

A portrait of John Owen, a man with long, dark, wavy hair, wearing a dark coat and a white cravat. The background is a dark, mottled brown.

THE DEATH OF DEATH
IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST

MODERNIZED EDITION

JOHN OWEN

EDITED BY MR D. CLARKE

THE DEATH OF DEATH IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST

A Modernised Edition

John Owen

Edited and Modernised by David Clarke

The John Owen Library

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The Death of Death in the Death of Christ

by John Owen

Modernised edition prepared by Mr Clarke

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EDITOR'S NOTE

In seeking to preserve the gospel of Christ as proclaimed in the doctrines of grace, I would direct readers to my work *Let Christian Men Be Men*, which sets out the necessity of understanding these truths.



This publication arises from the same conviction. John Owen presents a biblical defence of Particular Redemption, also called Limited Atonement: that Christ did not merely make salvation possible, but effectually secured redemption for his people. *D. Clarke*

Owen's work should be read not merely as a matter of controversy, but because it directs us to the sufficiency, certainty, and saving power of Christ's cross. This modernised edition seeks to make his argument accessible while preserving its theological precision.

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

The first death recorded in Holy Scripture did not occur at Calvary, nor even in the sacrifices offered by Abel. It took place in the Garden of Eden after the fall of our first parents. Having sinned against God, Adam and Eve became conscious of their nakedness and sought to cover themselves with aprons of fig leaves. Their own efforts, however sincere, could never remove their guilt nor restore them to fellowship with God.

The Lord Himself therefore provided coats of skins and clothed them.

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

Genesis 3:21 (KJV)

The sentence of death pronounced upon Adam was neither withdrawn nor forgotten.

"For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Genesis 2:17 (KJV)

Yet, in that very day, the Lord revealed not only His justice but also His mercy. Adam and Eve were not immediately cut off from life, but were spared according to God's eternal purpose of redemption.

At the same time, they were driven from the Garden of Eden and denied access to the tree of life, so that they would no longer eat of it and live for ever in their fallen condition.

“Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden... So he drove out the man... lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.”

Genesis 3:22–24 (KJV)

From that day onward, Adam and all his descendants became subject to bodily death.

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

Romans 5:12 (KJV)

Yet physical death was not the whole of God’s judgement. Unless delivered by His sovereign grace through faith in the promised Seed, Adam and all mankind would ultimately face the second death, the everlasting judgement of God.

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”

Revelation 20:14 (KJV)

Thus, from the very beginning, God revealed that the hope of sinful man rested entirely in His gracious provision. The promise concerning the Seed of the woman, together with the sacrifice by which Adam and Eve were clothed, directed faith beyond Eden to that perfect redemption which would one day be accomplished by Jesus Christ.

The obtaining of those skins necessarily required the death of an innocent animal. Although Scripture does not describe the sacrifice in detail, it marks the first recorded shedding of blood in the history of redemption. From that moment onward, God established a pattern that would run throughout the whole of the Old Testament. The sacrifices of Abel, Noah, Abraham, the Passover lamb, the Levitical offerings, and the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement all pointed beyond themselves to a greater sacrifice yet to come.

These sacrifices possessed no power in themselves to remove sin.

“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats

should take away sins.”

Hebrews 10:4 (KJV)

Rather, they were appointed by God as shadows and types, directing faith to the promised Redeemer. The innocent victim died in the place of the guilty, foreshadowing that perfect substitution which would one day be accomplished by Jesus Christ. Thus the whole sacrificial system proclaimed, long before the coming of Christ, that forgiveness would only be secured through the death of another.

The Scriptures plainly teach that the blood of Christ was the purchase price of our redemption and the means by which remission of sins was obtained. His life was not merely an example to be admired, but a ransom offered to satisfy the justice of God. From the first sacrifice in Eden to the final sacrifice upon Calvary, God was teaching His people that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

Hebrews 9:22 (KJV)

The blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin, but they pointed forward to Him whose blood alone could accomplish eternal redemption.

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”

Ephesians 1:7 (KJV)

Likewise, the coats of skins provided by God may rightly be understood as a gracious figure of His provision for guilty sinners. Adam and Eve could not cover their own shame; God Himself provided the covering they required. In the fulness of time He would provide a far greater covering—not garments of skin, but the perfect righteousness of His beloved Son, imputed to all who believe. The sinner stands accepted before God, not clothed in his own righteousness, but in the righteousness of Christ.

Yet the justice and righteousness of God were not fully displayed merely by the institution of these types. They anticipated the day when His justice would be openly manifested in the actual substitutionary death of His Son upon the cross. There, and there alone, the holy law

of God was perfectly honoured, sin was punished in the appointed Surety, divine justice was fully satisfied, and redemption was effectually accomplished for all those whom the Father had given to His Son.

It is this glorious truth that John Owen so carefully defends in *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*. Christ did not merely make salvation possible; He actually bore the sins of His people, satisfied the justice of God, purchased eternal redemption by His own blood, and secured everlasting salvation for all whom the Father had chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. The sacrifices of the Old Testament anticipated this work; the cross accomplished it once for all.

JOHN OWEN

John Owen wrote *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* in the seventeenth century, during a time of vigorous theological debate. Its language is necessarily shaped by that age: sentences are often long, vocabulary is sometimes unfamiliar, and his arguments can be difficult for a modern reader to follow on first reading. This edition has been prepared to make Owen's work more accessible without changing its doctrine. Archaic grammar, spelling, and forms of expression have been updated into clear modern English. Long and complex passages have been arranged for easier reading. Scripture quotations have been retained in the King James Version, preserving the biblical language Owen himself used. The theology has not been revised, softened, or recast for modern preferences. Owen's argument concerning the purpose, extent, and efficacy of Christ's death remains his own. Important theological terms—such as oblation, propitiation, satisfaction, redemption, and intercession—have been retained where they carry a precise meaning that simpler language might weaken or obscure. The aim is not to replace Owen's voice, but to remove unnecessary barriers between the reader and his argument. Where his theological language remains necessary, the accompanying glossary is intended to help readers understand it in the sense Owen employs it. May this edition enable a new generation of readers to engage carefully with one of the most substantial works ever written on the death of Christ.

JOHN OWEN: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

John Owen (1616–1683) was an English pastor, theologian, scholar, and one of the leading Puritan writers of the seventeenth century. He was born in Stadhampton, Oxfordshire, and studied at Queen's College, Oxford, receiving his Bachelor of Arts in 1632 and his Master of Arts in 1635.

During the English Civil War, Owen identified with the Parliamentary cause and became a prominent preacher. He served as chaplain to Oliver Cromwell during the campaigns in Ireland and Scotland. In 1651 he was appointed Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, and the following year became Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford. In these roles he worked to strengthen the university's learning, discipline, and Christian witness.

Owen was a convinced Congregationalist and a defender of Reformed theology. After the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and the ejection of Nonconformist ministers in 1662, he continued to preach and write despite legal restrictions placed upon those outside the established Church of England.

His writings range widely across the Christian faith, including the person and work of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of justification, communion with God, the mortification of sin, and perseverance in faith. Among his best-known works are *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers*, *Communion with God*, and his extensive exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

John Owen died in 1683. His writings remain valued for their biblical depth, theological clarity, and pastoral concern for the church.

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BOOK I

Chapter 1

The Purpose of Christ's Death as Scripture Presents It

By the end of Christ's death, I mean two things: first, what the Father and the Son intended to accomplish by it; and second, what was actually accomplished through it. We may briefly consider the language used by the Holy Spirit concerning both.

First, what was Christ's purpose in coming into the world? Let Christ himself answer, for he knew his own mind and all the secrets of his Father's counsel.

"For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."

Matt. 18:11

His purpose was to recover and save lost sinners. The same is stated again in Luke 19:10.

The apostles, who knew his mind, say the same:

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." 1 Tim. 1:15

But who are these sinners towards whom Christ has this gracious purpose? Christ tells us that he came:

"To give his life a ransom for many." Matt. 20:28

Elsewhere, those for whom he gave himself are called us - believers - as distinct from the world:

"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." Gal. 1:4

It was the will and purpose of God that Christ should give himself for us, so that we might be saved and separated from this evil world. They are his church:

"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." Eph. 5:25-27

These words also express Christ's purpose in giving himself for any: that they might be made fit for God and brought near to him. The same truth appears here:

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:14

The intention and design of both Christ and his Father in this great work are therefore plain: to save us; to deliver us from this evil world; to cleanse and sanctify us; to make us holy, zealous, and fruitful in good works; to make us acceptable to God; and to bring us near to him.

"By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." Rom. 5:2

The actual effects and fruits of Christ's death, his blood-shedding, and his oblation are revealed no less clearly.

First, there is reconciliation with God, accomplished by removing and destroying the enmity between God and us.

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son..." Rom. 5:10

"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." 2 Cor. 5:19

"And hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 5:18

How was this reconciliation accomplished? The apostle tells us:

"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; ... that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Eph. 2:15-16. Thus:

"He is our peace." Eph. 2:14

Second, there is justification. Christ removes the guilt of sin, obtains its remission and pardon, redeems us from its power, and delivers us from the curse and wrath due to us because of it.

"By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. 9:12

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Gal. 3:13

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.”

1 Pet. 2:24

We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God; yet we are:

“Justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.” Rom. 3:24-25

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” Col. 1:14

Third, there is sanctification. Christ’s death cleanses us from the pollution of sin, renews the image of God within us, and supplies us with the graces of the Holy Spirit.

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Heb. 9:14

“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7

“When he had by himself purged our sins...” Heb. 1:3

“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.” Heb. 13:12

Christ gave himself for the church:

“That he might sanctify and cleanse it ... that it should be holy and without blemish.” Eph. 5:25-27

In particular, faith is given to us for Christ’s sake:

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ ... to believe on him.” Phil. 1:29

And God blesses us in Christ:

“With all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” Eph. 1:3

Fourth, there is adoption, together with the liberty and privileges that belong to the children of God.

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Gal. 4:4-5

Fifth, the effects of Christ’s death do not end there. They continue until we are established in heaven, in glory and immortality for ever.

“Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” Eph. 1:14

“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 which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.” Heb. 9:15

In summary: by his death and blood-shedding, Jesus Christ has accomplished and effectually obtained for all who are included in it eternal redemption - grace here and glory hereafter.

Scripture’s language concerning the purposes and effects of Christ’s death is therefore full, clear, and plain. Yet few matters in Christian religion are more disputed. Many maintain that Christ paid a general ransom for all people without exception - that he died not only for many, for his church, and for God’s elect, but for every descendant of Adam.

Those who hold this view recognise that, if Christ’s death has the purposes and effects Scripture describes, one of two conclusions must follow. Either God and Christ failed to accomplish what they intended - Christ’s death was not sufficient to attain its intended end - or all people must be saved, cleansed, sanctified, and glorified.

The first conclusion dishonours the wisdom, power, and perfection of God, and diminishes the worth and efficacy of Christ’s death. The second contradicts both Scripture and the grievous experience of millions.

To avoid these conclusions, advocates of universal redemption deny that God or Christ had any definite and effectual purpose in the death of Christ. They deny that reconciliation, justification, sanctification, adoption, faith, or eternal life were immediately purchased by Christ’s death for anyone in particular. Instead, they

say that Christ's death obtained only benefits common to every person, including those who remain unbelieving and are eternally condemned, until faith distinguishes some from others.

But, Owen argues, such a view weakens the virtue, value, fruits, and effects of Christ's satisfaction and death. It also becomes the foundation of a dangerous, comfortless, and erroneous doctrine. With the Lord's help, he will now show what Scripture teaches about both Christ's purpose in dying and the effects actually obtained by his death.

Chapter 2

The Nature of an End in General, and Some Necessary Distinctions

An end is what an agent intends to accomplish through an action suited to its nature. It is the object at which a person aims - something considered good and desirable in his present condition.

For example, Noah's end in building the ark was the preservation of himself and his household. In obedience to God, he built an ark so that he and his family might be preserved from the flood.

"Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he." Gen. 6:22

Whatever an agent does, or whatever he employs, in order to accomplish his intended end is called the means. End and means together make up the whole nature of purposeful action in free and intelligent agents - those who act by choice.

Absalom, intending to rebel against his father and obtain the crown for himself, prepared the means necessary for that purpose.

"And Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him." 2 Sam. 15:1

By flattering speech and deceitful conduct:

"Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel." 2 Sam. 15:6

He then pretended to offer a sacrifice at Hebron and formed a conspiracy there. These were the means he used to pursue his intended end.

There is a mutual relation between end and means, though each is a cause of the other in a different respect. The end is the first and principal moving cause of the whole work. It is the reason for which

the work is undertaken. No agent acts without some end in view. Unless he were directed towards a particular effect, thing, way, or manner of acting, he would no more do one thing than another.

The builders of Babel desired unity and continued residence together. Perhaps they also wished to secure themselves against another flood. They first stated their aim, and then chose the means which they thought would accomplish it.

“Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.” Gen. 11:4

The whole order of action followed by a wise agent arises from the end he intends. In intention and planning, the end is the beginning of all order in the work.

The means are all those things used to attain the intended end: food for preserving life; sailing in a ship for one who wishes to cross the sea; laws for the peaceful continuation of human society. In one way or another, they procure the end. They exist for the sake of the end, and the end follows from them either morally, as that which they deserve, or naturally, as their fruit and product.

First, in a moral sense, when an action and its end are considered in relation to a moral rule or law given to the agent, the means become the deserving or meritorious cause of the end. Had Adam continued in innocence and done all things according to the law given to him, the end obtained would have been a blessed life for ever. In the same way, the end of every sinful act is death, which is the curse of the law.

Second, when means are considered only in their natural relation, they are the instrumentally efficient cause of the end. Joab intended Abner's death:

“And Joab smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died.” 2 Sam. 3:27

Likewise, when Benaiah struck Shimei at Solomon's command, the wound he gave him was the efficient cause of his death. In that natural respect, there is no difference between murdering an innocent man and executing a guilty offender. Yet, when these acts are considered morally, their ends follow from their respective deserts according to the rule of righteousness; and between them there is a great gulf.

Because some agents are defective and perverse, we must distinguish between the end of the work and the end of the worker - the end of the action and the end intended by the agent. When the means chosen for an end are not proportioned or suited to that end according to the rule by which the agent ought to act, the agent may aim at one thing while another follows from his action in a moral sense.

Adam was tempted with the desire to be like God. This became his aim. To obtain it, he ate the forbidden fruit; but in doing so, he contracted guilt, which was not the end he intended.

When an agent acts rightly - aiming at a proper end and using suitable means - the end of the work and the end of the worker are the same. Abel intended to worship the Lord, and through faith offered a sacrifice acceptable to him. Likewise, when a person desires salvation through Christ and seeks an interest in him, his intended end and the proper end of his action agree.

The reason for this difference is that secondary agents, such as human beings, have an end appointed to their actions by the One who gives them an external rule or law. That rule always governs their actions, whether they will acknowledge it or not. God alone, whose will and good pleasure are the sole rule of all his outward works, can never deviate in his actions or have any end follow from them which he did not precisely intend.

Again, the end of every free agent is either that which he accomplishes, or that for whose sake he accomplishes it. If a man builds a house in order to let it for rent, the house is what he accomplishes; profit is the end for which he builds it. A physician heals his patient, but his reward may be the end for which he acts.

Judas aimed to betray his Master when he went to the priests, bargained with them, brought the soldiers to the garden, and kissed Christ. But the end for which he undertook all this was the thirty pieces of silver.

“What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?”

Matt. 26:15

The end God accomplished by the death of Christ was the satisfaction of his justice. The supreme end for which he accomplished it was his own glory; the subordinate end was our good in him.

The means used to attain an end are of two kinds.

First, some means have a genuine goodness in themselves, even apart from their use as means. Yet they are not considered good as means in themselves, but because they lead to a further end. Study, for example, is a noble employment of the mind; but when we pursue it for wisdom and knowledge, we consider it good because it leads to that end. Otherwise, it may become:

“A weariness of the flesh.” Eccl. 12:12

Second, some means have no goodness in themselves, but only as they lead to the end they are suited to attain. Their goodness is entirely relative to that end. Examples include cutting off an arm or leg to preserve life, taking bitter medicine to regain health, or throwing cargo into the sea to prevent shipwreck. Christ’s death is a means of this kind, as will later be shown.

Having set out these matters generally, we must now apply them to the work of redemption. We shall consider, in order, the agent who works, the means employed, and the end accomplished. These three must be considered distinctly if we are to understand the whole matter rightly. With God’s help, we therefore begin with the agent in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

The Father as the Chief Author of Redemption

Part One: The Father's Sending of the Son

The whole blessed Trinity is the agent and chief author of the great work of redemption. All the outward works of the Godhead are undivided: they belong equally to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, though the distinct order of their personal subsistence is maintained.

There were, of course, other instrumental causes involved in Christ's oblation - or, more properly, his suffering. Yet the work of redemption cannot properly be attributed to them.

With respect to the Father, the outcome of their actions was entirely contrary to their own intentions. They did only what God had already determined should occur.

"For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."

Acts 4:28

With respect to Christ, they could not accomplish what they intended against him, for he willingly laid down his own life.

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again."

No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself."

John 10:17-18

Therefore, they must be excluded from consideration as authors of redemption.

Although the three persons of the holy Trinity are the joint authors of the whole work, Scripture assigns distinct acts and operations particularly to each person. Because of the weakness of our understanding, we must consider these separately. We begin with those acts especially attributed to the Father.

Two acts in the redemption accomplished by the blood of Jesus are particularly assigned to the Father:

1. the sending of his Son into the world for this work; and
2. the laying upon him the punishment due to our sin.

The first of these is the Father's sending of the Son. The Father loved the world and sent his Son to die.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

John 3:16-17

"God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us."

Rom. 8:3-4

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."

Rom. 3:25

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

Gal. 4:4-5

The Gospel of John refers to this sending more than twenty times. Christ describes himself as:

"Him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world."

John 10:36

And he describes the Father as:

"He that sent me."

John 5:37

This sending is therefore especially attributed to the Father, according to his promise:

"And he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them."

Isa. 19:20

And according to Christ's own declaration:

“And now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me.”

Isa. 48:16

For this reason, the Father himself is sometimes called our Saviour.

“According to the commandment of God our Saviour.”

1 Tim. 1:1

The same title appears elsewhere:

“My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.”

Luke 1:47

In this work, the Father’s sending of the Son includes three distinct acts.

1. The Father’s appointment of the Son as Mediator

First, the Father authoritatively appointed his Son to the office of Mediator. Christ willingly accepted this office, though the Father exercised, by divine dispensation, a kind of authority which the Son - though equal with the Father in his divine nature - freely submitted to in his mediatorial work.

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.”

Phil. 2:6-7

This appointment may be considered in two parts.

The first was the eternal purpose and counsel of God, by which he set apart his incarnate Son for this office.

“Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”

Ps. 2:7-8

“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. ...

The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”

Ps. 110:1, 4

The Father appointed Christ:

“Heir of all things.”

Heb. 1:2

And:

“Ordained [him] to be the Judge of quick and dead.”

Acts 10:42

Christ was:

“Foreordained before the foundation of the world.”

1 Pet. 1:20

And he was appointed:

“To be the firstborn among many brethren.”

Rom. 8:29

This eternal counsel is the source and fountain of all the acts that took place in time. God’s works were known to him from the beginning.

“Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.”

Acts 15:18

The second part was Christ’s actual inauguration, or solemn admission, into his mediatorial office. The Father committed judgment to the Son, made him both Lord and Christ, and appointed him over the whole house of God.

“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.”

John 5:22

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Acts 2:36

“Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we.”

Heb. 3:6

This was the anointing of the Most Holy.

“To anoint the most Holy.”

Dan. 9:24

“God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”

Ps. 45:7

The Father publicly testified to Christ’s nativity through angels, who proclaimed to the shepherds:

“Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

Luke 2:10-11

The heavenly host then declared:

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

Luke 2:14

The Father later bore witness to his beloved Son:

“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Matt. 3:17

Christ’s inauguration into office may therefore be viewed in three stages: his birth and public proclamation; his baptism and anointing by the Spirit; and his resurrection, ascension, and exaltation at the Father’s right hand.

At his baptism, the Spirit visibly descended upon him, equipping him for the work and office to which he had been appointed. At his exaltation, Christ was crowned with glory and honour, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and established as King upon Zion.

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

Matt. 28:18

“God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.”

Phil. 2:9

The Father appointed witnesses of every kind to this exaltation: angels from heaven, saints raised from the graves, the apostles among the living, and more than five hundred brethren at once.

Thus Christ was gloriously inaugurated into his office in its several stages and degrees. The Father said to him:

“It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel:

I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”

Isa. 49:6

Part Two: The Father’s Equipping of the Son

The second act of the Father in sending the Son was to furnish him with every gift and grace required for the office he was to undertake, the work he was to accomplish, and the charge committed to him over the house of God.

There was in Christ a twofold fullness and perfection of spiritual excellency.

The first was the natural, all-sufficient perfection of his Deity. As one with the Father in respect of his divine nature, Christ possessed this fullness essentially.

“And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.”

John 1:14

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.”

Phil. 2:6

He is:

“The man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts.”

Zech. 13:7

This divine glory was revealed to Isaiah when the seraphim cried:

“Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.”

Isa. 6:3

Isaiah then declared:

“Mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”

Isa. 6:5

The apostle explains that this vision concerned Christ:

“These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.”

