and that to his infinite disadvantage. The Bible everywhere represents man to be dead in sin, under the law, under the curse—an alien from the commonwealth of Israel—without God, and without hope in the world. Instead of speaking of spiritual graces as within man’s own reach, it describes repentance as the gift of an ascended Saviour, and faith as something wrought in us by the operation of God. Now, the universalist admits all this, and acknowledges that man has not the power to respond to his offers and invitations, and yet he studiously labours to make him believe that he can. He aims, he intends, he wishes, to create in the sinner’s mind the impression that he possesses power which he firmly believes he does not possess. Now, with the largest Christian charity, what shall we say of a system in which man strives to mislead and deceive his fellowsinners in so important a matter as the salvation of the soul? If it be urged that the motive is good, we concede that; but it is doing evil that good may come, 28 and striving to serve the cause of truth by the persistent promulgation of error. And if it be urged, as

it sometimes is, that an unregenerate man is not a theologian—that he does not stay to weigh and balance doctrinal arguments—that these exhortations only make him think of his soul, and that is all that is intended: we reply, It is playing fast and loose with a man's soul, and a soul is not a suitable thing to play fast and loose with. Moreover, if he thinks at all, he is far more likely to procrastinate than anything else, under the impression that what he can do at any time, he is not obliged to do now; better by far to tell him, in God's own words, what he is, where he is, and whither he will inevitably go, unless God's unmerited mercy be extended to save him; and, under any circumstances, it is not for a servant to improve upon his master's commission, or to discuss its probable effects, but rather to say with Micaiah: "As the Lord liveth, whatsoever the Lord saith unto me, that I will speak."

Long may the Strict Baptists eschew this pernicious system. May the Lord still enable us to preach and proclaim salvation by free grace alone, as the sole work of the Triune God,—to reprove sin and warn the sinner,—to direct the enquirer and encourage the seeker,—to comfort the penitent and bind up the broken-hearted, to tend the lambs and feed the sheep, to insist upon the sufficiency of the work of Christ, and the necessity for the work of the Holy Spirit,—speaking the truth in love, yet being clear of the blood of all men, by not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God.

Before we close our paper, there is yet one other important subject which claims a brief notice—a doctrine which was until modern times the mutual belief of all Christendom, but is now rapidly becoming a distinguishing doctrine of the Strict Baptist denomination, viz., the eternal duration of future punishment.

The testimony of the Word of God upon this subject is neither deficient in amount, nor ambiguous in terms.

It does not depend upon any critical dispute about the etymology of the words Sheol, Gehenna, or Hades. No doctrine of the Scripture is

the exclusive property of the learned (since it was written with special regard for the poor,) nor turns upon the interpretation of any single Hebrew or Greek term, over which scholars may wrangle. The meaning of the *word* is sufficiently determined by the description of the *thing*.

Most solemnly, and three times in succession, does our Lord affirm, that hell is a place where “the worm dieth not,” and “the fire never shall be quenched.” He illustrates it no less forcibly by the parable, in which the rich man lifted up his eyes, being in torment, seeking a drop of water to cool his tongue; yet was told that a great gulf, immovably fixed, rendered his relief, or his release, impossible. In no doubtful phraseology He declares that “the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, prepared for the devil and his angels,” nor less emphatically does the writer of the Apocalypse declare, that “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever,” and they have no rest day nor night.”

Such a doctrine as this is naturally most unpalatable to the carnal mind, interfering as it does, with the unmingled enjoyment of sinful pleasure, and disturbing the conscience in the unholy indulgence of lust, by uncomfortable suggestions of the penalty to follow. From this cause, undoubtedly arises the antagonism to the truth which has of late years been manifested. If this opposition came from the professed enemies of godliness alone, it would be unnecessary for us to refer to it, but the gravity of the matter lies in its general acceptance in many fashionable pulpits, by many eminent men in most denominations, and now at last it is a feature in the theological training in Baptist colleges.

There are three different schools of teachers who deny the doctrine of eternal punishment. These are, first, the “Destructionists,” who maintain that the wicked will never be raised from the dead, but that corporal death will be the final end of them. Secondly, the “Annihilationists,” who hold that the wicked will be punished, but not eternally; that they will when sufficiently punished, be annihilated;

and thirdly, the “Restorationists,” who hold that justice will eventually be satisfied, and punishment exhaust itself, when the wicked will be restored, and taken to heaven, to rejoin the righteous.

All these theories may be replied to in one and the same argument; for if either of the following propositions can be maintained, viz., 1st. That man is not in account with his Maker, and the eternal Legislator has no claim upon the sinner; or 2nd. That those claims on the one hand and obligations on the other are terminable; or, 3rd. That they may be accommodated otherwise than by a complete satisfaction; or, 4th. That satisfaction may be rendered in any other way than by the atonement of the Redeemer; in such a case, either of these three theories may be as possible as the other, and any future hypothesis may equally deserve consideration. But in the fear of God, and in humble deference to His Word, we insist that not one of these positions can be maintained. If the first were true, the punishment inflicted upon Christ was *unjust*, in the second case it was *excessive*, in the third case it was *unnecessary*, in the fourth it was *unwise*.

In the first place, man *is* and *must be* in account with, his Maker. It is impossible that the relation of Creator and creature can exist, without corresponding obligations. Indeed that God must be a Legislator, and man must be a responsible being, is the foundation of all religious belief, apart from which all attention to the Bible is useless, and all religious observance a waste of time.