John 12:41

For a time, Christ laid aside the outward manifestation of this glory when he took the form of a servant and humbled himself unto death.

“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Phil. 2:8

In that humbled condition, he appeared to men as one having:

“No form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.”

Isa. 53:2

But this essential fullness of Deity is not the subject now under consideration. It was not communicated to Christ by the Father, but belongs eternally and essentially to his divine person.

The second fullness in Christ was communicated to him by the Father. It was bestowed upon him to fit him for his work and office as Mediator - not as the Lord of hosts, but as:

“The man Christ Jesus.”

1 Tim. 2:5

And as:

“Emmanuel, God with us.”

Matt. 1:23

He is the Son given to us:

“And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

Isa. 9:6

This was a fullness of grace. It was not the essential fullness of the divine nature, but a habitual and communicated fullness bestowed upon Christ's human nature, personally united to his divine person.

This fullness was not absolutely infinite, as the essential perfection of his Deity is infinite. Yet it extended to every perfection of grace, both in kind and degree. No grace was absent from Christ, and every grace was present in him in its highest degree. Whatever perfection of grace was required for the accomplishment of his mediatorial work was bestowed upon him by the Father.

Though this communicated fullness cannot properly be called

infinite, it is boundless and unfailing. It is in Christ as light is in the beams of the sun, and as water is in a living fountain that cannot fail.

Christ is the source from whom grace flows to all who belong to him.

“For he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.”

Col. 1:18-19

“In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

Col. 2:3

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

Col. 2:9

And from this fullness believers continually receive grace.

“And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”

John 1:16

When Christ entered upon the work of redemption, he declared:

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek;

he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.”

Isa. 61:1-2

This was the anointing by which he was set apart above all others.

“God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”

Ps. 45:7

The grace bestowed upon Christ flows from him to all who are clothed in the garment of his righteousness.

“And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding,

the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of

the fear of the LORD.”

Isa. 11:2

This fullness was not given to Christ in limited portions, as grace is given to us according to our measure and degree of sanctification.

“For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.”

John 3:34

Christ did, however, truly grow in his human life.

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”

Luke 2:52

To this fullness of grace was added universal mediatorial authority.

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

Matt. 28:18

The Father gave the Son authority over all flesh, so that he might give eternal life to all those given to him.

“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

John 17:2

This is sufficient to show the second act of the Father in sending his Son: he equipped Christ perfectly and fully for the work of redemption entrusted to him.

Part Three: The Covenant Between the Father and the Son

The third act of the Father's sending of the Son was his entering into covenant with him concerning the work to be undertaken and its certain outcome.

This covenant had two parts. First, the Father promised to protect and assist the Son in accomplishing the whole work entrusted to him. He would provide every necessary help in trials, strength against opposition, encouragement in temptation, and consolation amid terror, so that Christ would carry this great work through every difficulty to its appointed end.

Yet the work Christ undertook was full of suffering. He was to become the Saviour of his people and enter into their affliction.

“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his

presence saved them.”

Isa. 63:9

Though he was the fellow of the LORD of hosts, he was to endure the sword drawn against the Shepherd.

“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts.”

Zech. 13:7

He was to bear the wrath of God against sin, to suffer in the place of his people, and to be made an offering for sin.

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him.”

Isa. 53:4-5

He was to suffer even to the point of crying:

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Ps. 22:1

It is no surprise, then, that the Father promised to support and preserve him in this undertaking. He promised to make him a fit and effectual servant in the accomplishment of his work.

“And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft.”

Isa. 49:2

“Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”

Isa. 49:3

Though the kings and rulers of the earth would oppose him, the Father promised to establish him as King upon Zion.

“The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed.”

Ps. 2:2

“Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.”

Ps. 2:6

Though men would reject him, he would become the chief cornerstone.

“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone

of the corner.”

Ps. 118:22

Thus, the Father’s covenantal promise assured Christ of divine support throughout his sufferings and of certain success in the work of redemption.

Part Four: The Father’s Promise of Success

The second part of the Father’s covenant with the Son was his promise of success: that Christ’s sufferings would have a certain and blessed outcome, and that the end for which he undertook the work would certainly be accomplished.

This is the matter most directly connected with Owen’s present argument. Whatever the Father promised the Son would be accomplished through his work must be the end which the Son intended in undertaking it. Having fulfilled the Father’s will, Christ could rightly claim nothing less, and nothing more, than what the Father had promised him.

The substance of this promise is set out clearly in Isaiah 49. The Father promised that Christ would raise up and restore his people, and would be a light to the Gentiles.

“It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel:

I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”

Isa. 49:6

The Father also promised to preserve Christ and give him as the covenant of his people.

“I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;

That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves.”

Isa. 49:8-9

Those whom Christ gathers to himself will be certainly sustained, fed, guided, and brought safely through every difficulty.

“They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them:

for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.”

Isa. 49:10

By these promises, the Father plainly engages himself to give Christ a glorious church of believers gathered from among Jews and Gentiles throughout the world. They will be brought to him, nourished by him, and refreshed by all the living streams of grace that flow from God in Christ unto eternal salvation.

This, then, was the end which Christ certainly intended: the gathering together of the children of God, their bringing to God, and their eternal salvation. Owen argues that this is wholly inconsistent with the idea that Christ's death merely made salvation possible while leaving it possible that none should be saved.

Isaiah 53 states the same promise even more directly. When Christ made his soul an offering for sin, the promised result was not uncertain.

*“When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days,
and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.”*

Isa. 53:10

*“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:
by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”*

Isa. 53:11

Christ was promised that he would see his seed: a spiritual people raised up to God, preserved through every generation, and made his own. The Father's pleasure would prosper in Christ's hand. That pleasure is the bringing of many sons unto glory.

“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory.”

Heb. 2:10

The same purpose is expressed here:

“God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.”

1 John 4:9

The agreement between the Father's promises and the Son's prayer

is seen most clearly in Christ's own request after he had finished the work given to him.

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

John 17:4

Having completed that work, Christ asks for the full outpouring of the Father's love upon those given to him: their faith, sanctification, preservation, union with God, and final glory.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

John 17:17

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

John 17:20-21

And finally:

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am;

that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me."

John 17:24

These requests rest upon the promises the Father had made to the Son. Christ does not pray here for all people without exception. Rather, he prays for those given to him by the Father.

Therefore, the promise of the Father to the Son, and the request of the Son to the Father, are directed to one particular end: the bringing of God's people to him in faith, holiness, and glory.

Part Five: The Father Laying the Punishment of Sin upon Christ

The second act especially attributed to the Father is the laying upon Christ of the punishment due to sin.

The prophet speaks of this as a divine command:

"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd."

Zech. 13:7

The Gospel explains this in the language of fulfilment:

"I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."

Matt. 26:31

Christ was not merely afflicted by the cruelty of men. He was:

"Stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."

Isa. 53:4

The Lord himself laid the iniquity of his people upon him.

"The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Isa. 53:6

And:

"It pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief."

Isa. 53:10

The same truth is expressed by Paul:

"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."

2 Cor. 5:21

Christ knew no sin; that is, he deserved no punishment. Yet the Father made him to be sin for us by laying upon him the punishment due to sin. The expression may also be understood as meaning that Christ was made a sin offering: the sacrifice appointed for the expiation of sin.

Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were instruments in Christ's death. Yet they did only what God had already determined should take place.

"For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."

Acts 4:28

This explains the depth of Christ's distress in his final conflict. The greatest burden he bore was the wrath which the Father immediately laid upon him.

Before any outward instrument of suffering appeared - while he was still in the garden with his three chosen disciples, before Judas and the company who came to arrest him - Christ:

"Began to be sorrowful, and very heavy."

Matt. 26:37

“Began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy.”

Mark 14:33

It was then, in the days of his flesh, that he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to him who was able to save him from death.

“And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly:

and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

Luke 22:43-44

This was a deep and immediate trial from the Father. Christ endured the cruelty of men and the violence done to his body with remarkable meekness. But when this conflict with the Father's wrath was renewed, he cried:

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Matt. 27:46

This is important for understanding what Christ endured for sinners, and for whom he endured it. His sufferings did not consist merely in bodily pain, together with inward distress caused by that pain. He underwent the curse of the law of God in our place.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.”

Gal. 3:13

That curse includes all the punishment due to sin, according to the justice of God and the demands of his holy law.

It is true that, under the Old Testament sacrificial system, God permitted a substitution: the life of a beast was accepted, in a ceremonial sense, in the place of the life of the offender. Yet this does not mean that the nature of the punishment due to sin was changed. In dying for us, Christ did not merely seek our good; he died directly in our stead.

The punishment due to our sin and the chastisement by which we have peace were laid upon him.

“The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

Isa. 53:5

Owen's point is that Christ endured the pains of hell in their nature, weight, and pressure - though not in their eternal duration, for it was impossible that death should hold him. God accepted this substitution of Christ for his people; yet there was no alteration in the true nature of the punishment which sin deserved.

We may therefore conclude this part with the prophet's summary:

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;

and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Isa. 53:6

Part Six: The Extent of Christ's Substitutionary Suffering

Owen now presses the consequence of this truth. It would be strange to say that Christ underwent the pains of hell in the place of those who were already enduring those pains before Christ suffered, and who will continue to endure them eternally.

"Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Mark 9:44

This leads to a necessary question. Did God lay his wrath upon Christ, and did Christ endure the punishment of hell, for:

1. all the sins of all people;
2. all the sins of some people; or
3. some sins of all people?

If Christ suffered for only some sins of all people, then every person still has some sins for which he must answer. If God were to judge any person for even one sin, no one could stand justified before him.

"If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"

Ps. 130:3

All people would then stand exposed to the terror of God's judgment.

If, however, Christ suffered for all the sins of some people, this

is the position Owen affirms: Christ suffered in the place of all the elect, bearing the punishment due to all their sins.

But if Christ suffered for all the sins of all people, why are not all people freed from the punishment of all their sins?

It may be said that unbelief prevents them from receiving the benefit of Christ's death. But unbelief is either sin or it is not. If it is not sin, why should anyone be punished for it? If it is sin, then Christ either bore its punishment or he did not.

If Christ bore the punishment due to unbelief, why should unbelief prevent anyone from receiving the benefit of his death any more than any other sin for which he died? But if Christ did not bear the punishment due to unbelief, then he did not die for all the sins of all people.

Owen therefore concludes that the claim that Christ died for all sins of all people cannot stand. Christ bore, in the place of his people, the full punishment due to all their sins.

Chapter 4

The Particular Actions of the Son in the Work of Redemption

Part One: His Voluntary Undertaking and Incarnation

The Son was an agent in this great work of redemption by willingly undertaking the office which the Father had appointed for him.

When all other sacrifices proved insufficient, Christ declared his readiness to accomplish the Father's will.

"Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

Then said I, Lo, I come ... to do thy will, O God."

Heb. 10:5-7

All other ways having been rejected as insufficient, Christ undertook the work. He was the one in whom the Father was well pleased.

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Matt. 3:17

Christ repeatedly testified that he had come to accomplish not his own independent will, but the will of the Father who sent him.

"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."

John 6:38

"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

John 4:34

Even as a child, he spoke in the same way:

"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

Luke 2:49

At the completion of his earthly ministry, he could say:

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

John 17:4

Throughout his ministry, Christ describes what he did as his Father's work, and the purpose of his coming as the accomplishment of his Father's will.

His undertaking may be considered under three heads. The first is a common foundation for the other two: his incarnation, or his taking human flesh and dwelling among us.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

John 1:14

Christ's being made of a woman is commonly called his incarnation.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman."

Gal. 4:4

This is the great mystery of godliness:

"God was manifest in the flesh."

1 Tim. 3:16

In becoming incarnate, the Son did not assume a particular human person into union with himself. Rather, he took our human nature into personal union with his divine person.

The reason for this is given in Hebrews. Since the children whom he came to save shared in flesh and blood, he also took the same nature.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same;

that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

Heb. 2:14

The children in view are those given to him by the Father.

"Behold I and the children which God hath given me."

Heb. 2:13

Their participation in flesh and blood was the reason for Christ's participation in the same. Owen's point is not that Christ became incarnate because every descendant of Adam was in that condition, but because the children given to him were in that condition. For their sake, he set himself apart to accomplish redemption.

This self-emptying, humbling, and dwelling among us was the particular act of the second person of the Trinity. The Father and the Holy Spirit concurred in it by eternal counsel, approval, and delight; but the Son alone took flesh and became man.

Part Two: Christ's Voluntary Oblation

The second action of the Son is his oblation: his offering of himself to God for us.

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God,

purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Heb. 9:14

Christ loved his people and washed them from their sins in his own blood.

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

Rev. 1:5

He gave himself for the church in order to sanctify and cleanse it.

"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."

Eph. 5:25-26

In this oblation, Christ took from his Father's hand the cup of wrath that was due to us and drank it fully - not for himself, but for his people.

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself."

Dan. 9:26

Christ said:

"And for their sakes I sanctify myself."

John 17:19

That is, he set himself apart as an offering and sacrifice for sin.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

Rom. 5:6

All the sacrifices and ordinances of the Old Testament pointed forward to this offering. When those shadows were ready to pass away, Christ declared:

“Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.”

Heb. 10:9

Scripture often describes Christ’s oblation in terms of what he suffered rather than what he did, because his suffering is chiefly considered as the means used by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to accomplish a further end. Yet Christ’s willing offering of himself was his own action. Without the willing consent of Christ, his death could not have been an oblation of value, nor could it have purged our sins.

Christ was the Lamb provided by God for sacrifice.

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

John 1:29

But he was not unwilling. He did not resist the work given to him.

“He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb,

so he openeth not his mouth.”

Isa. 53:7

He declared plainly:

“I lay down my life. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.

I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.”

John 10:17-18

Men could inflict suffering upon Christ, and the Father could lay upon him the punishment due to sin. But Christ’s death could not have been a true offering to God unless he willingly gave himself.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:

and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God,

who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Gal. 2:20

A gift is truly a gift only when it proceeds from a free and willing mind. Christ freely loved his people and gave himself for them.

“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us

an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”

Eph. 5:2

Thus he cheerfully fulfilled the Father’s will.

“Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.”

Heb. 10:9

And:

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.”

1 Pet. 2:24

By Christ’s oblation, Owen does not mean one isolated action, suffering, or moment. He means the whole course of Christ’s mediatorial obedience: his coming in the flesh, his ministry, his prayers, tears, sufferings, and final offering of himself, until he had purged our sins and sat down at the right hand of God.

“When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

Heb. 1:3

This entire work continued until Christ gave his life as the ransom price for many.

Part Three: Christ’s Intercession

Christ’s third action is his intercession for every person for whom he gave himself as an oblation.

He did not suffer for people and then refuse to intercede for them. He did not perform the greater work and omit the lesser. The price of redemption is too precious in the sight of God and Christ to be poured out for perishing souls without any concern for their final salvation.

This intercession was also included in the Father’s appointment of the Son.

“Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,

and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”

Ps. 2:8

Christ told his disciples that he still had work to do for them in heaven.

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you.

I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself.”

John 14:2-3

The high priest of Israel entered the inner sanctuary once each year, bringing blood for himself and for the sins of the people.

“But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood,

which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.”

Heb. 9:7

Christ, our great High Priest, entered the true holy place by his own blood.

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands ...

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place,

having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

Heb. 9:11-12

The holy place into which he entered was not an earthly sanctuary, but heaven itself.

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true;

but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

Heb. 9:24

There Christ appears as our advocate, pleading for the application to his people of all the good things obtained by his oblation.

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

1 John 2:1

The ground of his intercession is his propitiatory sacrifice.

"And he is the propitiation for our sins."

1 John 2:2

His being the propitiation for their sins is the foundation of his interceding for them. Therefore, his oblation and intercession belong to the same people.

Christ himself distinguishes those for whom he intercedes from the world.

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."

John 17:9

There could be no foundation for Christ's interceding for the world in this saving sense, because he was not the propitiation for them.

The Father always hears the Son.

"Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

And I knew that thou hearest me always."

John 11:41-42

Therefore, if Christ interceded for all people without exception, all would certainly be saved. But Scripture says that he saves completely those for whom he lives to intercede.

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Heb. 7:25

This gives the apostle confidence concerning God's elect:

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again,

who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

Rom. 8:33-34

Those for whom Christ died may therefore be assured that he intercedes for them, and that no charge will finally stand against them. Owen argues that this overthrows the doctrine of a general ransom, which says that Christ died for many who have no interest in his intercession, remain under the charge of sin, and perish.

Christ's intercession is not the humble and uncertain pleading of one who may be refused. It is his authoritative appearing before the Father's throne with his own blood and merit, to secure for his people every spiritual blessing purchased by his oblation.

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.”

John 17:24

For everyone for whom Christ suffered, he appears in heaven with his satisfaction and merit. He intercedes for the fulfilment of the Father's promise: that he should be the Captain of salvation to all who believe, and should effectually bring many sons to glory.

Having such a High Priest over the house of God, believers may draw near with full assurance of faith.

“For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

Heb. 10:14

Chapter 5

The Particular Actions of the Holy Spirit in This Work

We may now briefly consider the actions of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the blessed Trinity. In his own distinct operation, the Holy Spirit plainly concurs in each of the chief parts of the work of redemption. These actions may be considered under three heads.

1. The Incarnation and Christ's Earthly Ministry

The Holy Spirit was active in the incarnation of the Son and gave him full assistance throughout his earthly life.

Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit.

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.”

Matt. 1:18

When Mary asked how this could be, the angel replied:

“The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

Luke 1:35

This was the overshadowing power of the Spirit. By his power alone, Christ was conceived in the womb of the virgin.

As Christ was conceived by the power of the Spirit, so he was filled with the Spirit in the course of his life.

“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit.”

Luke 1:80

He received the Spirit in fullness, not in a limited measure, and was perfectly equipped with every gift and grace necessary for his great undertaking.

2. Christ's Oblation

The Holy Spirit was also active in Christ's oblation, or passion. These describe the same work from different perspectives: passion

refers to what Christ suffered; oblation refers to what he willingly did under and through those sufferings.

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

Heb. 9:14

Whether this refers particularly to Christ’s offering of himself on the cross, or more broadly to his continual presentation of himself before the Father, the offering was made through the eternal Spirit.

The Holy Spirit was, as it were, the eternal fire beneath the sacrifice: the power by which Christ willingly offered himself and by which his offering was made acceptable to God.

Some understand “the eternal Spirit” in this verse as Christ’s own divine nature. Owen sees no sufficient reason for that interpretation. Scripture can speak of Christ as offering himself through the Holy Spirit, just as it speaks of him being declared the Son of God by the Spirit and raised by the Spirit.

“Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

Rom. 1:4

“Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”

1 Pet. 3:18

The working of the Holy Spirit was therefore necessary in Christ’s oblation as well as in his resurrection; in his dying as well as in his being raised to life.

3. Christ’s Resurrection

Finally, the Holy Spirit was active in Christ’s resurrection.

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

Rom. 8:11

We have now considered the blessed agents in this work - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - together with their distinct actions and ordered concurrence. Though these actions may be distinguished, they must not be divided. Every action belongs to the whole divine nature, in

which each person fully shares.

As the three persons of the Trinity began this work together, so they will jointly carry its application through to its final fulfilment. Therefore we give thanks:

“Unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

Col. 1:12-14

Chapter 6

The Means Used by the Foregoing Agents in This Work

Following the order of execution rather than the order of intention, we must now consider the means used in the work of redemption.

These means are the same actions already described, but considered from a different perspective: as means appointed to accomplish a proposed end. Because the actions of the Father and the Holy Spirit were directed towards Christ, as God and man, Christ himself and his work are now to be considered as the means of redemption. The Father's and the Spirit's necessary concurrence is assumed.

The means appointed by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the whole mediatorial work of Jesus Christ. This is commonly divided into two parts:

1. his oblation; and
2. his intercession.

By Christ's oblation, Owen does not mean only his offering of himself upon the cross, though that was its chief and completing act. There Christ, the spotless Lamb of God, bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

His oblation also includes the whole of his humiliation: his voluntary obedience to the law, having been made under it; his submission to its curse; the miseries and sufferings of his life; and finally his death upon the cross. No action performed by Christ as Mediator is excluded from making up the whole means of redemption.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Rom. 10:4

By Christ's intercession, Owen does not mean only his appearance in heaven to apply to us the blessings purchased by his oblation. It also includes every act of his exaltation that serves this purpose: his resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of the Majesty on high, where angels, principalities, and powers are subject to him.

His resurrection is the basis and foundation of all that follows. Without it, faith is empty, sin remains unforgiven, and believers are without hope.

“And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.”

1 Cor. 15:14

“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.”

1 Cor. 15:17

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

1 Cor. 15:19

For this reason, Scripture often attributes the effects of redemption to Christ's resurrection, though his continuing heavenly intercession is included within that expression.

“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

Rom. 4:25

“Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you,

in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”

Acts 3:26

This whole mediatorial work, especially Christ's death and blood-shedding, is the means now under consideration. Christ's sufferings, considered in themselves, were not desirable for their own sake. Their goodness lay only in their service to a further end: the manifestation of God's glorious grace.

There was nothing good in itself in the wicked gathering of Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel against God's holy child Jesus.

“For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together.”

Acts 4:27

Nor was there anything desirable in itself in the Son of God

being made sin and a curse, bruised, afflicted, and exposed to such wrath that the whole creation seemed to tremble at the sight. These things must therefore be regarded as means leading to a greater end. The glory of that end removes the darkness and apparent disorder surrounding the sufferings themselves.

This was the intention of the blessed Trinity.

“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,

ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”

Acts 2:23

“For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

Acts 4:28

One further matter must be observed. Although Christ's oblation and intercession are distinct acts, and Scripture assigns distinct immediate effects to them, they must never be separated. Neither should be said to concern persons or blessings which the other does not also concern in its own way.

They are united in three respects.

First, both are intended to accomplish the same complete end: the effectual bringing of many sons to glory, to the praise of God's grace.

Second, the people for whom Christ's oblation obtains good things are the same people to whom his intercession applies those good things.

“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

Rom. 4:25

The object of Christ's oblation is no wider than the object of his intercession. For those for whom he offered himself, he intercedes; and those for whom he intercedes are sanctified.

“And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”

John 17:19

Third, Christ's oblation is the foundation of his intercession. By his oblation he purchased every blessing that is bestowed through

his intercession. The purpose for which he obtained these blessings by his death was that they should be applied to those for whom they were obtained.

The conclusion is this: Christ's oblation and intercession are one complete means for producing the same effect. The purpose of his oblation is fulfilled when all that he purchased is actually applied by his intercession.

Therefore, Christ's death cannot be said to have obtained good for any person beyond those for whom he intercedes to apply that good. Since Christ intercedes effectually, and the Father always hears the Son, everyone for whom Christ died must receive all the blessings purchased by his death.

Owen will now establish this point by further arguments.

Chapter 7

Christ's Oblation and Intercession: One Complete Means

Part One: Their Scriptural Union and Priestly Unity

Owen now gives reasons for proving that Christ's oblation and intercession are one complete means, directed to the same end and concerning the same people.

1. Scripture Continually Joins Them Together

The first reason is the constant union Scripture makes between Christ's bearing sin and the blessings that follow from his intercession. Scripture joins them so closely that what are sometimes described as distinct fruits of oblation and intercession are shown to be inseparable.

*"By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many;
for he shall bear their iniquities."*

Isa. 53:11

The actual justification of sinners follows from Christ's bearing their iniquities.

The following verse joins the two actions even more directly:

"He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

Isa. 53:12

He bore the sin of many, and he made intercession for those same transgressors whose sins he bore.

Another expression in the same chapter shows that the full application of the benefits for which Christ intercedes is the immediate fruit of his suffering.

"With his stripes we are healed."

Isa. 53:5

Our complete healing is the fruit purchased by Christ's stripes - that is, by his oblation completed in suffering.

The same union appears in Paul's words:

"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Rom. 4:25

For whose offences Christ died, for their justification he rose. Therefore, if he died for all people without exception, all would also have to be justified. Otherwise, either the death or the resurrection of Christ would fail to accomplish its intended purpose.

Paul grounds the assurance of believers that no accusation will finally prevail against them in both Christ's death and his continuing intercession.

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Rom. 8:33-34

Here, Christ's death, resurrection, exaltation, and intercession concern the same people: God's elect. The persons included in one are included in the other.

The foundation of this assurance is the love of God that moved him to give Christ up to death for his people.

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Rom. 8:32

Paul reasons from Christ's being delivered up for us all to the certainty that God will give us all things in him. This cannot be reconciled with the idea that God gave his Son for countless people to whom he will give neither grace nor glory.

The same connection is expressed here:

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

Rom. 5:6

"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

Rom. 5:9

Christ's death, the justification obtained by his blood, and the salvation of his people from wrath are inseparably joined.

2. Both Are Acts of Christ's One Priestly Office

To offer sacrifice and to intercede are both acts of the same priestly office. A priest must perform both. If Christ either offered for people without interceding for them, or interceded for them without offering for them, he would not fully discharge the priestly office he undertook on their behalf.

Both acts are joined in Christ:

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

And he is the propitiation for our sins."

1 John 2:1-2

Christ is both our propitiation and our advocate. He offers the sacrifice and intercedes for its successful application.

The Epistle to the Hebrews shows this very clearly. Christ offered himself by the shedding of his blood, then entered the heavenly holy place to carry out the remaining part of his priestly work.

*"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come,
by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands
...*

*Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood
he entered in once into the holy place,
having obtained eternal redemption for us."*

Heb. 9:11-12

As the high priest under the old covenant entered the holy place with blood to represent the people before God, so Christ entered heaven by his own blood, appearing before the Father so that his previous oblation might have its full efficacy for those in whose place he offered it.

Christ's priesthood is permanent.

*"But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an
unchangeable priesthood."*

Heb. 7:24

Therefore:

*"He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto
God by him,*

seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

Heb. 7:25

For this reason believers have boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

Since oblation and intercession are both acts of Christ's one priestly office, Christ must perform both for the same people. He will not perform one act of his priestly office for people for whom he does not perform the other. For all those for whom he is a priest, he faithfully carries out every part of that office.

Therefore, Christ's oblation and intercession must have the same extent and cannot be separated with regard to the persons whom they concern.

Part Two

The Nature and Foundation of Christ's Intercession

3. Christ's Intercession Continues His Oblation

The nature of Christ's intercession itself proves that it cannot be separated from his oblation.

Christ's intercession in heaven is not a humble or uncertain pleading, accompanied by cries, tears, and entreaties. That belonged to his state of humiliation. Now, exalted at the Father's right hand, his intercession is his authoritative appearance before God on behalf of his people.

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true;

but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

Heb. 9:24

Christ appears in heaven in the presence of God, presenting the sacred body in which he suffered for us. The high priest of the Old Testament entered the holy place with the blood of bulls and goats. In the same way, Christ entered heaven with his own blood, presenting himself before the Father so that his oblation might have continuing and perpetual efficacy until all the sons given to him are

brought to glory.

In this respect, Christ's intercession is his oblation continued. Before his actual offering in the fullness of time, his intercession was the presentation of his eternal undertaking to perform the work. After the accomplishment of that work, his intercession is the presentation of the completed sacrifice and the claiming of everything purchased by it.

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

Rev. 13:8

Therefore, how can Christ's oblation be wider in extent than his intercession? Can he be said to offer for people for whom he does not intercede, when his intercession is the continual presentation of his oblation for those for whom he suffered, so that they may receive the blessings purchased by it?

4. His Oblation Purchases What His Intercession Applies

If Christ's oblation and death obtain every blessing that is actually given through his intercession, then both actions have the same aim and are means tending to the same end.

The basis for this is the covenant between the Father and the Son. When the Son voluntarily undertook the work of redemption, the Father set before him the end of his sufferings and promised him the reward of his labour. Everything for which Christ now intercedes was promised to him as the fruit of his obedience and suffering.

Christ's intercession rests upon the promises of the Father.

“Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,

and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”

Ps. 2:8

This promise was made in connection with Christ's suffering and rejection by earthly rulers.

“The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together,

against the LORD, and against his anointed.”

Ps. 2:2

The apostles apply this to Christ's suffering at the hands of Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel.

“For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed,

both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

Acts 4:27-28

Christ's intercession rests upon promises made to him because of his work of redemption. Those promises engage the Father to bestow upon the people for whom Christ suffered every good thing that his death obtained.

Therefore, Christ intercedes for all those for whom he died. His death purchased every blessing that is given through his intercession. Until those blessings are actually bestowed, his death has not yet brought forth its full fruit and effect.

The claim that Christ's death purchases blessings which are never given will be examined later. Owen believes that it contradicts both Scripture and sound reason.

Part Three: Christ's Own Union of Oblation and Intercession

5. Christ Himself Joined Oblation and Intercession

What Christ has joined together, no one should presume to separate. His oblation and intercession may be distinguished, but they must never be divided.

Christ himself united them in his high-priestly prayer in John 17. In that prayer, he offered himself willingly to the Father and interceded for those for whom he offered himself.

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

John 17:4

In respect of his own will and intention, Christ offered himself

there as fully as he did on the cross. He also interceded there as truly as he does now in heaven.

Who, then, can divide these things?

Scripture also teaches that Christ's death, without the intercession and exaltation that followed, would not have brought complete redemption.

"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."

1 Cor. 15:17

Complete remission and redemption could not be obtained without our great High Priest entering the heavenly holy place for us.

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place,

having obtained eternal redemption for us."

Heb. 9:12

6. The Believer's Assurance Depends upon This Union

To separate Christ's death and intercession in relation to the people for whom they are performed removes the basis of the believer's assurance.

The strong consolation which God intends believers to possess rests on the unbreakable connection between Christ's oblation and his intercession. By his oblation, Christ has purchased every good thing for his people. By his intercession, he ensures that every one of those blessings is actually bestowed.

He does not leave the sins of his people unresolved. He follows their cause, as it were, before every court of justice until their sins are fully pardoned and completely removed.

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

Heb. 9:26

He will not leave unfinished the salvation of those who come to God through him.

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him,

seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

Heb. 7:25

Christ's death without his resurrection and intercession would give us no true comfort.

“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.”

1 Cor. 15:17

But joined to his resurrection, exaltation, and continuing intercession, his death becomes a sure foundation upon which the believer may rest.

What comfort would it give a person merely to believe that Christ died for his sins, if those sins could still be brought against him for condemnation at a time when Christ would not appear for his justification?

Paul's answer is not simply that Christ died. It is that Christ died, rose again, sits at the right hand of God, and makes intercession for us.

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again,

who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

Rom. 8:34

God's law cannot finally condemn the person for whom Christ died, because Christ also rose, appears before God, and effectually intercedes for that person.

This is the ground of firm consolation: no sin and no accuser can finally prevail against those for whom Christ appears before the Father.

Chapter 8

Objections to the Previous Argument Answered

Part One: The Claim of a General Mediation

The previous chapter established that Christ's oblation and intercession have the same extent: those for whom he offered himself are those for whom he continually intercedes. Together, they form

one means appointed to accomplish a certain end.

Before proceeding to consider that end, Owen answers several objections.

One objection is stated as follows:

Christ's ransom and mediation extend no further than his offices of Priest, Prophet, and King; but these offices belong to his church and chosen people; therefore, his ransom belongs to them alone.

Owen agrees with the substance of this argument. Christ offers himself for no one for whom he is not a priest, and he is a priest only for those for whom he also intercedes.

The reply offered by opponents is that Christ's mediation is both general and special. They appeal to these verses:

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

1 Tim. 2:5

"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 which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Heb. 9:15

"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God,

who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."

1 Tim. 4:10

From this, they argue that Christ is a general Mediator and Priest for all people, but a special Mediator and Priest for believers.

Owen rejects this distinction. To say that Christ died for all people but was not a ransom for all people is self-contradictory. Christ's death, in its most general sense, is a ransom.

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister,

and to give his life a ransom for many."

Matt. 20:28

Nor can Christ be a Mediator apart from the new covenant. Every

mediator stands between parties in relation to a covenant. If Christ were a mediator in some broader sense than as Mediator of the new covenant, of what covenant would he be the mediator? Certainly not of the covenant of works, which has been broken and cannot save.

Scripture calls him:

"The surety of a better testament."

Heb. 7:22

Owen therefore denies that Christ has any general mediatorial office extending beyond his church and chosen people.

It was the church that Christ redeemed with his own blood.

"Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Acts 20:28

It was the church that he loved and gave himself for.

"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."

Eph. 5:25-27

It was his sheep for whom he laid down his life.

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

John 10:11

And it is for his people that he appears in heaven.

"Now to appear in the presence of God for us."

Heb. 9:24

The same particularity appears throughout Christ's work. He took flesh because the children given to him shared in flesh and blood. He sanctified himself as an offering for those given to him by the Father. He was delivered for our offences and raised for our justification. He prepares a place for his people, and he lives to save to the uttermost those who come to God through him.

Most plainly, Christ says:

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me."

John 17:9

The words, “one mediator between God and men,” do not prove that Christ is the Mediator of every person without exception. The elect are men; the church is made up of men; the children given to Christ are human beings. An indefinite statement that Christ is Mediator between God and men cannot rightly be turned into a universal claim that he mediates for every individual person.

The other text, “the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe,” does not speak of Christ as Mediator. The subject is the living God - God the Father - and the salvation in view is his providential preservation and protection of all creation, with special care for believers.

God is said to preserve both man and beast.

“O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.”

Ps. 36:6

Thus, God is the Saviour of all people in the sense that he preserves them by his providence; but he is Saviour in a special and saving sense to believers.

The context supports this meaning. Paul encourages believers to continue in hope amid reproach and suffering because they trust in the living God, who governs and preserves all things, and who watches especially over his people.

Therefore, 1 Timothy 4:10 cannot establish a universal mediation or a universal redemption. It speaks of God’s providential preservation, not Christ’s saving mediation. To those for whom Christ is Saviour in the work of redemption, he saves completely from sin, granting saving grace now and glory hereafter.

Part Two: The Claim of a General Intercession for Faith

A further attempt is made to weaken the previous argument. Some say that Christ intercedes in one sense for all sinners, asking that they may be brought to faith; and in a more special sense for believers, asking that they may be saved.

The proposed distinction is therefore:

1. Christ intercedes for all sinners, that they may believe;
2. Christ intercedes especially for believers, that they may be

saved.

Owen examines this alleged general intercession.

First, in what sense does Christ intercede for all people? Is it a direct intercession, or only an indirect result of his intercession for believers? Is it grounded on his blood shed for them, or not? Does Christ intend that they receive the blessing for which he intercedes, or does he not? Is this intercession for every person in the world, or only for those who hear the gospel? Is faith requested absolutely, or upon a condition?

Until these questions are answered, the claim of a general intercession remains unclear.

The argument itself does not describe Christ as directly praying for unbelievers. Rather, it suggests that he prays for believers, so that their holy lives and gospel ministry may lead others to believe. Thus, believers are the direct object of the prayer; unbelievers are considered only indirectly.

If the conversion of those unbelievers is merely a possible side effect, then it is not truly intended. But if their faith is the intended end, why is it not accomplished? Did Christ lack wisdom to choose suitable means? Or did he lack power to bring about what he intended?

Next, if this supposed intercession for all people is grounded on Christ's blood shed for them, then it follows that Christ purchased faith for all people by his death and intercedes for them to receive it. Yet this is more than advocates of universal redemption generally claim. They do not ordinarily say that Christ's death obtained the effectual and infallible gift of faith for all those for whom he died.

But if Christ purchased faith for all, and also intercedes for all to receive faith, why is faith not actually bestowed upon all? Is not Christ's death together with his effectual intercession sufficient to obtain that spiritual blessing?

If this alleged intercession is not grounded on Christ's death and blood-shedding, then it is not the intercession of Christ as our High Priest appearing before God with the merit of his own sacrifice.

Again, does Christ intercede for unbelievers with the intention that they should believe? If not, such an intercession would be only an appearance of prayer for a blessing Christ did not truly desire. If

he does so intend, why do all not believe?

If Christ died for all and interceded for all that they might believe, then all should be saved. The Father always hears the Son.

“And I knew that thou hearest me always.”

John 11:42

Is this intercession said to be for every person in the world, or only for those who live within reach of the outward ministry of the church? If only for the latter, it is not a general intercession for all people. If it is for every person without exception, how can it consist merely in a prayer that the gospel ministry and witness of believers might lead others to faith? Millions have never seen believers or heard the gospel.

Finally, is Christ said to intercede for faith absolutely, or conditionally?

If absolutely, then all must certainly believe; otherwise the Father does not always hear the Son. If conditionally, what is the condition? If it is that people yield to grace or obey the Spirit, then the condition is faith itself. The claim becomes that Christ intercedes for people to believe on condition that they believe.

Others say the condition is that people use the means of grace well. But to use those means rightly is itself to believe and submit to the gospel. Moreover, not all people have access to the means of grace. And if Christ prays that people will use the means of grace rightly, the same question returns: does he pray this absolutely or conditionally?

Owen concludes that the proposed general intercession for faith is confused and cannot be established.

The first proof offered for it is:

“He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Isa. 53:12

But the transgressors for whom Christ interceded are either all those for whom he suffered - which supports Owen's own argument that oblation and intercession concern the same people - or they are the particular transgressors involved in his crucifixion.

The next text offered is Christ's prayer from the cross:

“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

Luke 23:34

Owen will now consider whether this prayer supports the idea of a general and unsuccessful intercession for all people.

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The argument itself does not describe Christ as directly praying for unbelievers. Rather, it suggests that he prays for believers, so that their holy lives and gospel ministry may lead others to believe. Thus, believers are the direct object of the prayer; unbelievers are considered only indirectly.

If the conversion of those unbelievers is merely a possible side effect, then it is not truly intended. But if their faith is the intended end, why is it not accomplished? Did Christ lack wisdom to choose suitable means? Or did he lack power to bring about what he intended?

Next, if this supposed intercession for all people is grounded on Christ's blood shed for them, then it follows that Christ purchased

faith for all people by his death and intercedes for them to receive it. Yet this is more than advocates of universal redemption generally claim. They do not ordinarily say that Christ's death obtained the effectual and infallible gift of faith for all those for whom he died.

But if Christ purchased faith for all, and also intercedes for all to receive faith, why is faith not actually bestowed upon all? Is not Christ's death together with his effectual intercession sufficient to obtain that spiritual blessing?

If this alleged intercession is not grounded on Christ's death and blood-shedding, then it is not the intercession of Christ as our High Priest appearing before God with the merit of his own sacrifice.

Again, does Christ intercede for unbelievers with the intention that they should believe? If not, such an intercession would be only an appearance of prayer for a blessing Christ did not truly desire. If he does so intend, why do all not believe?

If Christ died for all and interceded for all that they might believe, then all should be saved. The Father always hears the Son.

"And I knew that thou hearest me always."

John 11:42

Is this intercession said to be for every person in the world, or only for those who live within reach of the outward ministry of the church? If only for the latter, it is not a general intercession for all people. If it is for every person without exception, how can it consist merely in a prayer that the gospel ministry and witness of believers might lead others to faith? Millions have never seen believers or heard the gospel.

Finally, is Christ said to intercede for faith absolutely, or conditionally?

If absolutely, then all must certainly believe; otherwise the Father does not always hear the Son. If conditionally, what is the condition? If it is that people yield to grace or obey the Spirit, then the condition is faith itself. The claim becomes that Christ intercedes for people to believe on condition that they believe.

Others say the condition is that people use the means of grace well. But to use those means rightly is itself to believe and submit to the gospel. Moreover, not all people have access to the means of grace. And if Christ prays that people will use the means of grace

rightly, the same question returns: does he pray this absolutely or conditionally?

Owen concludes that the proposed general intercession for faith is confused and cannot be established.

The first proof offered for it is:

“He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Isa. 53:12

But the transgressors for whom Christ interceded are either all those for whom he suffered - which supports Owen's own argument that oblation and intercession concern the same people - or they are the particular transgressors involved in his crucifixion.

The next text offered is Christ's prayer from the cross:

“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

Luke 23:34

Owen will now consider whether this prayer supports the idea of a general and unsuccessful intercession for all people.

Part Four: Christ's Prayer That the World May Believe

A further text used to support a general intercession is Christ's prayer that, through the unity and faithfulness of his disciples, the world might believe and know that the Father sent him.

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee,

that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

John 17:21

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;

and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”

John 17:23

Owen argues that these words do not establish a general intercession for every person in the world to receive saving faith.

If Christ intended and desired that every person without

exception should believe, then he would surely have prayed for more direct and effectual means of grace to be given to all - at least that the gospel should be preached to every person, since this is the ordinary means by which people come to know him.

Yet Christ did not pray for this, nor has God granted it to all people. Instead, Christ gave thanks that the Father had hidden these things from some and revealed them to others, according to his own good pleasure.

*"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent,
and hast revealed them unto babes.*

Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Matt. 11:25-26

Nor should John 17:21-23 be interpreted in a way that contradicts Christ's own clear words earlier in the same prayer:

*"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which
thou hast given me."*

John 17:9

If, in verses 21 and 23, Christ were praying for the world to receive true, holy, saving faith, then he would be praying for the world to receive as great a blessing as any he asks for his own people. That would directly conflict with his statement that he does not pray for the world.

Some understand "the world" in these verses to mean the world of the elect: God's people scattered throughout the nations. Owen does not fully adopt that explanation. Throughout John 17, he understands "the world" either as unbelieving people, or as those who are not given to Christ by the Father.

However, "the world" need not mean every individual person without exception. Scripture often uses the word indefinitely for people in the world - whether many or few - rather than universally for all people everywhere.

Thus, Christ's prayer is not that every person in the world will certainly come to saving faith. Rather, he prays that the unity, love, and holiness of his people will bear witness before the unbelieving world that the Father sent the Son and loves his people in him.

This does not establish a general, ineffectual intercession for all people. Nor does it weaken the truth that Christ's priestly intercession is directed to the people given to him by the Father.

Part Five: The Meaning of "Believe" and "The World"

Owen adds that, in John 17, believing and knowing need not mean saving faith in its strict sense - the personal receiving of Christ by which someone becomes a child of God.

"That the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

John 17:21

"That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

John 17:23

He understands these words as referring to a conviction and acknowledgement that Christ is not, as some had supposed, a deceiver or false prophet, but truly the One sent from God - able to protect and bless his people.

Such a conviction is often called "believing" in Scripture. It does not necessarily mean that every person in the world receives saving faith.

This recognition is not sought for the saving good of the unbelieving world, but for the vindication of Christ's people and the exaltation of Christ's own glory. Therefore, it does not establish a general intercession for the salvation of all.