And secondly, as long as the relationship lasts the obligations must continue. The angels in heaven are to-day under the same obligations, as on the day they were created, and although their obedience is perfect to-day, that does not release them from the obligation to render the same obedience to-morrow,—every creature of God being bound to render incessantly to his Creator all the worship and service of which his nature is capable. Man is an immortal being, he is destined to exist for ever; so that in like manner his obligations will be perpetuated by his existence, and be as real in another world as in this. A change of worlds is no change of the relation in which he stands to

his Creator. Now as a sinner, man has rendered himself answerable to the divine law, and since that law demands nothing capricious nor arbitrary, but only that which is good and right in itself, it cannot alter its claims without altering its character, and ceasing to be “holy, just, and good.” In a future world, therefore, man’s relation to God will be the same, the law will be the same, its claims will be the same, and the sinner’s obligation to it the Same also.

We contend thirdly, that this account between man and his Maker—these obligations of the sinner to the divine law, can be settled in no other way than by satisfaction. What it is right to demand it is right to enforce, and since God in His law requires perfect obedience,—perfect obedience must be rendered, or the curse attached to disobedience must be inflicted. Destruction at death, or annihilation afterwards, must suppose the possibility of evading the claim and avoiding the penalty; there is nothing of the nature of satisfaction in it, any more than the law of the land is satisfied when a criminal escapes to a foreign land, or anticipates its operation by committing suicide, and to suppose it possible to escape from divine jurisdiction is an awful delusion.

Lastly, we observe that the satisfaction demanded can only be rendered by the life and death of the Son of God. He could render a perfect obedience such as the law requires of man, because he was a man; and he could impart that obedience to the sinner, because he was God also, and, not standing on the same footing as creatures, did not need it for Himself. He could expiate sin, because He could suffer for it in the nature in which it was committed,—because ho could offer a perfect sacrifice without spot or blemish in substitution,—because He could impart to those sufferings in human nature, the virtue, worth, and glory of the divine nature.

But there is nothing of this in hell. There is nothing in the punishment of the damned that cleanses, purifies, sanctifies, or fits the soul for the society of a holy God. And as the sinner carries his sinful nature to hell with him, and continues to sin there as he did here, no

longer even partially restrained by social considerations or Christian influences, he will perpetuate his punishment, (even if not rendered so by his earthly transgressions) by perpetual sin. Sin is as hateful to God in hell as on earth, and the same law which curses it here will undoubtedly curse it there also.

How then can punishment terminate, when the source of it is continuous 1 How can the damned be restored, when there is nothing to change the heart, renew the nature, cleanse the soul, and purify the mind? Shall the fires of hell effect what the blood of Christ and the grace of the Spirit failed to accomplish? And was it only from a temporary punishment that Christ died to redeem his people? or was that unspeakable gift, those unparalleled sufferings, that costly sacrifice, only intended to save us from annihilation?

We maintain the contrary. That that justice which was inflexible in the case of Christ, can never be relaxed in favour of the ungodly—that God's everlasting, means infinite duration, or otherwise the eternal happiness promised to the redeemed in heaven, may be only a limited matter after all.

The Strict Baptist denomination give place to none in the earnestness of their desire for the extension of the gospel, and the salvation of sinners; but due reverence for the plain statements of Scripture forbid any man to add to, or take from its sacred records to modify the doom of the wicked, or destroy the hopes of the righteous, by admitting that the state of either is terminable. In conclusion, the Strict Baptists claim for themselves the famous statement of Chillingworth, "The Bible and the Bible alone is their religion."

In accordance with its inspired teachings we believe that God is our Creator, and therefore, our Legislator; we are His creatures, and therefore, accountable to him. As sinners, we have transgressed His holy law, and merited its just condemnation. And, but for His grace, upon which we have no claims,—but for His mercy, to which we have no right,—we deserved to be punished and to perish.

But we rejoice in the revelation of a purpose of salvation—designed, arranged, fixed, and set in the mind of Jehovah before the world began,—that it rests upon the basis of a finished atonement—a perfect sacrifice—a complete obedience—a full and entire satisfaction. We rejoice that it is further secured by the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, sanctification, and preservation,—that it is described and proclaimed in the gospel in such terms that although the final result is assured beyond the possibility of failure, the door of mercy is stood open that every sensible sinner may enter—the fountain of redemption flows that every thirsty soul may drink and be satisfied—the throne of grace is erected, that whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved—the wine and milk of the gospel is advertised, that be that has neither money nor price may purchase them—and Christ is lifted up on the gospel pole, as was the serpent in the wilderness by Moses, that whosoever is bitten when he looketh may live. And the immutable oath and promise of Jehovah is pledged that none shall seek in vain nor be sent empty away.

But when the needy have knocked at mercy's door and have entered,—when the thirsty shall have drunk of the water of life and been satisfied,—when the broken-hearted have been led to Christ and have been healed, they shall have done that which His hand and counsel determined before should be done.

And the whole number of the redeemed shall be finally presented without fault before the throne of God. White robes shall denote the spotless purity of their character,—palms shall express the victory they have obtained,—crowns of gold shall exhibit the dignity to which they are advanced,—harps of gold shall indicate the worship in which they engage,—and mansions in the Father's house, the domestic, home-like felicity of their family circle. And while they are fed by the Lamb in the midst of the throne, and led by Him to fountains of living waters,—while night and darkness, candle and sunshine, are things of the past,—while tears, sins, death, sorrow, and crying, are passed

away,—God's great object shall be realized, his glory shall be exhibited and displayed, in and upon each and every one of them; and as throughout the countless ages of ceaseless duration, they gaze upon the face of the Lamb whose name is in their foreheads, they shall sing with united rapture, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," "blessing, and honour, and glory, and majesty, and dominion, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever." Amen.

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