Another text is sometimes brought forward:

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works,

and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Matt. 5:16

But this is Christ's instruction to his disciples. It teaches them to live and preach in such a way that others may be led to glorify God. It does not show that Christ, as Mediator, intercedes for every person to receive saving faith.

A further appeal is made to the words:

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

John 1:9

Some add the words “in some measure,” suggesting that Christ gives every person a limited spiritual illumination and that the rest is supplied by natural light or common grace.

Owen rejects this addition. Scripture does not say that Christ enlightens every person only “in some measure.” Nor does it teach that Christ gives an insufficient light which must then be completed independently of him.

Christ is called the true Light because he is the only source of all true light. Every person who is enlightened receives that light from him.

Therefore, neither Matthew 5:16 nor John 1:9 supports the claim that Christ makes a general, ineffectual intercession for all people. The defence of such an intercession fails.

Part Six: The Claim of Different Ends for Different People

The final objection argues that Christ, as Priest, offered sacrifice for all people in one respect, but offered it for his called and chosen people in a fuller and more particular respect.

The claim is that Christ’s death had different ends for different groups: a general propitiation for all, but redemption, the new covenant, remission of sins, and final salvation only for the elect.

Owen rejects this distinction. He argues that it confuses the immediate and final ends of Christ’s death, and merely assumes the very point under debate.

Christ’s offering of himself to put away sin, his shedding of blood for the remission of sins, and the obtaining of redemption are not separate and unrelated ends distributed among different groups. They describe the same saving work and its immediate fruits.

“But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

Heb. 9:26

“This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

Matt. 26:28

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the

forgiveness of sins.”

Eph. 1:7

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

Col. 1:14

Therefore, it is mistaken to say that Christ’s death obtains propitiation for all, while remission and redemption belong only to some. Propitiation, remission, and redemption belong together.

The objection assumes that Christ intended different benefits for different people: some benefits for all, and all benefits only for the elect. But this is precisely what Owen denies, and the previous argument from Christ’s priesthood was offered to show why it cannot be true.

The passages commonly brought forward do not prove the claim.

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death,

crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

Heb. 2:9

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

John 1:29

“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

1 John 2:2

An indefinite statement that Christ bears sin or takes away sin does not prove that he is Priest and propitiation for every individual person without exception.

Moreover, John’s description of Christ as the Lamb of God recalls the Passover lamb. The Passover involved a typical and ceremonial cleansing that belonged particularly to Israel, who were themselves a type of God’s elect; it was not a sacrifice offered for every person in the world, including unbelievers and the reprobate.

Owen will consider Hebrews 2:9 and 1 John 2:2 more fully later, since they are among the principal passages appealed to in support of universal redemption.

His conclusion is that Christ's oblation and intercession have the same people in view. The argument from their equal extent therefore stands confirmed. The means used by the blessed Trinity have now been set out, and Owen is ready to consider the end which those means were appointed to accomplish.

Chapter 9

Further Arguments for Christ's Satisfaction

Part One: Christ Bore the Punishment of Sin in Our Place

Owen begins the second part of his discussion by setting out several arguments that Christ made satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of his people.

His first argument is simple: if Christ took the sins of his people, bore the punishment due to them, and did so in their place, then he made satisfaction for those sins so that they might go free.

Scripture says that Christ bore sin:

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

John 1:29

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.”

1 Pet. 2:24

“By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”

Isa. 53:11

God himself laid those sins upon Christ:

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Isa. 53:6

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.”

2 Cor. 5:21

To bear sin in this way, Owen argues, is to bear the punishment due to it. The penalty of sin includes death and the curse of the law. Christ underwent both.

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

Heb. 2:9

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.”

Gal. 3:13

His sufferings were not simply the sufferings of a righteous man.

The Father did not spare him, but condemned sin in his flesh. He was bruised and put to grief as the one who bore the punishment of the sins laid upon him.

“Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief.”

Isa. 53:10

Finally, Owen insists that Christ did this in the place of others. Christ himself said that he came to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many.

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Matt. 20:28

The righteous suffered for the unrighteous:

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

1 Pet. 3:18

Thus Owen concludes that Christ bore the sins of his people, endured the punishment those sins deserved, and did so as their substitute. This, he argues, is satisfaction: Christ answered the demands of God’s justice so that those for whom he died might be delivered.

Part Two: Christ Paid the Ransom as Surety

Owen’s second argument follows from the biblical language of price and ransom. If Christ paid a valuable ransom to his Father as the surety of sinners, so that they might be set free, then he made satisfaction to God’s justice for their sins.

Christ himself describes the purpose of his coming in these terms:

“For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:45

The apostle likewise speaks of him as giving himself in the place of others:

“Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

1 Tim. 2:6

Owen argues that a ransom is a price paid to obtain release. Scripture therefore speaks of redemption as deliverance purchased through Christ.

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

Rom. 3:24

“For ye are bought with a price.”

1 Cor. 6:20

That price was not silver, gold, or any created thing. It was the precious blood of Christ.

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

1 Pet. 1:18-19

Owen asks to whom this ransom was paid. It could not have been paid to Satan, for Satan is conquered by Christ, not satisfied by him. The ransom was paid to God, whose wrath rested upon sinners, whose law condemned them, and to whom their debt was owed.

Christ’s death is therefore called an offering and a sacrifice to God.

“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”

Eph. 5:2

Owen further argues that Christ paid this price as a surety. A surety assumes another person’s obligation and answers for it in his place.

“By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.”

Heb. 7:22

Christ, then, paid what his people owed, though he had not incurred the debt himself.

“Then I restored that which I took not away.”

Ps. 69:4

The end of this payment was their freedom. Christ did not pay a ransom merely to make liberation possible. He paid it as surety for those whose debt he undertook, so that they would be released from sin's guilt, curse, and punishment.

Owen concludes that the language of ransom, purchase, sacrifice, and surety all teaches the same truth: Christ gave himself to God as the full price of redemption for his people.

Part Three: Atonement and Christ's Priestly Office

Owen's third argument is that to make atonement for sin and reconcile God to sinners is, in substance, to make satisfaction to God's justice.

Christ's death is repeatedly described in this way. Through his redemption, God sets him forth as the propitiation for sin.

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."

Rom. 3:24-25

Owen understands propitiation as an atoning sacrifice that deals with sin, turns away wrath, and establishes peace between God and those for whom Christ died. Christ did not merely announce that peace was available; by his death he obtained reconciliation.

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."

Rom. 5:10

This reconciliation is received by faith, but it was accomplished through Christ's one righteous act. His satisfaction is the ground upon which sinners are delivered from condemnation.

Owen's fourth argument concerns the priestly office of Christ. To deny that Christ bore sin's punishment, made atonement, and reconciled sinners to God would be to deny the very work his priestly office required him to perform on earth.

The Old Testament sacrifices pointed forward to this work. Their purpose was propitiation and atonement. Christ, the true High

Priest, had no sacrifice to offer other than himself.

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

Heb. 9:14

His sacrifice was not offered for himself, for he was without sin. It was offered for the sins of his people.

“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”

Heb. 10:12

Thus, Owen argues, Christ’s priesthood confirms the doctrine of satisfaction. The priest offers sacrifice to God; Christ offered himself. The sacrifice deals with sin; Christ bore the punishment due to sin. The end is reconciliation and peace with God.

These are not peripheral interpretations placed upon Christ’s death. They belong to the heart of his priestly work. Therefore, Owen concludes, Christ’s death must be understood as a true and effectual satisfaction for those whom he represented.

Part Four: Christ Bore the Wrath Due to Sin

Owen expands his argument from the priestly office of Christ. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were types of Christ’s sacrifice. Their blood was accepted in the place of the offerer and ceremonially dealt with the guilt of sin. Christ, as the true Priest, Altar, and Sacrifice, fulfilled what those offerings prefigured.

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.”

Heb. 9:14

The old sacrifices could not finally perfect those who came to worship. Christ, however, offered his own body as the one sufficient sacrifice for sins.

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

Heb. 10:10

“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”

Heb. 10:12

Owen argues that Christ's sacrifice necessarily involved his bearing the wrath due to sin. The punishment of sin is God's wrath; and Christ bore the punishment due to the sins laid upon him.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

Rom. 1:18

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin."

2 Cor. 5:21

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

1 Pet. 2:24

The curse of the law is also the expression of God's wrath against sin. Christ bore that curse for those whom he represented.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

Gal. 3:13

Moreover, Christ tasted the death that sinners deserved. His fear, agony, sorrow, abandonment, and suffering show that he did not die merely as a witness to God's love, but as the surety who endured the judgment due to sin.

"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

Luke 22:44

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Matt. 27:46

Owen's point is not that the Father ceased to love the Son in his person. The Father was always pleased with Christ's holiness, obedience, and perfect righteousness. But the sins of his people were charged to him, and it pleased the Father to bruise him as the one bearing their punishment.

"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief."

Isa. 53:10

Therefore, Christ's suffering under wrath does not contradict the Father's love for the Son. It displays both the holiness of God's justice and the greatness of his saving love: Christ stood in the place of sinners and bore what they deserved.

Part Five: The Foundation of Faith and Consolation

Owen next argues that any doctrine denying Christ's satisfaction strikes at the foundation of gospel faith and comfort.

When a person is awakened to the guilt of sin and the reality of God's wrath, he cannot find rest in his own righteousness. Nor can he find safety in the vague thought that God is merciful. He needs a sure refuge from the judgment that sin deserves.

Owen compares Christ to Noah's ark amid the flood. The waters of judgment fell upon the ark, yet it rose above them and carried those within it safely through the flood. In the same way, the wrath due to Christ's people fell upon Christ, while those who rest in him are brought safely through judgment.

The foundation of a troubled sinner's peace is not that wrath was never due, nor that sin was never truly guilt. It is that God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up; that Christ was made sin for his people; and that the judgment they feared fell upon him.

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all."

Rom. 8:32

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin."

2 Cor. 5:21

This is why Christ's satisfaction gives solid comfort. If he fulfilled justice in the sinner's place, then the sinner who comes to him need not bear that judgment himself. But if Christ did not answer the demands of justice and undergo the wrath due to sin, Owen says, there is no secure ground for peace.

"The wages of sin is death."

Rom. 6:23

The soul can therefore say: if Christ did not satisfy God's justice, then I must satisfy it; if he did not bear wrath, then I must bear

it eternally. To take away Christ's satisfaction is to take away the believer's only refuge.

For Owen, this is not a merely abstract theological question. It concerns the very ground upon which a guilty conscience finds peace with God. Christ's satisfaction is the firm foundation of faith because he bore the judgment that his people deserved and secured their safety in himself.

Part Six: The Claim of Different Ends for Different People

The final objection argues that Christ, as Priest, offered sacrifice for all people in one respect, but offered it for his called and chosen people in a fuller and more particular respect.

The claim is that Christ's death had different ends for different groups: a general propitiation for all, but redemption, the new covenant, remission of sins, and final salvation only for the elect.

Owen rejects this distinction. He argues that it confuses the immediate and final ends of Christ's death, and merely assumes the very point under debate.

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

Heb. 9:26

"This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Matt. 26:28

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins."

Eph. 1:7

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

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Therefore, it is mistaken to say that Christ's death obtains propitiation for all, while remission and redemption belong only to

some. Propitiation, remission, and redemption belong together.

The objection assumes that Christ intended different benefits for different people: some benefits for all, and all benefits only for the elect. But this is precisely what Owen denies, and the previous argument from Christ's priesthood was offered to show why it cannot be true.

The passages commonly brought forward do not prove the claim.

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crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

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"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

John 1:29

"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

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An indefinite statement that Christ bears sin or takes away sin does not prove that he is Priest and propitiation for every individual person without exception.

Moreover, John's description of Christ as the Lamb of God recalls the Passover lamb. The Passover involved a typical and ceremonial cleansing that belonged particularly to Israel, who were themselves a type of God's elect; it was not a sacrifice offered for every person in the world, including unbelievers and the reprobate.

Owen will consider Hebrews 2:9 and 1 John 2:2 more fully later, since they are among the principal passages appealed to in support of universal redemption.

His conclusion is that Christ's oblation and intercession have the same people in view. The argument from their equal extent therefore stands confirmed. The means used by the blessed Trinity have now been set out, and Owen is ready to consider the end which those means were appointed to accomplish.

BOOK II

Chapter 1

Preliminary Considerations Concerning the Proper End and Effect of Christ's Death

We now come to the central issue in the controversy concerning the death of Christ: its proper end.

If the end of Christ's death is what many of Owen's opponents claim, then Christ died for every person without exception. But if the end is what Owen maintains, then Christ's death cannot be extended beyond the elect - those who believe.

This question must therefore be clearly established. At the beginning of this work, Owen stated that the end of Christ's death is our being brought near to God. This is a general expression for the complete recovery of sinners from alienation, misery, and wrath into grace, peace, and eternal communion with God.

There are two kinds of end: the end intended by the worker, and the end actually produced by the work. Unless an agent lacks wisdom in choosing suitable means, or lacks power and skill to use those means effectively, these two ends will agree. The work accomplishes what the worker intended.

In this case, the agent is the blessed Trinity. The means appointed to accomplish the proposed end are the oblation and intercession of Jesus Christ. These are united and concern the same people.

Therefore, unless we are willing to ascribe a lack of wisdom, power, perfection, or sufficiency to the blessed Trinity - or to say that Christ's death and intercession were not suited to their intended end - we must conclude that the intended end and the accomplished end are one and the same.

Whatever the Trinity intended to accomplish through Christ's death and intercession was accomplished. And whatever Scripture identifies as their actual fruit is what the Trinity intended by them.

The end of Christ's death may be considered in two ways: as the supreme and final end, and as the intermediate end which serves that final purpose.

The Supreme End: The Glory of God

The supreme and ultimate end is the glory of God: the

manifestation of his glorious attributes, especially his justice and his mercy in harmony with justice.

God necessarily aims first at himself, because he alone is the highest and absolute good. Therefore, in all his works - and especially in the work of redemption - he intends the manifestation of his own glory. This he accomplishes perfectly, in every degree he has purposed.

"The LORD hath made all things for himself."

Prov. 16:4

"That the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God."

2 Cor. 4:15

"And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

1 Cor. 3:23

The whole purpose of God's eternal election, Christ's redemption of his people, and every spiritual blessing bestowed in him is:

"To the praise of the glory of his grace."

Eph. 1:6

"That we should be to the praise of his glory."

Eph. 1:12

The benefits believers receive through Christ's death are therefore directed to the praise of God.

"Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ,

unto the glory and praise of God."

Phil. 1:11

"That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Phil. 2:11

This final purpose will be perfectly fulfilled when every creature gives praise to God and to the Lamb.

"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne,

and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

Rev. 5:13

The Intermediate End: Bringing Sinners to God

The intermediate end of Christ's death is the effect it has in relation to us: bringing us to God.

Though this is one complete end in relation to Christ's oblation and intercession, it may be considered in two connected parts:

1. faith and saving grace, which are the means; and
2. salvation and glory, which are the end.

God has appointed an inseparable connection between the things Christ purchased. Faith is the means by which salvation is received, and salvation is the promised inheritance. Yet both faith and salvation were purchased for God's people by Christ.

Under the name faith, Owen includes every saving grace that accompanies it. Under the name salvation, he includes the whole glory yet to be revealed and the eternal enjoyment of God.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared

with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Rom. 8:18

"The glorious liberty of the children of God."

Rom. 8:21

With faith come all its effectual means, both outward and inward: the Word of God and the almighty, sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. It also includes justification, reconciliation, adoption into God's family, sanctification, universal holiness, and every privilege believers enjoy in this life.

Owen's conclusion is that Christ's death effectually and infallibly obtains all these things - both the means and the end, both faith and salvation, both grace and glory - for every person for whom he died.

Every person for whom Christ offered himself has a right purchased for them to receive these blessings, and in due time will certainly receive them. Faith itself is bestowed absolutely, not upon a condition. Salvation and glory are received through faith, but that faith is itself part of what Christ purchased.

Chapter 2

False Accounts of the End of Christ's Death Removed

Part One: Christ Did Not Die Merely for His Own Good

Christ's death, oblation, and blood-shedding must be considered as means appointed to accomplish an end. Such means are not desirable in themselves, but only because they lead to that end.

Since the end of a thing must be good, the end proposed by Christ's death must have been either:

1. Christ's own good;
2. the Father's good; or
3. our good.

First, it is plain that Christ did not die merely for his own good.

In his divine nature, he eternally possessed all the glory proper to the Godhead. That glory may be more or less displayed to us, but in itself it is eternally perfect and unchangeable. At the close of his earthly work, Christ asked for no other glory than that which he had with the Father before the world began.

*"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self
with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."*

John 17:5

Neither did Christ, in his human nature, suffer in order to obtain something needed for himself. From the first moment of his conception, his human nature was personally united to the second person of the Trinity. He was perfectly righteous and had no need to suffer for himself.

The joy set before him as he endured the cross was chiefly the bringing of many children to glory, not merely the exaltation of his own human nature.

His exaltation, authority over all flesh, and appointment as Judge of the living and the dead did follow his humiliation and suffering. Yet Owen denies that these were the saving end for which Christ made satisfaction for sin.

Christ's dominion over all things is not founded upon his death

for all things or all beings. He possesses dominion because he is appointed heir of all things and sustains all things by the word of his power.

“Whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,

and upholding all things by the word of his power.”

Heb. 1:2-3

“Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour,

and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.”

Heb. 2:7-8

Christ has authority even over angels and spiritual powers. Yet he did not die for angels. Some angels had no need of redemption, while others are eternally excluded from it.

“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels;

but he took on him the seed of Abraham.”

Heb. 2:16

The Father set Christ as King upon Zion and gave him authority over his enemies.

“Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.”

Ps. 2:6

“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;

thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

Ps. 2:9

This sovereignty rests upon the Father’s love for the Son, not upon a universal death for all people.

“The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.”

John 3:35

“All things are delivered unto me of my Father.”

Matt. 11:27

Even if Christ's death had obtained his authority to judge, this would not prove a general ransom. The authority given to Christ includes the authority to condemn as well as to save.

"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."

John 5:22

"And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."

John 5:27

"They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

John 5:29

Christ did not die to redeem people so that he might gain authority to condemn them. If he redeemed a person by his death, then condemnation was not the end he intended for that person.

Therefore, Christ's own exaltation and authority cannot be regarded as the immediate and proper end of his death.

Part Two: Christ Did Not Die Merely to Give the Father a Freedom to Save

The immediate end of Christ's death was not the Father's good, considered as though Christ's death merely gave God a new liberty to save sinners if he chose.

Owen is not denying that the supreme and final end of Christ's oblation is the glory of God. The whole work of redemption is:

"To the praise of the glory of his grace."

Eph. 1:6

But he is speaking here of the immediate effect of Christ's death. In that respect, Christ's death does not obtain something from us for God; rather, it obtains all saving good things from God for us.

Arminius and other defenders of universal redemption argued that Christ's death satisfied divine justice in such a way that God was then free to save sinners on whatever condition he chose. They said that sin had stood in the way of God's desire to show mercy, and

that Christ removed this obstacle. God could then choose whether to save anyone, and could decide whether the condition of salvation would be faith, works, or something else.

Owen rejects this view for several reasons.

First, he questions the assumption that God could not have shown mercy unless Christ first made satisfaction. It is true that, having decreed to save in this way and to manifest his glory through vindictive justice, God could not act contrary to his own eternal purpose.

“With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

James 1:17

“And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent:

for he is not a man, that he should repent.”

1 Sam. 15:29

But Owen argues that Scripture does not say that, before God’s own decree and appointment, he was absolutely unable to forgive without such satisfaction. The point here is not to lessen the necessity of Christ’s satisfaction within God’s ordained way of redemption, but to deny that the immediate purpose of Christ’s death was merely to obtain a freedom for God to save if he wished.

Second, this view makes the sending of Christ arise from a general and ineffective wish to do good to all humanity, rather than from God’s definite purpose to know, redeem, and save his elect.

Third, it makes Christ’s death appear to purchase liberty for God rather than liberty from sin and judgment for us. On that view, the death of Christ does not directly free sinners from the condition in which they must perish; it simply gives God permission to save them if they later fulfil conditions he may impose.

But Scripture presents Christ as the one who redeems his people from their sins. It presents the immediate good obtained by his death as a benefit for sinners, not as a new right or liberty acquired by God.

The opposing view replies that, although this liberty first arises to God, it is intended ultimately for our good, since God may now show mercy if people fulfil the condition he appoints.

Owen answers that this destroys the true merit of Christ’s death towards us. Real merit does not merely obtain the possibility that

something may be given; it obtains that the thing merited ought to be given.

When a labourer has completed his work, we do not say that his wages may be paid. We say that they ought to be paid, because he has a right to them.

“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.”

Rom. 4:4

In the same way, the fruits of Christ's death were truly purchased for his people. They are given freely to those who receive them, but in relation to Christ's purchase, their bestowal rests upon the obligation of God's covenant with his Son.

Therefore, Christ's death did not merely purchase a possibility of salvation. It purchased the actual bestowal of the blessings he obtained for those in whose place he offered himself.

Part Three: Christ Purchased Salvation, Not Mere Possibility

A view of Christ's death is inadequate if, once its supposed end has been achieved, it remains possible that no one at all will be saved - or even impossible that any sinner will be saved by virtue of that death.

Yet this is the consequence of saying that Christ merely obtained for the Father a right to save on any condition he chose.

On that view, the Father is under no obligation to save anyone. He may use the liberty supposedly purchased by Christ, or he may not. He might impose a condition of works which fallen people could never fulfil. Thus, Christ's death could have accomplished its full intended end, while no person received eternal life.

But Christ came to save sinners and to save that which was lost. His own prayer also assumes the certain salvation of those given to him.

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am;

that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.”

John 17:24

Christ's death did not purchase a mere possibility of remission,

salvation, reconciliation, and peace with God. It purchased these blessings themselves.

The opposing view further says that, because Christ's satisfaction removed the barrier of divine justice, the Father may now enter into a new covenant of grace with sinners, promising them the benefits of Christ's death if they fulfil its condition.

Owen replies that Christ himself, together with his death and passion, is the great promise of the new covenant. The covenant cannot therefore be regarded as something first obtained by his death.

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed;

it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Gen. 3:15

Moreover, the new covenant does not merely promise blessings on the condition that people provide faith and obedience for themselves. The obedience required by the covenant - including the writing of God's law upon the heart - is itself a promise of the covenant, sealed by the blood of Christ.

"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel;

After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts,

and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Jer. 31:33

Owen does not deny that Christ's death has an end in relation to God: it manifests the Father's glory.

"Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified."

Isa. 49:3

The bringing of many sons to glory reveals God's mercy, justice, love, and grace. In Christ, God is shown to be both just and the justifier of the believer.

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,

to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just,

and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

Rom. 3:25-26

But Christ's death did not obtain a new freedom for God to do what he formerly wished to do but could not. Its immediate end, in relation to us, was that God would certainly bestow upon Christ's people every good thing Christ intended to purchase by offering himself for them.

Chapter 3

The Immediate End of Christ's Death and the Ways Scripture Describes It

Part One: The Purpose and Intention of the Father and the Son

We must now state more particularly what Scripture teaches concerning the immediate end of Christ's death.

The argument may be summarised as follows: according to the counsel and will of the Father, Jesus Christ offered himself upon the cross to obtain the saving blessings already described. He continually intercedes so that every blessing purchased by his death will be actually and infallibly bestowed upon every person for whom he died.

The relevant passages may be considered under three headings: passages showing the purpose and intention of the Father and the Son;

passages showing the actual effects of Christ's oblation; and passages identifying the people for whom Christ died.

We begin with the Father's purpose and Christ's own intention, which is one with the Father's will.

Christ declared the purpose of his coming:

"For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."

Matt. 18:11

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Luke 19:10

In one place, these words introduce the parable of the lost sheep. In the other, they conclude the conversion of Zacchaeus. Both show that Christ came to do his Father's will by recovering lost sinners. As the shepherd finds the lost sheep, lays it upon his shoulders, and brings it home, so Christ recovers those he came to save.

The angel declared the same purpose before Christ's birth:

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS:

for he shall save his people from their sins."

Matt. 1:21

Everything required for the complete salvation of Christ's people from their sins was intended in his coming. To say that he accomplished only part of their salvation would diminish the plain force of these words.

Paul likewise states:

*"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation,
that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."*

1 Tim. 1:15

Christ did not merely come to make salvation possible, to open a door that sinners might enter if they could, or to obtain a pardon which they might never receive. He came to save sinners from sin's guilt and power, and from the wrath of God due to sin.

The Father's covenant and promise to the Son make the same purpose clear. Christ was promised that, after making his soul an offering for sin, he would see his seed and that the Father's pleasure would prosper in his hand.

*"When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see
his seed,*

*he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall
prosper in his hand."*

Isa. 53:10

The people given to Christ by the Father are inseparably joined to his offering for sin.

"Behold I and the children which God hath given me."

Heb. 2:13

Christ took flesh and blood in order to deliver these children from death, the devil, and bondage.

*"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and
blood,*

he also himself likewise took part of the same;

*That through death he might destroy him that had the power of
death, that is, the devil;*

*And deliver them who through fear of death were all their
lifetime subject to bondage."*

Heb. 2:14-15

This passage does not describe a merely possible deliverance purchased for all people. It describes the actual deliverance of the children whom God gave to Christ.

The same intention is expressed in these words:

“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.”

Eph. 5:25-27

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity,

and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

Titus 2:14

Christ gave himself for his church and for his people in order to cleanse, sanctify, redeem, and purify them. Are all people part of this church? Are all people redeemed from all iniquity, made holy, and brought to Christ without spot or blemish? Owen's answer is clear: Christ did not fail in the purpose for which he gave himself.

Christ himself states the matter plainly:

“And for their sakes I sanctify myself,

that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”

John 17:19

He sanctified himself - that is, set himself apart as an oblation - for those given to him by the Father out of the world.

“I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.”

John 17:6

He did not pray for the world in the same saving sense.

“I pray for them: I pray not for the world,

but for them which thou hast given me.”

John 17:9

The purpose of Christ's offering was that these people should truly be sanctified. This purpose agrees fully with the will of the Father.

The same truth appears in Paul's words:

"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world,

according to the will of God and our Father."

Gal. 1:4

God sent his Son to redeem those under the law, so that they might receive adoption as sons and the Spirit of sonship.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

Gal. 4:4-5

Finally:

"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."

2 Cor. 5:21

The Father's purpose in making Christ sin for his people was that they should become the righteousness of God in him.

Therefore, Christ died only for those in whom these saving purposes are actually fulfilled: those redeemed, purified, sanctified, delivered from death and Satan, freed from sin and the curse of the law, made righteous in Christ, and brought near to God.

Part Two: The Actual Effects of Christ's Oblation

The next group of passages describes what Christ's oblation actually accomplished for those for whom it was offered.

First, Christ's blood obtained eternal redemption and cleanses the conscience.

"But by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

Heb. 9:12

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God,
purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”
Heb. 9:14

Two things are ascribed to Christ’s blood:
before God, it obtains eternal redemption from the guilt of sin and the wrath due to it;

within us, it purges the conscience from dead works, producing sanctification.

Christ’s offering itself is said to have purged sin before his ascension.

“When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

Heb. 1:3

“But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

Heb. 9:26

The sacrifices of the old covenant were shadows of Christ’s sacrifice. They gave a ceremonial cleansing and freedom from the legal penalties attached to those ordinances. Therefore, Christ’s true and spiritual sacrifice accomplishes what those sacrifices foreshadowed: the cleansing of his people from sin and their deliverance from its guilt.

Christ is also said to bear our sins.

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

1 Pet. 2:24

Christ bore the sins of his people so that, through his wounds and suffering, they would be healed, freed from sin’s condemnation, and enabled to live unto righteousness.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.”

Gal. 3:13

There is therefore a real exchange: Christ bears the curse due to his people so that they are delivered from it.

Peace and reconciliation with God are also actual effects of Christ's death.

"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works,

4. yet now hath he reconciled

5. In the body of his flesh through death,

to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight."

Col. 1:21-22

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace."

Eph. 2:13-14

"That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross,

having slain the enmity thereby."

Eph. 2:16

Christ's death produces actual peace with God: the removal of enmity and every obstacle that kept his people from enjoying God's favour.

It also delivers from wrath.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

Rom. 5:8-9

Christ redeemed his church with his own blood. Therefore, those for whom he died can say with assurance:

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again,

who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh

intercession for us.”

Rom. 8:33-34

Finally, Christ's death is the source of life and immortality for his people.

*“For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven,
and giveth life unto the world.”*

John 6:33

This is the world of Christ's sheep, for whom he lays down his life.

*“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for
the sheep.”*

John 10:11

“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.”

John 10:28

Therefore, if Christ's sacrifice sanctifies, purges sin, redeems from wrath and the curse, reconciles to God, and gives eternal life to all for whom it is offered, then Christ died only for those who are in fact sanctified, justified, reconciled, delivered, and saved. Since not all people receive these blessings, not all can be the proper object of Christ's death.

Part Three: The People for Whom Christ Died

Scripture also identifies the people for whom Christ died as the particular objects of God's redeeming purpose.

In several places, they are called many.

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

Matt. 26:28

*“By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many;
for he shall bear their iniquities.”*

Isa. 53:11

*“For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but
to minister,
and to give his life a ransom for many.”*

Mark 10:45

Christ came to bring many sons to glory and became the Captain of their salvation through suffering.

“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things,

in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

Heb. 2:10

The word many, by itself, does not always prove a contrast with all, since it can sometimes be used broadly. But these many are elsewhere described in ways that cannot be true of every person without exception.

They are Christ's sheep.

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”

John 10:11

They are the scattered children of God.

“And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one

the children of God that were scattered abroad.”

John 11:52

They are Christ's brethren and the children given to him by God.

“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one:

for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

Heb. 2:11

“Behold I and the children which God hath given me.”

Heb. 2:13

They are those given to Christ by the Father, whom he will certainly preserve.

“As thou hast given him power over all flesh,

that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

John 17:2

They are his sheep, gathered through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,

that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.”

Heb. 13:20

They are his elect.

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.”

Rom. 8:33

They are his people.

“For he shall save his people from their sins.”

Matt. 1:21

They are the people whom God foreknew, including those who, before conversion, are already his people by election.

“God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.”

Rom. 11:2

“For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.”

Acts 18:10

They are the people for whom Christ suffered outside the gate, so that he might sanctify them.

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

Heb. 13:12

They are his church, purchased with his own blood and loved by him.

“Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”

Acts 20:28

“Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”

Eph. 5:25

They are the many whose sins Christ bore and for whom he

made covenant.

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.”

Heb. 9:28

These descriptions are not common to all people. They belong properly to God’s elect: those chosen to obtain eternal life through the oblation and blood-shedding of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 4

The Purchase and Application of Redemption

Part One: The Proper Use of the Distinction

Owen now considers a common reply to the passages already discussed. Those who defend universal redemption distinguish between the purchase of salvation and its application.

They argue that Christ, by his death, obtained reconciliation, redemption, forgiveness of sins, and salvation for every person in the world. Yet, they say, these benefits are actually given only to those who believe. Thus, the purchase is universal, but the application is limited.

This distinction is expressed in several ways. Some say that Christ died for all people, but that the benefits of his death become theirs only if they believe. Others say that Christ died conditionally for all, but absolutely for the elect, to whom God intends to give faith. Still others distinguish between a reconciliation made by Christ with God for humanity and a reconciliation worked in people, bringing them into actual peace with God.

Owen acknowledges that there is a true and useful distinction here, if it is properly understood.

By impetration, or purchase, he means Christ's meritorious obtaining from the Father of every saving blessing for his people. By application, he means their actual receiving and enjoyment of those blessings through faith.

A ransom paid for captives provides an illustration. The paying of the ransom is like the purchase; the captives' actual release is like the application of what was purchased.

However, several truths must be carefully maintained.

First, this distinction does not exist in Christ's purpose and intention. In his purpose, the purchase and application of salvation are united. Christ did not merely intend to obtain blessings that might possibly be given; he intended that his people would actually be delivered from evil and receive every saving good.

The distinction concerns the blessings themselves. They may be considered, first, as obtained by Christ, and then as bestowed upon

those for whom he obtained them.

Second, God's will in this matter is not conditional, as though he sent Christ to obtain forgiveness and reconciliation only on the condition that sinners first believe. The gifts themselves are received in a certain order, and faith is necessary to the enjoyment of some blessings. But God's purpose that these blessings should be purchased and bestowed is absolute.

Third, not every blessing purchased by Christ is given conditionally. Some are bestowed absolutely. And where a blessing is received through faith, faith itself is also purchased by Christ.

For example, forgiveness of sins and eternal life are enjoyed through faith. But faith, which is the condition of receiving them, is itself a gift Christ has obtained for his people. It is not a condition supplied independently of his saving work.

Otherwise, the whole argument would turn in a circle. If faith must be present before Christ's death can secure its benefits, then faith would be required before the very gift which produces faith could be received.

Fourth, the purchase and the application have the same persons in view. Everyone for whom Christ obtained any saving good by his death will certainly receive it in due time.

Christ does not obtain a blessing for someone who will never enjoy it. For all those with whom he accomplished reconciliation to God, he also works reconciliation in them, bringing them to God.

This is the central point. The purchase of redemption cannot be broader than its application. If Christ obtained salvation for a person, that salvation will certainly be applied to that person.

Owen will now give reasons why the purchase and application of Christ's saving work must always extend to the same people.

Part Two: Why Purchase Must Lead to Application

Owen's first reason is straightforward: the application of salvation is the purpose for which Christ obtained it.

If Christ purchased forgiveness, reconciliation, and eternal life, but did not intend that these blessings should actually be given to those for whom he purchased them, then he would fail to attain the end of his death. But Christ cannot fail in his purpose.

If the application of redemption were not included in Christ's aim, then his death might have accomplished all that it was intended to accomplish even if no one were ever saved. Every person in the world might have perished, despite Christ's death.

Owen argues that this is incompatible with the purpose of the Father and the intention of the Son. Christ came to save sinners, to seek and save the lost, and to bring many sons to glory. His death was not merely intended to make salvation possible; it was intended to secure salvation for those whom the Father gave him.

Scripture joins Christ's suffering and the salvation of his people together.

"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."

Isa. 53:11

Christ bears the iniquities of many, and those same people are justified. His suffering and their salvation belong together.

Likewise:

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

Isa. 53:5

His wounds and our healing are inseparably joined. His chastisement and our peace belong to the same people.

The same truth appears in the apostle's words:

"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Rom. 4:25

Christ was delivered to deal with the offences of his people and raised for their justification. His death does not merely create the possibility of justification; it is directed toward their actual justification.

Christ himself explains the purpose of his coming:

"For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."

Matt. 18:11

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was

lost.”

Luke 19:10

He came not only to make salvation available to the lost, but to save them.

Again, Christ speaks of the life he gives to his sheep:

“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

John 10:10

And the apostle John writes:

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.”

1 John 4:9

The purpose of Christ’s coming was that his people should live through him.

The same union of purchase and application appears in Hebrews:

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

Heb. 10:10

“For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

Heb. 10:14

The offering of Christ is the means; the sanctification and perfection of his people are its certain result.

Owen therefore rejects the claim that Christ purchased reconciliation and forgiveness for people who may never receive either. The blessings obtained by his death are not left uncertain, depending on a condition that Christ did not obtain.

Those who hold this view may speak highly of Christ’s death, but, Owen says, they take away what they appear to give. They make the enjoyment of its benefits depend on a condition supplied by the sinner, rather than secured by Christ.

In this way, they reduce the proper end of Christ’s death to the opening of a possible way of salvation: God may save sinners if he chooses, on whatever condition he chooses to prescribe. But Owen insists that Christ actually obtained justification, forgiveness, life,

and salvation for his people.

The next question is therefore clear: what exactly do those who defend a general redemption mean when they say that Christ obtained salvation for all, but applies it only to believers?

Part Three: The Opposing View Stated Clearly

Owen now sets out the opposing view in plain terms. He does this so that the real point of disagreement may be clearly seen.

According to this view, God looked upon all humanity as fallen in Adam, excluded from salvation under the covenant of works, and deserving misery. Yet, because of his goodness, he desired the salvation of every person without exception.

This is called God's universal love, or his antecedent will: the claim that God wishes all people to be saved before considering their unbelief.

On this view, God sent Christ to die for every person. Christ's death did not secure the actual salvation of anyone in particular. Instead, it obtained a possibility of salvation for all.

God's justice, it is said, was satisfied in such a way that he was now free to save sinners if he wished, on whatever condition he chose to appoint. The usual condition is faith.

Thus, Christ is said to have purchased reconciliation, forgiveness of sins, and salvation for every person, not so that all would certainly receive these blessings, but so that God might offer them to all upon the condition of believing.

Some take this further and say that, through Christ's death, all people have been restored to a state of grace. They argue that humanity has been placed under a new covenant, in the same way that all fell in Adam under the first covenant.

According to this view, no one is condemned merely because of Adam's sin. People are condemned only if they personally reject the condition of the new covenant.

Others speak more cautiously. They deny that all people are actually reconciled, justified, or freed from wrath through Christ's death. They maintain that all remain children of wrath by nature and that God's wrath continues upon them until they personally come to Christ.

There is also disagreement about original sin. Some argue that Christ's death removed original sin from every person, and that therefore all infants who die before reaching the use of reason must be saved.

Others reject this conclusion. They say that Christ died equally for all sinners, but absolutely for no one. In their view, he died conditionally for everyone: the benefits of his death become theirs only if they fulfil the appointed condition.

They also differ about the condition itself. Some say that a person can believe by his own strength, aided by the ordinary means God provides. Others insist that effectual grace is necessary for faith, and that this grace is given only to the elect.

Owen observes the difficulty. If effectual grace is necessary for faith and is given only to some, then Christ's death does not benefit all in the same way. Yet if faith depends upon the sinner's own strength, then the doctrine rests upon the power of free will.

They also disagree about the love of God. Some say that God's love in sending Christ is equal toward all people. Others claim that God has a greater love for some than for others, even though Christ died for all.

This leads, Owen says, to a growing number of distinctions: Christ is said to die for some in one way and for others in another; to obtain a greater good for some and a lesser good for others; and to have many different ends in the same act of redemption.

Yet, despite their differences, they agree on one central point: they deny that faith itself was purchased for us by the death of Christ.

Owen argues that they must deny this. If Christ obtained faith for all those for whom he died, then all those people would certainly believe. Their doctrine of universal redemption would collapse.

Some therefore say that Christ died for people only if they believe. But this makes faith the cause of Christ's dying for them. Others say that Christ died absolutely for all, yet the benefits of his death remain unavailable until each person fulfils the condition of faith.

In either case, they deny that Christ, in dying, had a special and saving intention toward the elect. They describe him as acting in the place of all humanity alike, rather than as the Surety and Redeemer of his own people.

Owen will now contrast this confused account with the simple teaching he believes Scripture gives concerning the purpose and effect of Christ's death.

Part Four: The Purpose and Effect of Christ's Death

Owen observes that those who argue for a universal redemption give very different accounts of what Christ's death actually accomplished.

Some say that Christ's death gave God the power to save sinners. Others say that it opened a door of grace through which people may enter if they choose. Others say that it secured only a possibility of salvation for all humanity.

Still others say that Christ had different ends for different people. He is said to have died for the elect in one sense and for the rest of humanity in another. Yet Owen asks what purpose can be served by saying that Christ died for those whom God had already determined not to save.

In contrast, Owen states the doctrine he believes Scripture teaches.

God, from his eternal love for his elect, sent his Son into the world at the appointed time. Christ gave himself as a ransom of infinite worth, to purchase eternal redemption and to bring every person chosen for eternal life safely to God's glory.

Everything from which believers are delivered, and every blessing they receive in passing from death to life, from wrath to glory, is a proper effect of Christ's death.

First, the fountain of Christ's coming is God's eternal love for his elect. The Father did not merely have a general desire to save all people; he sent his Son in love for those whom he had chosen.

Second, the value of Christ's ransom is infinite. The price he paid was fully sufficient to secure every blessing intended by the Father. If there had been millions more people for whom God had intended salvation, Christ's sacrifice would have been sufficient for them also.

Scripture speaks of this precious and infinitely valuable purchase:

*"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,
to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his*

own blood.”

Acts 20:28

“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, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

1 Pet. 1:18-19

Third, the Father’s purpose in this work was to bring many sons to glory. These are the elect, chosen by grace from every nation, condition, and people.

For them, God established the covenant of grace. Christ is the chief promise of that covenant, and by his death he obtains every other blessing promised within it.

Fourth, the blessings purchased for these people will certainly become theirs in due time. They include forgiveness of sins, deliverance from wrath and the curse of the law, justification, sanctification, reconciliation with God, and eternal life.

Christ’s purchase is also the foundation of his intercession. Having obtained these blessings for his people, he prays that they may be actually given to them. The Father always hears the Son.

“And I knew that thou hearest me always.”

John 11:42

Therefore, all those for whom Christ obtained salvation will receive it. His death is not merely the basis on which God may save sinners; it is the effective cause of their salvation.

Owen concludes that this account is plain and consistent. It does not need a complicated division between a redemption purchased for all and a redemption applied only to some.

The opposing view, he says, separates what Scripture joins together. It makes Christ’s death secure a possible salvation, while leaving its actual fulfilment uncertain. Owen’s view is that Christ purchased and will apply every saving blessing to the same people: those whom the Father gave to him.

Chapter 5

The Inseparable Connection Between Purchase and Application

Part One: Redemption Cannot Be Purchased Without Being Applied

Owen returns once more to the distinction between the purchase of redemption and its application.

He agrees that these may be distinguished. Christ's purchase of salvation and the believer's actual enjoyment of salvation are not the same event. But, Owen insists, they can never be separated.

Everyone for whom Christ obtained saving good must in due time receive it. Everyone for whom he accomplished reconciliation with God must also be brought into actual reconciliation with God.

Christ's death is not like medicine stored in a box, available to anyone who may happen to take it. It was not intended equally for all, leaving it uncertain whether any particular person would ever receive its benefits.

Yet this is what Owen believes the doctrine of universal redemption requires. It says that Christ purchased forgiveness, reconciliation, and salvation for all people, while admitting that most of those people will nevertheless perish.

Owen gives several reasons why this cannot be true.

First, it contradicts ordinary language and common sense. If something has truly been obtained for a person, then that person has a right to it, even if he has not yet come into possession of it.

If someone obtains an office or an inheritance for another person, it is no longer uncertain whether that person will have it. It belongs to him by right. In the same way, if Christ has obtained saving blessings for someone, those blessings belong to that person by Christ's purchase.

Second, it contradicts the purpose of God. If God wills that Christ should die for a person, then he intends that person to have a share in Christ's death and its benefits.

To say that Christ died for all, while the benefits of his death are never even made known to most of them, is inconsistent. How can redemption be intended for a person's good if that person never

hears of it and never receives any benefit from it?

Third, it contradicts the nature of a ransom.

Christ himself describes his death as a ransom:

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister,

and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Matt. 20:28

A ransom is paid for captives so that they may be released. It would be strange to say that a ransom was paid for their deliverance, yet that most of those captives were never freed.

Christ undertook the office of Saviour according to the Father's appointment. The promise connected with his work was the deliverance of those for whom he acted. Therefore, Owen argues, it cannot be supposed that Christ paid the ransom for people whom God never intended to release.

Fourth, this separation of purchase and application contradicts the teaching of Scripture. The Bible consistently presents Christ's death as securing the salvation of those for whom he died.

The opposing argument attempts to answer this by saying that Christ obtained these blessings only conditionally. They become the sinner's only when the condition is fulfilled.

The condition is described in different ways: not resisting grace, responding to the gospel invitation, or simply believing.

Owen now considers whether this conditional explanation can preserve the claim that Christ purchased salvation for every person.

Part Two: The Problem with a Conditional Redemption

Those who defend universal redemption reply that Christ obtained salvation for all people only on a condition.

They say that blessings obtained absolutely become the rightful possession of those for whom they were obtained at once. But blessings obtained conditionally do not become theirs until they fulfil the required condition.

Christ, they say, purchased forgiveness, reconciliation, and salvation for all people, but only on the condition that they believe. Until they believe, they have no right to or possession of those blessings.

Owen raises several objections.

First, if Christ truly obtained salvation for every person on the condition of faith, then that condition must be revealed to every person. Everyone for whom Christ died must have the opportunity to know that his death will benefit them if they believe.

Christ alone has the power to provide this knowledge. If he truly intended the salvation of all, Owen argues, he would ensure that all heard the gospel.

He illustrates this with a physician. If someone secured a promise from a physician to cure everyone who came to him, but then allowed many sick people to remain ignorant of that promise, could that person be said to intend their healing? Certainly not.

In the same way, if Christ purchased salvation for people on condition that they believe, yet they never hear of Christ or the gospel, it cannot reasonably be said that he intended their salvation in that sense.

Second, can people fulfil this condition of faith by their own power?

If they can, then all people possess the natural power to believe savingly. Owen denies this.

If they cannot, then God must either give them the grace to believe or withhold it. If he gives it to all, then all should believe and be saved. But if he does not give it to all, then the supposed universal redemption leaves people without any benefit from Christ's death unless they perform what they are unable to perform.

Owen considers this inconsistent with a genuine intention to save. It would be like promising a blind person a great reward on the condition that he first sees.

Third, Owen asks whether faith itself was obtained by Christ's death.

If faith was not purchased by Christ, then the most necessary gift in salvation does not depend on Christ's saving work. Forgiveness, reconciliation, and eternal life cannot be enjoyed without faith. To deny that Christ obtained faith for his people is therefore, in Owen's view, to take away the chief glory due to him.

Scripture presents faith as a gift given in Christ.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of

yourselves: it is the gift of God.”

Eph. 2:8

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.”

Phil. 1:29

If faith is a fruit of Christ’s death, Owen asks, why is it not given to all, if Christ died for all?

Some attempt to answer that the condition is simply not resisting the means of grace. But Owen argues that this raises the same difficulty. If all who do not resist grace are saved, then those who never heard the gospel—including infants and those in pagan lands—would fall within that description.

If they are not saved, then the condition cannot explain why the benefits of Christ’s death are applied to some and not to others.

Owen concludes that this account makes Christ only a partial Mediator: one who obtains the end of salvation but does not obtain the necessary means by which that end is reached.

But Christ does not merely purchase salvation while leaving faith uncertain. He purchases both salvation and the faith by which his people receive it.

Part Three: Christ Obtains Both the End and the Means

Owen’s final point is that Christ is not a partial Mediator.

A mediator does not merely secure an end while leaving the necessary means uncertain. If Christ obtains eternal life for his people, he also obtains the faith by which they come to possess that life.

Otherwise, the success of his work would depend upon something he did not secure.

Owen therefore maintains that the purchase and application of redemption must remain united. Christ obtains saving blessings for his people, and those same blessings are applied to them in due time.

His conclusion may be stated simply:

Christ did not die for anyone on the uncertain condition that they might believe. He died for God’s elect so that they would believe and, believing, receive eternal life.

Faith itself is one of the chief fruits of Christ’s death. Scripture

does not say that our believing makes Christ's death become ours, as though faith caused him to die for us. Rather, Christ died for us so that we might believe.

Salvation is received through faith; in that sense, salvation is bestowed conditionally. But faith itself is obtained by Christ absolutely.

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him,
but also to suffer for his sake.”

Phil. 1:29

Thus, faith is not an independent contribution made by the sinner, upon which Christ's redemption becomes effective. It is God's gift, secured through Christ for those whom he came to save.

Owen concludes that the opposing view separates what must remain together: Christ's obtaining of redemption and the actual application of redemption.

The biblical view, he argues, is clear. Christ died for his people; by his death he obtained every saving blessing for them; and by his Spirit he brings them to faith and gives them the blessings he purchased.

Having established this point, Owen is ready to begin the main arguments against universal redemption.

Book III

Chapter 1

The New Covenant and the Extent of Redemption

Part One: The New Covenant Is Made with a Particular People

Owen now begins his main arguments against universal redemption.

His first argument comes from the nature of the new covenant. This covenant was established, confirmed, and sealed by the death of Christ. His blood is called the blood of the new covenant.

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

Matt. 26:28

Since Christ’s death secures the blessings of the new covenant, those blessings cannot extend beyond the people included within that covenant.

Owen argues that the new covenant was not made with every individual person without exception. It was made particularly with God’s own people. Therefore, the saving benefits purchased by Christ belong to those people and not to all humanity alike.

The nature of the covenant itself proves this.

*“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel,
and with the house of Judah:*

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand

to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake,

although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord,

I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;

and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord:

for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord:

for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Jer. 31:31-34

The difference between the old covenant of works and the new covenant of grace is crucial.

Under the old covenant, God required obedience: do this and live. But because of sin, humanity could not fulfil that condition.

Under the new covenant, God does not merely require what sinners cannot perform. He promises to work the necessary obedience in those with whom he makes the covenant. He writes his law upon their hearts, brings them to know him, and forgives their sins.

Thus, faith and obedience are not uncertain conditions left to human strength. They are among the covenant blessings which God promises to give.

If God only demanded faith without giving it, the new covenant would leave sinners in the same helpless state as the old covenant. It would not bring them to God or communicate grace to them.

But the new covenant is not weak or ineffective. God undertakes to accomplish its promises in all who belong to it.

Owen therefore argues that the covenant cannot include all people alike. Not all people have faith. Not all know the Lord. Not all receive the forgiveness of sins promised in the covenant.

The covenant is therefore made with those in whom God fulfils its promises: his chosen people.

Christ is the Surety of this covenant. His blood secures its blessings. Therefore, his death was intended for those, and only those, who are included within it.

Owen will next argue that if Christ had truly obtained redemption for all people on the condition of faith, then all people would need to hear the gospel by which faith comes.

Part Two: The Gospel Must Be Made Known

Owen's second argument concerns the preaching of the gospel.

If Christ obtained forgiveness, reconciliation, and eternal life for every person, on the condition that they believe, then this good news must be made known to every person.

Faith comes through hearing God's word.

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Rom. 10:17

No one can believe in Christ without hearing of him. Therefore, if Christ's death was intended to benefit every person on condition of faith, every person must at least receive the knowledge of that condition and of the redemption Christ obtained.

Otherwise, one of two conclusions follows.

Either people may be saved without faith in Christ, which Owen denies; or Christ's redemption is useless to those who never hear of it. They cannot embrace a benefit that has never been announced to them.

Owen asks whether it is consistent with God's wisdom and goodness to say that Christ died to save people, while God never permits them to hear that Christ died for them. They are then condemned for not believing a truth they never had the opportunity to hear.

He compares this to paying a ransom for captives while never informing them that their release has been obtained. Or it is like a physician who claims to possess a medicine that will cure all diseases, yet tells only a few people of it while allowing the rest to remain ignorant.

Such actions would not show a genuine intention to rescue or heal.

Yet, Owen observes, Scripture and history show that countless people have never heard the gospel.

Under the old covenant, God's special revelation was given particularly to Israel.

"In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel.

In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion."

Ps. 76:1-2

“He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.

He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them.”

Ps. 147:19-20

The nations beyond Israel did not receive the same knowledge of God’s covenant or the promise of redemption.

The apostle describes their condition:

“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,

and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”

Eph. 2:12

Even under the new covenant, though the gospel has spread widely among the nations, many people have never heard of Christ or of reconciliation through him.

The Lord himself directed the spread of the gospel, at times preventing the apostles from preaching in certain places and sending them elsewhere. The message did not reach all people alike.

Owen concludes that this fact is irreconcilable with the claim that Christ died for every person on the condition that they believe. If he had truly obtained salvation for all in that sense, then all would have received the gospel necessary for faith.

The gospel’s particular distribution, Owen argues, agrees with the truth that Christ’s redemption was intended for a particular people.

Chapter 2

Further Arguments Against Universal Redemption

Part One: Redemption Cannot Be Both Conditional and Uncertain

Owen's third argument begins with the saving blessings which Scripture attributes to Christ's death. These may be summed up in the phrase eternal redemption.

If Christ obtained eternal redemption for all people, then he obtained it either absolutely or conditionally.

If he obtained it absolutely, then all people must certainly receive it. Nothing can prevent the fulfilment of what God absolutely intended and Christ absolutely purchased.

But not all people are saved. Therefore, those who defend universal redemption say that Christ obtained salvation conditionally: it is received only if a person believes.

Owen then asks whether Christ obtained this condition of faith for those whom he died to save.

If Christ obtained faith for them absolutely, then salvation is certain for them. To purchase salvation on condition of faith, and also to purchase faith itself, is effectively to purchase salvation absolutely.

This is Owen's own position. Christ purchased salvation for his people to be received through faith, but he also obtained faith for them without condition. Therefore, the salvation he purchased certainly comes to them.

But if faith itself was obtained only on another condition, then the same question must be asked again: was that further condition obtained absolutely or conditionally?

If it was obtained conditionally, the argument never reaches an end. Each condition requires another condition, and the reasoning runs in a circle.

If Christ did not obtain faith for those for whom he died, then the same difficulties return.

First, the condition of faith must be made known to all those for whom Christ died. Yet countless people never hear the gospel.

Second, people must either be able to believe by their own

strength or unable to do so.

If they are able by their own strength, then saving faith rests upon human free will. Owen denies that Scripture allows this.

If they are unable to believe without God's grace, then God must either purpose to give that grace to all or withhold it from some.

If God purposes to give faith to all, why do all not believe? Why are all not saved?

But if God does not purpose to give faith to all, then the doctrine means that Christ died for people on the condition that they perform what they cannot perform without God's help, while God has determined not to provide that help.

Owen regards this as inconsistent with God's goodness and wisdom. It would be like offering a blind person a great gift on condition that he first opens his eyes and sees, while withholding the power by which he could see.

No saving good can come from a redemption that depends upon a condition which the sinner cannot fulfil and which God does not intend to provide.

Therefore, Owen concludes that Christ's death does not merely make salvation possible upon an uncertain condition. It secures both salvation and the faith by which salvation is received.

Owen will now continue with further arguments from the nature and effects of Christ's redeeming work.

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The gospel's particular distribution, Owen argues, agrees with the truth that Christ's redemption was intended for a particular people.

Chapter 3

Christ as Substitute and Surety

Part One: Christ Died in the Place of His People

Owen now argues from the person Christ sustained in his death.

Christ did not die merely as an example, or as one who made salvation possible from a distance. He died as the Surety and Substitute of those for whom he died.

Scripture describes his death in this way:

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Rom. 5:6-8

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.”

Gal. 3:13

“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.”

2 Cor. 5:21

These passages teach, Owen says, a real exchange. Christ stood in the place of his people. He bore what they deserved, so that they might receive what he had secured.

If Christ died as the Substitute and Surety of those for whom he died, two conclusions follow.

First, those for whom he died must be delivered from the guilt, wrath, and punishment that he bore in their place.

The reason Christ endured punishment in another's place was so that the other person would not endure it. Justice requires this. A surety takes the debt of another so that the debtor may be released.

Christ is called the Surety of a better covenant.

“By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.”

Heb. 7:22

Isaiah also speaks of him as bearing the punishment and iniquity of his people.

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities:

the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;

and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Isa. 53:5-6

Christ was made sin for his people so that they might become the righteousness of God in him. His substitution and their reconciliation belong together.

But not all people are delivered from wrath, guilt, and condemnation. Until people come to Christ, God’s wrath remains upon them.

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life:

and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life;

but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

John 3:36

Owen notes the word abideth. The text does not say that wrath comes upon unbelievers after having been removed from them by Christ’s death. It remains upon them.

Therefore, Owen argues, Christ cannot have died as Substitute for every individual person. If he had borne the guilt and punishment of every person in their place, all would be freed from that guilt and punishment.

The next consequence concerns Christ’s satisfaction to the justice of God for sin.

Part Two: Christ’s Satisfaction Cannot Be Double-Paid

The second consequence follows from Christ’s work as Surety.

If Christ died in the place of those for whom he died, then he made satisfaction to God’s justice for their sins. This is why he bore

death and punishment: to redeem his people and reconcile them to God.

But if Christ made satisfaction for the sins of every individual person, then God's justice would already be satisfied for every individual person.

Owen argues that this cannot be true, because many people will bear eternal punishment for their own sins.

Those who are eternally punished are paying the penalty due to their sins. If God still requires that penalty from them, then Christ did not already satisfy justice for those same sins in their place.

God's justice cannot be both satisfied and still require satisfaction for the same sins, in the same respect.

Scripture warns that judgment will exact the full debt from those who remain under condemnation.

"Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

Matt. 5:26

Owen's reasoning is therefore this: if Christ satisfied for a person's sins, that person cannot also be required to make satisfaction for those sins in eternal punishment.

To say otherwise would make Christ's satisfaction ineffective or insufficient. But this cannot be said of the Son of God.

Christ's satisfaction was not accidental or unintended. He willingly offered himself, according to the Father's purpose, as an acceptable sacrifice for sin.

Therefore, he did not intend to satisfy for the sins of those whom he knew would receive no benefit from his offering.

Owen raises the question plainly: did Christ die for people already condemned, such as Cain and Pharaoh, who had entered eternal punishment long before his crucifixion?

He rejects the idea. Christ knew that they were beyond recovery and could never receive any benefit from his death. It would be vain to say that he offered himself for their good on the condition that they believed, when they had never heard that condition and could no longer fulfil it.

An objection may be made: if Christ did not die for people already condemned, why did he die for believers who had already

been saved before his death?

Owen answers that those believers were saved because Christ's future death was certain in the purpose and promise of God. The covenant between the Father and the Son was sure. Christ's sacrifice was counted to them as certain to be accomplished.

For those who had already been condemned, however, there was no such promise of deliverance, no saving purpose, and no benefit to be obtained.

Owen concludes that Christ's death, as a true satisfaction, was offered for those whom he intended to save—not for people whom God had eternally determined to leave under the punishment of their sins.

He will now set out a further argument from the distinct groups of people described in Scripture.

Part Three: Unbelief and Christ's Mediation

Owen presses the argument further.

If Christ died as Substitute for all people and satisfied for their sins, then he satisfied either for all their sins or only for some.

If he satisfied for only some sins, then no one can be saved, because remaining sins would still condemn them.

But if he satisfied for all sins, why are any people condemned?

The usual answer is that people perish because of unbelief. Owen then asks: is unbelief a sin?

If unbelief is not a sin, it cannot be a just cause of condemnation. But if it is a sin, then Christ either died for it or he did not.

If Christ did not die for unbelief, then he did not die for all the sins of all people.

If Christ did die for unbelief, why does unbelief prevent the salvation of those for whom he died? To say that Christ died for their unbelief only if they cease to be unbelievers, Owen argues, simply repeats the same difficulty in another form.

Therefore, Christ's satisfaction cannot have been made for every sin of every person without exception.

Owen gives one further argument from Christ's office as Mediator.

For all those for whom Christ died, he acts as Mediator. His offering of himself to God was one of the chief acts of his mediation.

But Christ is not Mediator for every individual person. As Mediator, he is Priest; and the work of a priest includes both sacrifice and intercession. He obtains good things for his people and applies those good things to them.

Since Christ does not intercede for all people in this saving manner, he cannot be Mediator and Priest for all people in that same manner.

The argument is simple:

Christ died for those for whom he is Mediator.

As Mediator, he sacrifices and intercedes for the same people.

He does not savingly intercede for every individual person.

Therefore, he did not die for every individual person.

Some reply that Christ is Mediator for some people in certain respects, but not in others. Owen rejects this distinction. He sees no Scriptural basis for dividing Christ's mediatorial work in this way.

To say that Christ offers sacrifice for people but does not intercede for them makes him, in Owen's words, only a partial Mediator. But Christ's priestly work is one united work, embracing both his sacrifice and his intercession.

Owen therefore concludes that Christ died as Substitute, Surety, and Mediator for a particular people. His death satisfied for their sins, secured their release from condemnation, and is joined to his effectual intercession for them.

Chapter 4

Sanctification and the Gift of Faith

Part One: Christ's Blood Sanctifies Those for Whom It Was Shed

Owen's next argument comes from sanctification.

If the blood of Christ washes, cleanses, purges, and sanctifies those for whom it was shed, then Christ died only for those who are actually washed, cleansed, and sanctified.

Not all people are sanctified. Faith is the beginning of the heart's purification, and not all people have faith.

"And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."

Acts 15:9

"For all men have not faith."

2 Thess. 3:2

Therefore, if Christ's blood certainly sanctifies those for whom it was shed, he did not shed it for every individual person.

Owen first considers the Old Testament sacrifices, which pointed forward to Christ.

The blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of the heifer, brought a ceremonial cleansing to those for whom they were offered.

"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean,

sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God,

purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Heb. 9:13-14

What was accomplished outwardly and ceremonially under the old covenant is accomplished inwardly and spiritually by Christ's sacrifice.

The earlier sacrifices sanctified for ceremonial purification. Christ's blood does far more: it purges the conscience from dead works and brings his people into the service of the living God.

Some reply that the ancient sacrifices purified only when their blood was applied, and that Christ's blood sanctifies only when it is applied through faith.

Owen agrees that Christ's blood sanctifies through its application. But he rejects the conclusion drawn from this. The question is precisely whether the blood of Christ is applied to all those for whom it was offered.

He argues that it is. The sacrifice and the application may be distinguished, but they cannot be separated. Christ's blood is applied to all those for whom it was shed.

The purpose of Christ's death was not merely to make sanctification possible. It was to cleanse and sanctify his people in reality.

"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death,

we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him,

that the body of sin might be destroyed,

that henceforth we should not serve sin."

Rom. 6:5-6

Union with Christ in his death is joined to newness of life. The old dominion of sin is broken so that believers no longer remain its servants.

Owen will now show further passages in which sanctification is presented as a certain purpose and fruit of Christ's death.

Part Two: Sanctification Is a Certain Fruit of Christ's Death

Owen next shows that Christ's death confirms and secures the promises of the new covenant.

*"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen,
unto the glory of God by us."*

2 Cor. 1:20

The promises of God are made sure in Christ. They are confirmed by his death, which ratifies the covenant and secures its blessings for his people.

Those blessings include not only forgiveness, but also a new heart, holiness, and reconciliation with God.

“And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you;

and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh.”

Ezek. 11:19

The death of Christ therefore obtains the whole saving work of God's grace, including sanctification.

Owen points especially to two passages which directly state that Christ gave himself in order to purify a people for himself.

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity,

and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

Titus 2:14

“Husbands, love your wives, even as 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.”

Eph. 5:25-26

In both passages, cleansing and sanctification are not merely possible results of Christ's death. They are the purpose for which he gave himself.

Christ gave himself for his church so that he would sanctify and cleanse it. He gave himself for his people so that he would redeem them from iniquity and make them zealous for good works.

Owen also points to the comprehensive character of Christ's saving work:

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom,

and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”

1 Cor. 1:30

Christ is made to his people righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. These blessings belong together.

Owen's conclusion is therefore:

Sanctification and holiness are certain fruits of Christ's death in all those for whom he died. But not every person is sanctified, cleansed, or made holy. Therefore, Christ did not die for every individual person.

An objection may be raised. Sanctification is brought about through the work of the Holy Spirit and through faith. Does this mean that Christ's death is not the cause of sanctification?

Owen answers that several causes may work together in different ways.

The Holy Spirit is the effective cause who works holiness in the believer. Faith is the instrument by which the believer receives Christ and his righteousness. But Christ's death remains the meritorious cause: it is the price by which these blessings were obtained.

He illustrates this with a ransom. A captive may be released when an official brings the order of release and the jailer removes his chains. Yet the ransom paid is still the cause of his freedom, because neither the order nor the release would have taken place without it.

In the same way, the Spirit's work and the believer's faith do not weaken the truth that sanctification was purchased by Christ's blood.

Owen now turns to faith itself, arguing that faith is also a proper and immediate fruit of Christ's death.

Part Three: Faith Is Purchased by Christ

Owen now makes faith itself the subject of his next argument.

He begins with three principles.

First, every spiritual blessing freely given to believers through Christ was purchased by Christ's death. Nothing is given through Christ that he did not obtain by the price of his blood.

*"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief:
when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,
he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days,
and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."*

Isa. 53:10

Second, faith is absolutely necessary for salvation. Without faith, all other outward privileges are of no saving benefit.

*“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;
but he that believeth not shall be damned.”*

Mark 16:16

Third, Owen asks the central question directly: did Christ, by his death and intercession, obtain faith for his people? Is faith a fruit and effect of Christ’s saving work?

If the answer is yes, then faith was obtained either absolutely or conditionally.

If Christ obtained faith absolutely for all those for whom he died, then all those people must certainly believe. But not all people have faith.

“For all men have not faith.”

2 Thess. 3:2

*“Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ,
according to the faith of God’s elect.”*

Titus 1:1

If, however, faith was obtained only on a condition, Owen asks what that condition is.

Some answer that a person must not resist God’s grace. But not resisting grace is simply obeying grace; and obeying grace in this matter is believing.

The proposed condition therefore becomes faith itself. Christ is said to have obtained faith for people on condition that they have faith. Owen argues that this is circular and explains nothing.

If another condition is proposed, the same question returns: was that condition obtained by Christ or not? If it was not, then the ultimate cause of faith lies in the sinner. If it was, the question must again be asked whether it was obtained absolutely or conditionally.

Owen then considers the alternative: what follows if faith was not obtained by Christ’s death?

It would mean that faith comes from human will rather than from God’s grace. It would mean that people have the power, in themselves, either to make God’s love and Christ’s death effective for their salvation or to defeat their intended purpose.

Owen argues that this contradicts Scripture, the nature of the new covenant, the doctrine of human sinfulness, and the grace of

God.

The new covenant does not merely command faith. It promises that God will work its saving conditions within his people.

If faith is left ultimately to human free will, then the final cause of salvation lies in the sinner. A person would make himself differ from others by the decisive act of believing.

Owen rejects this conclusion. He maintains that faith is a gift of God, obtained through the death of Christ for those whom Christ came to save.

He will now give several reasons for this conclusion.

Part Four: Reasons Why Faith Is a Fruit of Christ's Death

Owen now gives reasons why faith must be included among the blessings purchased by Christ.

First, Christ's death obtained holiness and sanctification for his people. Faith is itself a grace of the Spirit and an essential part of that holiness. Therefore, Christ obtained faith for them.

There is no Scriptural basis, Owen argues, for claiming that Christ purchased some graces—such as love, hope, and meekness—but not faith. Nor is there any reason to suppose that fallen people are more able to believe by themselves than they are to love or hope rightly.

Second, faith is a principal fruit of election. God chose his people in Christ so that they would be holy, and faith is part of that holiness.

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,

that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

Eph. 1:4

Those whom God predestined, he also effectually calls; and that calling brings them to faith.

“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called:

and whom he called, them he also justified:

and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Rom. 8:30

Scripture describes those who believe as those appointed to eternal life.

“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord:

and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”

Acts 13:48

Faith, then, flows from God’s electing grace. Since Christ obtains for the elect the blessings God has chosen to give them, faith must be among those blessings.

Third, faith belongs to the blessings of the new covenant. Christ’s death confirms that covenant, and all its promised blessings are secured in him.

The new covenant promises a new heart, the law written within, the knowledge of God, and the forgiveness of sins. Faith belongs within this gracious work of God in his people.

Fourth, Christ cannot be said to save fully and effectually without obtaining what is absolutely necessary for salvation.

Without faith, no one can be saved.

“But without faith it is impossible to please him.”

Heb. 11:6

But Christ saves his people completely.

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS:

for he shall save his people from their sins.”

Matt. 1:21

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place,

having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

Heb. 9:12

Therefore, faith must be included in the salvation Christ obtained. Finally, Scripture speaks directly of faith as God’s gift in Christ.

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him,

but also to suffer for his sake.”

Phil. 1:29

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

Eph. 1:3

Faith is a spiritual blessing, and it is given in Christ. Christ is also called:

“The author and finisher of our faith.”

Heb. 12:2

Owen therefore concludes that faith is purchased by Christ's death and bestowed upon those for whom he died.

Since faith is not given to all people, Christ did not die for all people without exception.

Chapter 5

Redemption and the Pattern of Israel

Part One: Israel as a Type of Christ's Redeemed People

Owen now argues from the relationship between Old Testament types and their fulfilment in Christ.

The people of Israel, especially in their deliverance from Egypt, were a type or picture of God's redeemed church.

Their priests, sacrifices, altar, worship, and entrance into Canaan pointed forward to the spiritual blessings accomplished by Christ.

*"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples:
and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends
of the world are come."*

1 Cor. 10:11

Israel's deliverance from slavery, preservation in the wilderness, nearness to God, and entrance into the promised land all foreshadow the salvation of God's people.

The New Testament uses the same language for believers that was used for Israel.

*"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy
priesthood,
to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus
Christ."*

1 Pet. 2:5

*"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy
nation,
a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him
who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."*

1 Pet. 2:9

Thus, Israel as God's chosen people was a type of the elect church: the people whom God calls, redeems, preserves, and brings into glory.

Owen's argument is that the type and its fulfilment must agree in the main purpose of redemption.

God did not bring Israel out of Egypt merely to make their deliverance possible. He actually delivered the people for whom he acted. He brought them out of bondage through the blood of the Passover lamb.

In the same way, Christ does not merely make redemption possible for an undefined mass of people. He actually redeems those for whom he gives himself.

The Passover is especially important. The lamb was appointed for a particular people, Israel. Its blood was not offered indiscriminately for all Egypt. It marked out those who were delivered from judgment.

Therefore, Owen argues, the sacrifice of Christ—the true Passover Lamb—must be understood as having a particular and effectual reference to his own people.

The deliverance of Israel was a shadow. The redemption accomplished by Christ is the reality. The reality cannot be less certain or less effective than the shadow that pointed to it.

Owen will next consider the particular ways in which Israel's redemption from Egypt illustrates the redemption Christ accomplishes for his church.

Part Two: The Type and the Reality Must Agree

Owen now states the argument drawn from Israel more directly.

Only those who were represented by Israel in its typical redemption are spiritually redeemed by Jesus Christ.

Israel's deliverance from Egypt, preservation by God, worship through the appointed sacrifices, and entrance into Canaan were all pictures of the salvation of God's elect church.

The type does not point to the whole world without distinction. Israel and its ordinances were not a picture of the Egyptians, the Canaanite nations, or unbelievers in general. They pointed to God's own chosen people.

Therefore, the fulfilment of the type must have the same particular character.

Christ truly redeems the people who were represented by Israel: his church, his elect, and those called by grace.

Owen insists that there is no reason to suppose that Israel's redemption could represent an ineffective redemption for all

humanity. The correspondence between type and fulfilment would be broken.

Israel was actually brought out of bondage. The people covered by the Passover blood were actually delivered from the destroying judgment. Their redemption was not merely an opportunity to escape.

So it is with Christ. His blood does not merely create a possible deliverance for all people. It secures an actual deliverance for those for whom he died.

To claim that Christ redeems every person without exception would make Israel a type of the whole world, including those who remain enemies of God and perish under judgment. Owen regards this as impossible.

The proper conclusion is that Christ's redemption is particular and effectual. He redeems his church—the people chosen by God, represented beforehand in Israel's deliverance.

This completes Owen's argument from Old Testament types. He now turns to the meaning of the word redemption itself.

Chapter 6

The Nature of Reconciliation

Part One: Reconciliation Must Be Complete

Owen next considers reconciliation, another blessing Scripture attributes to Christ's death.

Reconciliation has two sides:

God is reconciled to sinners; his wrath is turned away.

Sinners are reconciled to God; their enmity is overcome and they are brought back to him.

Both are accomplished through the death of Christ.

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works,

yet now hath he reconciled

In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight.”

Col. 1:21-22

Owen argues that these two sides cannot be separated.

If God is reconciled to a person, then Christ also brings that person into reconciliation with God. If a person is reconciled to God, then God must be ready to receive that person in peace.

Reconciliation is the renewal of friendship between parties who were previously at variance. It requires the removal of the division on both sides.

Sin made God and humanity enemies. Human beings were hostile to God in their minds and affections. God's wrath rested upon them because of their sin.

But there is an important difference. Human hostility is moral and rebellious. God's hostility is the righteous expression of his judgment against sin.

For reconciliation to be complete, God's wrath must be turned away, and the sinner's enmity must be overcome.

Owen rejects two incomplete accounts of reconciliation.

The first says that reconciliation means only humanity's conversion to God, without the appeasing of God's wrath. This ignores the fact that God was rightly offended by sin.

The second says that God is reconciled to every person through Christ, but that only some are reconciled to God. Owen argues that this is equally impossible. Peace cannot be made on only one side.

If God has been reconciled to a sinner, why would he not bring that sinner to himself? And if the sinner is reconciled to God, how could God remain unreconciled and unwilling to receive him?

Scripture describes the former state as real enmity.

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,

much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

Rom. 5:10

“And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

Eph. 2:3

God’s wrath remains upon those who do not believe.

“He that believeth not the Son shall not see life;

but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

John 3:36

Therefore, Owen argues, all people are not reconciled to God through Christ. If Christ reconciled God to every individual person, then God’s wrath could not still remain upon unbelievers.

He will now show more fully how Christ’s death secures a complete and effectual reconciliation for those whom he came to save.

Part Two: Reconciliation Accomplished by Christ

Owen next explains what reconciliation includes. Perfect reconciliation requires two things: God’s wrath against sin must be removed, and those who were enemies must be brought into willing obedience to God.

Both belong to Christ’s saving work.

First, reconciliation removes God’s wrath and establishes peace.

Paul writes:

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

Rom. 5:10

Owen understands this reconciliation as accomplished by Christ's death. While people were enemies, God's anger against their sin was turned away through the death of his Son. Forgiveness and peace with God are therefore not merely possible results of the cross; they are blessings obtained by it.

Paul also says:

"And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

Rom. 5:11

The reconciliation accomplished by Christ is received by faith. Yet it was obtained before it was received. Christ's death secured peace with God; the Spirit brings people to enjoy that peace in time.

Second, reconciliation also includes the change wrought in those who had been enemies. Christ does not merely remove guilt while leaving sinners in their enmity. By his Spirit, he brings them to receive the pardon purchased by his blood and to return to God.

Paul describes both aspects together:

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

2 Cor. 5:18-19

Here reconciliation includes God's not imputing sin to those for whom Christ died. But the gospel also calls those sinners to embrace the peace God has provided:

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

2 Cor. 5:20

Owen distinguishes these aspects without separating them. Christ's death obtains reconciliation; the Spirit applies it by bringing those for whom Christ died to faith, repentance, and willing obedience. The same people whose sins are not imputed are brought to receive the reconciliation purchased for them.

This creates a difficulty for the claim that Christ died equally for every person. If his death reconciled all people to God, why does God's wrath remain upon many?

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

John 3:36

Those upon whom wrath remains cannot already be reconciled to God in the full sense accomplished by Christ's death. Nor can reconciliation be reduced to a mere possibility of peace, since Scripture connects it with the removal of guilt, the non-imputation of sin, and reconciliation to God through faith.

Owen therefore concludes that Christ's death did not merely make reconciliation available to all. It actually obtained reconciliation for those whom God brings to himself. The reconciliation Christ purchased is complete, effectual, and particular.

Chapter 7

The Satisfaction of Christ

Part One: What Christ's Satisfaction Means

Owen now presents his thirteenth argument against universal redemption: Christ's death was a satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of those for whom he died, so that they might be set free.

The word satisfaction is not used of Christ's death in the English Bible. But Owen argues that the reality described by the word is found throughout Scripture. Christ's death is repeatedly presented as the bearing of sin's punishment, the payment of a ransom, the offering of a sacrifice, and the procuring of peace with God.

By satisfaction, Owen means full compensation for a debt. In ordinary terms, a debtor is released from an obligation when the creditor has received what is owed. Applied to sin, the debtor is the sinner, the debt is sin, and the penalty required is death.

"The wages of sin is death."

Rom. 6:23

The law binds sinners under this obligation:

"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

Gal. 3:10

God is the offended party, the righteous Judge, and the supreme Lord. Christ intervenes as the one who pays the ransom and makes propitiation through his blood.

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."

Rom. 3:25

For Christ to satisfy for sin, he had to undergo the punishment due to it. Owen argues that this is precisely what Scripture says he did.

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

1 Pet. 2:24

"By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."

Isa. 53:11

To bear iniquity in Scripture is to bear its punishment. Christ was not merely an example of suffering, nor was his suffering merely corrective. He had no sin of his own to be corrected for. He was wounded and bruised for the sins of others, so that they might have peace.

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

Isa. 53:5

Owen finds the same truth expressed in the language of sacrifice. Christ gave himself as an offering and sacrifice for sin; he was made sin for us, that is, made to bear the punishment due to sin.

“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”

Eph. 5:2

“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.”

2 Cor. 5:21

Christ’s sacrifice was therefore no partial or uncertain payment. It was a full and valuable satisfaction to God’s justice for all the sins of all those for whom he suffered. God was more pleased with the obedience and sacrifice of his Son than he was displeased with the sins of those whom Christ represented.

This satisfaction rests on substitution. The punishment was not relaxed; rather, the person who bore it was changed. Christ stood in the place of his people, bore the curse of the law for them, and made satisfaction for their rebellion.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.”

Gal. 3:13

Thus Owen’s question follows naturally: if Christ fully satisfied God’s justice for a person’s sins, how could that same person still be required to bear the eternal punishment of those sins? He will now examine that consequence more closely.

Part Two: Full Satisfaction and Free Pardon

Owen considers whether Christ's satisfaction was the payment of the very penalty required by the law, or only something accepted in its place.

Some distinguish between two kinds of satisfaction. The first is the payment of the very thing owed, whether by the debtor or by another acting for him. The second is the payment of something different, accepted by the creditor as sufficient.

Owen maintains that Christ made satisfaction of the first kind. He bore the penalty that the law required, though not in every accidental circumstance. The curse, the punishment, and death due to his people were laid upon him.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

Gal. 3:13

"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."

2 Cor. 5:21

This does not mean that those for whom Christ died immediately possess and enjoy every benefit of his death. They do not receive them until they are brought to faith. Yet, Owen says, they possess a true right to those benefits because Christ has already obtained them.

He compares this to a prisoner for whom a ransom has been paid. The prisoner may not yet know of his release or enjoy his liberty, but once the ransom is accepted, he has a right to freedom.

Nor does full satisfaction remove the freeness of God's pardon. God's grace is seen, first, in appointing his Son to bear the sins of his people; second, in accepting Christ's satisfaction in their place; and third, in freely applying Christ's death to them.

God pardons sinners freely, not because Christ's satisfaction was incomplete, but because sinners themselves made no payment. He spared them, while not sparing his own Son.

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Rom. 8:32

Thus the gospel does not describe a relaxation of the punishment due to sin. Rather, it describes a change of persons: Christ stood in the place of those who deserved the punishment.

“God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”

Rom. 8:3

God’s justice was therefore upheld in Christ’s death. He set Christ forth as a propitiation so that he might be just while justifying those who believe in Jesus.

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past.”

Rom. 3:25

Owen’s conclusion is that Christ made a full and valuable satisfaction to the justice of God for every sin of every person for whom he died. He bore the same punishment in its essential weight and force, though he could not be held by death forever.

The question is therefore unavoidable: can it be consistent with God’s justice for anyone to perish eternally when Christ has already made full and perfect satisfaction for that person’s sins? Owen will now draw out the consequences of this satisfaction.

Part Three: The Debt Cannot Be Required Twice

Owen next considers God’s action in this satisfaction. God is the offended party: his law has been broken, his honour despised, and his justice violated.

In relation to sinners, God may be considered as a creditor and they as debtors. Sin is their debt, and its penalty is required by the law. But in relation to Christ, God acts as the supreme Lord who appoints a surety to stand in the debtor’s place and then requires the full debt from that surety.

“He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.”

Rom. 8:32

Owen therefore identifies two acts in God’s saving work.

First, God exercises severe justice by requiring the penalty due to sin. He does not overlook the debt or reduce its essential weight.

Christ bears it.

Second, God exercises sovereign grace by transferring that punishment from the guilty debtor to the surety whom he himself provided. The substitution of Christ was an act of God's free and supreme dominion.

Christ's death is also called a price:

"For ye are bought with a price."

1 Cor. 6:20

Because the debt was paid to God, Owen argues, its payment must have real consequences for those on whose behalf it was made. Their full debt was paid; not merely some sins, but all their sins. God, having accepted the payment, is bound by his own righteous purpose to cancel the obligation against them.

The law can bring no further charge against those for whom Christ has satisfied it.

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again."

Rom. 8:33-34

Owen's central point is plain: to demand payment twice for the same debt would not accord with justice. If Christ endured the punishment due to a person's sins, that person cannot also be made to endure the eternal penalty of those same sins.

This cannot be avoided by saying that some fail to walk worthily of the benefit received. Their unbelief and every other sin would itself belong to the debt Christ is said to have paid. Nor can it be said that Christ's payment was sufficient but not actually accepted for them, if Christ truly made satisfaction in their place.

Therefore, if Christ had satisfied God's justice for every person without exception, then every person would have a right to discharge from condemnation. Yet many remain under wrath, live under the condemning power of the law, and perish eternally.

Owen concludes that universal redemption cannot be reconciled with the nature of satisfaction. Christ made full payment for all the sins of those for whom he died; therefore, they must receive the

freedom, pardon, and salvation that his satisfaction secured.

Chapter 8

A Digression on Election and Christ's Satisfaction

Part One: Eternal Election Does Not Remove the Need for Redemption

While writing on Christ's satisfaction, Owen recounts a private discussion with a man who seemed to deny that Christ made satisfaction to God's justice for sin.

The man's argument was this: because God eternally loved the elect, they were never truly under wrath in a way that required satisfaction. Christ's death, therefore, did not remove guilt or appease God's wrath; it merely revealed to the elect the eternal love that God already had for them.

Owen rejects this conclusion. In his judgment, it uses the truth of election to overthrow the truth of redemption.

God's eternal love for the elect is indeed certain and unchangeable. But it is an eternal purpose of his will, not an actual change in the condition of those whom he purposes to save. God decrees that they will be justified, sanctified, and saved; yet they are not actually justified, sanctified, or saved until he accomplishes those things in time.

A divine purpose guarantees the future event, but it is not the event itself. God decreed the creation of the world from eternity, yet the world was not eternally created. In the same way, God decreed to save his people, but they are not actually reconciled to him merely because he has decreed their salvation.

Scripture calls God's eternal choice his good pleasure, purpose, and foundation:

"Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Matt. 11:26

"For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand."

Rom. 9:11

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his."

2 Tim. 2:19

Owen argues that these eternal acts of God's will do not, by themselves, alter the actual state of the creature. The elect, before reconciliation, remain sinners under guilt and the effects of God's wrath, just as other unconverted people do.

"And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

Eph. 2:3

God's eternal love does not mean that the elect never need redemption. It means that God has determined to redeem them through Christ and apply that redemption to them in his appointed time.

If the elect needed only to be told of God's eternal love, then justification would simply be the discovery of a divine decree. But Owen insists that justification is a real act of God toward the sinner: God absolves the guilty person through faith and grants him the righteousness of Christ.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Rom. 5:1

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Rom. 4:5

The eternal love of God is later made known to believers and gives them comfort. But it does not remove the need for Christ's satisfaction, reconciliation, and actual justification. These are the means by which God brings his eternal purpose to its appointed end.

Part Two: The Elect Remain Under Wrath Until Reconciled

Owen argues that Scripture places all people, including God's elect before their calling, in the same natural condition: under sin, guilt, and the effects of God's wrath.

"There is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Rom. 3:12

"For we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin."

Rom. 3:9

God's eternal purpose to save some does not give them an actual exemption from this condition before his grace is applied to them. Their distinction from others is made by God's real and temporal work of redemption, calling, faith, and justification.

Owen describes the condition from which Christ delivers his people. Before their actual reconciliation they are alienated from God; their worship is unacceptable, their natural enjoyments are not sanctified, they are under the power of Satan, in bondage to death, under the curse of the law, exposed to judgment, and ruled by sin.

"The prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord."

Prov. 28:9

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air."

Eph. 2:2

"And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Heb. 2:15

The elect, until they believe, are not exempt from these realities merely because God has purposed to save them. They need the very deliverance Christ obtained for them.

"But without faith it is impossible to please him."

Heb. 11:6

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

Gal. 3:13

Owen rejects the suggestion that the elect are under wrath only in their own mistaken apprehension. Scripture gives no such distinction between their actual state and that of all other unconverted sinners. The misery of an unreconciled condition is real; therefore Christ's redemption is not simply a revelation that the condition was never real.

The wrath of God remains until faith:

"He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

John 3:36

This does not conflict with God's unchangeable love. God has

eternally purposed to free his people, but they are not free before he actually carries out that purpose. Owen compares this to an apprentice promised freedom at the end of his term: the certainty of future freedom does not mean he is already free.

The conclusion is that election does not make Christ's satisfaction unnecessary. Rather, God's eternal purpose to save his people includes his appointment of Christ as the one who purchases every spiritual blessing for them and satisfies for all their sins.

Christ's redemption is therefore one of the chief means by which God's purpose of election is brought to fulfilment.

Chapter 9

Further Arguments for Christ's Satisfaction

Part One: Christ Bore the Punishment of Sin in Our Place

Owen begins the second part of his discussion by setting out several arguments that Christ made satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of his people.

His first argument is simple: if Christ took the sins of his people, bore the punishment due to them, and did so in their place, then he made satisfaction for those sins so that they might go free.

Scripture says that Christ bore sin:

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

John 1:29

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

1 Pet. 2:24

"By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."

Isa. 53:11

God himself laid those sins upon Christ:

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Isa. 53:6

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin."

2 Cor. 5:21

To bear sin in this way, Owen argues, is to bear the punishment due to it. The penalty of sin includes death and the curse of the law. Christ underwent both.

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

Heb. 2:9

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made

a curse for us.”

Gal. 3:13

His sufferings were not simply the sufferings of a righteous man. The Father did not spare him, but condemned sin in his flesh. He was bruised and put to grief as the one who bore the punishment of the sins laid upon him.

“Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief.”

Isa. 53:10

Finally, Owen insists that Christ did this in the place of others. Christ himself said that he came to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many.

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Matt. 20:28

The righteous suffered for the unrighteous:

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

1 Pet. 3:18

Thus Owen concludes that Christ bore the sins of his people, endured the punishment those sins deserved, and did so as their substitute. This, he argues, is satisfaction: Christ answered the demands of God’s justice so that those for whom he died might be delivered.

Part Two: Christ Paid the Ransom as Surety

Owen’s second argument follows from the biblical language of price and ransom. If Christ paid a valuable ransom to his Father as the surety of sinners, so that they might be set free, then he made satisfaction to God’s justice for their sins.

Christ himself describes the purpose of his coming in these terms:

“For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:45

The apostle likewise speaks of him as giving himself in the place of others:

“Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

1 Tim. 2:6

Owen argues that a ransom is a price paid to obtain release. Scripture therefore speaks of redemption as deliverance purchased through Christ.

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

Rom. 3:24

“For ye are bought with a price.”

1 Cor. 6:20

That price was not silver, gold, or any created thing. It was the precious blood of Christ.

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

1 Pet. 1:18-19

Owen asks to whom this ransom was paid. It could not have been paid to Satan, for Satan is conquered by Christ, not satisfied by him. The ransom was paid to God, whose wrath rested upon sinners, whose law condemned them, and to whom their debt was owed.

Christ’s death is therefore called an offering and a sacrifice to God.

“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”

Eph. 5:2

Owen further argues that Christ paid this price as a surety. A surety assumes another person’s obligation and answers for it in his place.

“By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.”

Heb. 7:22

Christ, then, paid what his people owed, though he had not incurred the debt himself.

“Then I restored that which I took not away.”

Ps. 69:4

The end of this payment was their freedom. Christ did not pay a ransom merely to make liberation possible. He paid it as surety for those whose debt he undertook, so that they would be released from sin's guilt, curse, and punishment.

Owen concludes that the language of ransom, purchase, sacrifice, and surety all teaches the same truth: Christ gave himself to God as the full price of redemption for his people.

Part Three: Atonement and Christ's Priestly Office

Owen's third argument is that to make atonement for sin and reconcile God to sinners is, in substance, to make satisfaction to God's justice.

Christ's death is repeatedly described in this way. Through his redemption, God sets him forth as the propitiation for sin.

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."

Rom. 3:24-25

Owen understands propitiation as an atoning sacrifice that deals with sin, turns away wrath, and establishes peace between God and those for whom Christ died. Christ did not merely announce that peace was available; by his death he obtained reconciliation.

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."

Rom. 5:10

This reconciliation is received by faith, but it was accomplished through Christ's one righteous act. His satisfaction is the ground upon which sinners are delivered from condemnation.

Owen's fourth argument concerns the priestly office of Christ. To deny that Christ bore sin's punishment, made atonement, and reconciled sinners to God would be to deny the very work his priestly office required him to perform on earth.

The Old Testament sacrifices pointed forward to this work. Their purpose was propitiation and atonement. Christ, the true High

Priest, had no sacrifice to offer other than himself.

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

Heb. 9:14

His sacrifice was not offered for himself, for he was without sin. It was offered for the sins of his people.

Heb. 10:12

Thus, Owen argues, Christ’s priesthood confirms the doctrine of satisfaction. The priest offers sacrifice to God; Christ offered himself. The sacrifice deals with sin; Christ bore the punishment due to sin. The end is reconciliation and peace with God.

These are not peripheral interpretations placed upon Christ’s death. They belong to the heart of his priestly work. Therefore, Owen concludes, Christ’s death must be understood as a true and effectual satisfaction for those whom he represented.

Part Four: Christ Bore the Wrath Due to Sin

Owen expands his argument from the priestly office of Christ. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were types of Christ’s sacrifice. Their blood was accepted in the place of the offerer and ceremonially dealt with the guilt of sin. Christ, as the true Priest, Altar, and Sacrifice, fulfilled what those offerings prefigured.

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.”

Heb. 9:14

The old sacrifices could not finally perfect those who came to worship. Christ, however, offered his own body as the one sufficient sacrifice for sins.

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

Heb. 10:10

“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”

Heb. 10:12

Owen argues that Christ’s sacrifice necessarily involved his

bearing the wrath due to sin. The punishment of sin is God's wrath; and Christ bore the punishment due to the sins laid upon him.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

Rom. 1:18

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin."

2 Cor. 5:21

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

1 Pet. 2:24

The curse of the law is also the expression of God's wrath against sin. Christ bore that curse for those whom he represented.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

Gal. 3:13

Moreover, Christ tasted the death that sinners deserved. His fear, agony, sorrow, abandonment, and suffering show that he did not die merely as a witness to God's love, but as the surety who endured the judgment due to sin.

"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

Luke 22:44

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Matt. 27:46

Owen's point is not that the Father ceased to love the Son in his person. The Father was always pleased with Christ's holiness, obedience, and perfect righteousness. But the sins of his people were charged to him, and it pleased the Father to bruise him as the one bearing their punishment.

"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief."

Isa. 53:10

Therefore, Christ's suffering under wrath does not contradict the Father's love for the Son. It displays both the holiness of God's justice and the greatness of his saving love: Christ stood in the place of sinners and bore what they deserved.

Part Five: The Foundation of Faith and Consolation

Owen next argues that any doctrine denying Christ's satisfaction strikes at the foundation of gospel faith and comfort.

When a person is awakened to the guilt of sin and the reality of God's wrath, he cannot find rest in his own righteousness. Nor can he find safety in the vague thought that God is merciful. He needs a sure refuge from the judgment that sin deserves.

Owen compares Christ to Noah's ark amid the flood. The waters of judgment fell upon the ark, yet it rose above them and carried those within it safely through the flood. In the same way, the wrath due to Christ's people fell upon Christ, while those who rest in him are brought safely through judgment.

The foundation of a troubled sinner's peace is not that wrath was never due, nor that sin was never truly guilt. It is that God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up; that Christ was made sin for his people; and that the judgment they feared fell upon him.

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all."

Rom. 8:32

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin."

2 Cor. 5:21

This is why Christ's satisfaction gives solid comfort. If he fulfilled justice in the sinner's place, then the sinner who comes to him need not bear that judgment himself. But if Christ did not answer the demands of justice and undergo the wrath due to sin, Owen says, there is no secure ground for peace.

"The wages of sin is death."

Rom. 6:23

The soul can therefore say: if Christ did not satisfy God's justice, then I must satisfy it; if he did not bear wrath, then I must bear it eternally. To take away Christ's satisfaction is to take away the believer's only refuge.

For Owen, this is not a merely abstract theological question. It concerns the very ground upon which a guilty conscience finds peace with God. Christ's satisfaction is the firm foundation of faith because he bore the judgment that his people deserved and secured

their safety in himself.

Part Six: Christ Made Sin for Us

Owen closes this chapter with two central texts: 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Isaiah 53:5.

Paul writes:

“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.”

2 Cor. 5:21

Christ knew no sin. He was without inherent sin, guilt, or corruption. Therefore, Owen argues, to say that God made him “sin for us” cannot mean that Christ became sinful.

It means that, by God’s appointment and Christ’s consent, the sins of his people were charged to him. He stood as their surety. Though he had not incurred their debt, he answered for it fully, enduring the death, wrath, and curse that sin deserved.

This does not mean that the Father ceased to delight in the Son’s holy person. The Father was always pleased with Christ’s perfect obedience. Yet he was displeased with the sins that were imputed to Christ, and it pleased him to bruise the Son as the one who bore them.

“Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief.”

Isa. 53:10

Owen then returns to Isaiah:

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

Isa. 53:5

The chastisement that brought peace to Christ’s people fell upon Christ. He was wounded because of their transgressions and bruised because of their iniquities. His suffering was therefore punitive and substitutionary: he was punished so that they might have peace and go free.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Isa. 53:6

To bear iniquity, Owen insists, is not merely to declare that sinners are eternally righteous in God's purpose. In Scripture it means to undergo the punishment due to sin.

Christ bore sin by being struck, cut off, wounded, and bruised for the sins of others.

“For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.”

Isa. 53:8

Owen concludes that these texts establish the satisfaction of Christ. God laid the sins of his people upon his sinless Son; Christ bore their punishment in their place; and by his chastisement they obtain peace, healing, and freedom from condemnation.

Chapter 10

The Merit of Christ

Part One: What Christ's Death Purchased

Owen's fourteenth argument concerns the merit of Christ. By merit, he means the worth and value of Christ's death by which he purchased and obtained the saving blessings Scripture attributes to it.

The word merit itself is not used in the New Testament. Owen is therefore concerned not with the word but with the truth it expresses: Christ's suffering and obedience obtained peace, healing, redemption, and salvation for those for whom he died.

"The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

Isa. 53:5

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

Heb. 9:12

Scripture also describes this work as purchase:

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Acts 20:28

Owen defines merit as the performance of an action by which the thing sought becomes due, according to the justice established by God. Christ's death did not merely make blessings possible; it purchased them.

These purchased blessings include deliverance from enemies, from the wrath to come, from death's power, from the works of the devil, from the curse of the law, and from sin itself. They also include reconciliation with God, propitiation, peace, and salvation.

"And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

1 Thess. 1:10

“That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

Heb. 2:14

“For he shall save his people from their sins.”

Matt. 1:21

Owen carefully maintains that salvation is freely given by God to sinners. God was under no obligation to send his Son, to appoint the people for whom he would die, or to bestow grace upon them in themselves.

But once God has appointed that Christ should merit grace and glory for his people, those blessings are due to Christ on behalf of those for whom he died. To withhold from them what Christ has purchased would be contrary to the justice of that divine appointment.

This, Owen argues, is fatal to universal redemption. If Christ merited grace, glory, and every saving benefit for every person, why are those benefits not bestowed on every person? The defect cannot be in Christ’s merit, nor in God’s justice.

Nor can the difficulty be resolved by making the blessings conditional, for Owen has already argued that faith itself—the necessary condition of salvation—is among the blessings Christ purchased for his people.

Part Two: Christ Died in the Place of His People

Owen’s fifteenth argument comes from the expressions Scripture uses for Christ’s death: Christ died for us, bore our sins, and became our surety.

To die for another in this sense is to die in that person’s place so that he may go free. It is substitution, not merely assistance or example.

Christ is expressly called a surety:

“By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.”

Heb. 7:22

A surety assumes the obligation of another and bears the danger that otherwise would have fallen upon him. Owen therefore understands Christ’s death as the substitution of his person in the place of those whom he came to save.

Christ gave his life as a ransom instead of many:

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Matt. 20:28

The same truth appears in Christ’s suffering for the unjust:

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

1 Pet. 3:18

Owen considers the objection that the phrase “Christ died for us” means only that he died for our benefit, without implying substitution. He argues that the context and language of Scripture will not allow this weaker meaning. Christ’s death was indeed for the good of his people, but it was for their good precisely because he stood in their place and bore what was due to them.

His bearing of sin was therefore not merely an act of sympathy or a declaration of love. Christ bore the punishment, curse, and wrath that belonged to the sins of those whom he represented.

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.”

1 Pet. 2:24

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.”

Gal. 3:13

Owen then presses the consequence. If Christ died in the place of every person without exception, did he stand in the place of those who were already under final condemnation before his crucifixion? And if he bore the sins of all, how can any of those same people still bear their sins eternally?

A surety who has fully answered an obligation does not leave the original debtor to pay it again. To claim that Christ suffered in a person’s place, yet that person must still suffer eternally for the same sins, would empty substitution of its meaning.

Owen concludes that the claim that Christ died equally for all people ultimately undermines the historic Christian understanding of his death. Christ died as surety and substitute, bearing the punishment of those whom he represented, so that they might be delivered.

Chapter 11

The Final General Argument

Part One: The Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent

Owen's final general argument draws from particular passages of Scripture that, in his view, clearly distinguish the people of Christ from his enemies.

He begins with the first promise concerning Christ:

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Gen. 3:15

Owen understands the seed of the woman to include Christ as the head and his elect people as his body. The seed of the serpent includes the devil and those who remain in unbelief and enmity against Christ.

The promise establishes opposition between these two seeds. Christ and his people belong to one kingdom; the serpent and his seed belong to another. The serpent's head is crushed through Christ and in those united to him.

The New Testament describes unbelieving enemies of Christ in this way:

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

John 8:44

"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning."

1 John 3:8

From this distinction Owen argues that Christ died only for those whom the Father promised to give him. Yet, in the first promise of the gospel, Christ is not promised to the seed of the serpent as their Redeemer. Rather, enmity is declared between them and the seed of the woman.

Therefore, Owen concludes, the seed of the woman did not die for the seed of the serpent. Christ did not die for those who remain

finally his enemies in the same sense in which he died for his own people.

Owen then turns to Christ's words at the final judgment:

"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Matt. 7:23

Christ says that he knows his own sheep and lays down his life for them:

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

And I lay down my life for the sheep."

John 10:14-15

Owen's question is direct: how could Christ say to some, "I never knew you," if he had purchased them with his precious blood in the same saving sense in which he purchased his sheep? Those whom Christ buys belong to him; it would be strange, Owen argues, for him to deny ever knowing those for whom he had given himself.

This distinction between Christ's sheep and those who remain strangers to him supports Owen's conclusion that the saving purpose of Christ's death is particular and effectual.

Part Two: Christ's Sheep and the Gift of the Father

Owen next considers those from whom God hides the gospel and its saving power.

"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Matt. 11:25-26

Owen asks why the Father would send his Son to die for the redemption of people whom, according to his sovereign good pleasure, he had determined would remain strangers to the gospel and never receive its saving revelation. This does not, in Owen's view, fit with the claim that Christ died for every person equally.

He returns again to Christ's teaching about the sheep.

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”

John 10:11

Christ distinguishes some from his sheep:

“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”

John 10:26

The sheep are not simply those who have already believed. They include those whom the Father has given to Christ and who will later be brought to faith.

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.”

John 10:16

Owen argues that Christ lays down his life for the sheep as sheep. Therefore, his death is directed to them, not equally to sheep and goats. As the Shepherd, Christ gives his life for the flock entrusted to him by the Father.

“My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all.”

John 10:29

Those whom the Father gives to Christ certainly come to him and receive eternal life.

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.”

John 6:37

“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.”

John 10:28

Owen then appeals to Romans 8, where Paul comforts believers with the certainty of God's love.

“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

Rom. 8:32

Paul's argument is that the Father's giving of his Son guarantees every other saving blessing for the same people. If God gave Christ for a person, he will also freely give that person all things necessary for salvation—faith, grace, justification, and glory.

The people in view are identified as God's elect:

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God

that justifieth.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

Rom. 8:33-34

Owen draws two conclusions. First, Christ’s death certainly frees those for whom he died from condemnation. Second, Christ’s death and intercession concern the same people: he intercedes for those for whom he died, and his intercession saves them completely.

Therefore, Owen concludes, the death of Christ and its saving benefits belong particularly to God’s elect.

Part Three: Redemption, Intercession, and the Church

Owen concludes his final argument with several further passages that connect Christ’s death to its saving effects.

First, redemption through Christ’s blood includes the forgiveness of sins.

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”

Eph. 1:7

If Christ’s blood were shed for every person equally, Owen argues, then every person would have this redemption and forgiveness. But Scripture calls those whose sins are forgiven blessed, and that blessing does not belong to all without exception.

Second, Christ’s being made sin for his people is inseparably connected with their being made righteous in him.

“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.”

2 Cor. 5:21

Those for whom Christ was made sin are those who are made the righteousness of God in him. Therefore, Owen argues, Christ was not made sin in the same saving sense for people who remain without that righteousness.

Third, Christ’s intercession is as particular as his self-offering.

“I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”

John 17:9

“And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”

John 17:19

Christ sets himself apart as an offering for those given to him by the Father. Owen sees no basis for extending the saving purpose of his death beyond the people for whom he prays and intercedes.

Finally, Christ’s death is the expression of his special love for his church.

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”

Eph. 5:25

The church is Christ’s bride. Owen argues that the comparison requires a particular and covenantal love: as a husband’s marital love is directed to his wife, so Christ loved the church and gave himself for her.

Owen therefore brings Book III to its conclusion. Christ’s death is presented throughout Scripture as satisfaction, ransom, reconciliation, substitution, merit, redemption, and the expression of his love for his sheep, his people, and his church. These blessings are effectual and belong to those whom the Father gave to the Son.

Glossary of Theological Terms

Better Testament

The “better testament” of Hebrews 7:22: the new covenant established through Christ, whose promises, priesthood, and sacrifice are greater than those of the old covenant.

Chastisement of Our Peace

The punishment Christ bore so that his people might have peace with God. The phrase comes from Isaiah 53:5 and expresses the substitutionary character of Christ’s suffering.

Dead Works

Works that cannot give spiritual life or cleanse the conscience before God. The term may refer especially to sinful deeds, but also to religious actions performed without true faith and spiritual life.

Intercession

Christ’s ongoing priestly work of appearing before the Father and pleading for his people on the basis of his finished sacrifice. Owen treats Christ’s intercession as effectual and inseparable from his oblation.

Israel

In its ordinary biblical sense, the people descended from Jacob. In Owen’s typological arguments, Israel may also foreshadow or represent the people of God redeemed by Christ.

Mount Zion

Originally the hill and city associated with Jerusalem and David’s kingdom. In Scripture it can also refer to the heavenly Jerusalem, the dwelling place of God, and the gathered people of God.

Oblation

An offering made to God. When used of Christ, it refers especially to his offering of himself as the sacrifice for sin.

Passion

The sufferings of Christ, especially his suffering and death from Gethsemane to the cross.

Propitiation

A sacrifice that deals with sin and turns away the righteous wrath of God, establishing peace between God and his people. Christ is the propitiation for the sins of those for whom he died.

Ratification

The confirming or establishing of a covenant or testament. In relation to the new covenant, it refers to its being secured through the death and blood of Christ.

Reconciliation

The restoration of peace between God and sinners. It includes the removal of God's wrath against sin and the bringing of sinners from enmity into peace, faith, and obedience toward God.

Redemption

Deliverance obtained by payment of a price or ransom. Christ redeems his people through his blood, delivering them from sin, guilt, condemnation, and bondage.

Satisfaction

The full answering of the demands of God's justice for sin. Owen teaches that Christ, as the substitute and surety of his people, bore the punishment their sins deserved and thereby satisfied divine justice.

Sanctification

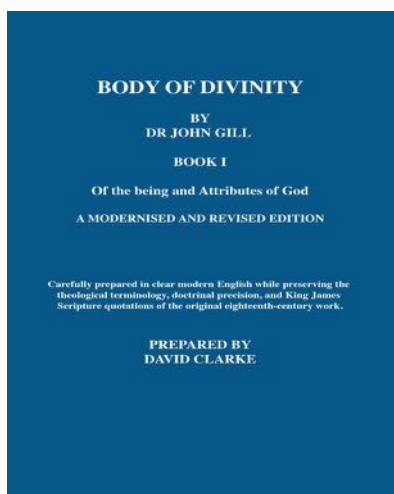
The work by which God sets his people apart for himself and progressively makes them holy. It is both a benefit purchased by Christ and applied by the Holy Spirit.

Surety

One who undertakes another person's obligation and answers for it in his place. Christ is the surety of the better testament, bearing the debt and punishment due to his people.

FURTHER PUBLICATIONS

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY BOOK I



A Body of Divinity by John Gill stands as one of the most substantial theological works produced within the Particular Baptist and Reformed tradition. Written with remarkable depth, reverence, and scriptural precision, Gill systematically unfolds the great doctrines of the Christian faith in a manner both intellectually rigorous and spiritually edifying.

In Book I, Gill begins with the doctrine of God Himself — His being, attributes, decrees, and eternal counsels. With careful reasoning grounded firmly upon Scripture, he presents the majesty, wisdom, sovereignty, holiness, and eternal purposes of God while defending the historic doctrines of grace against human speculation and theological error.

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Edited by David Clarke.

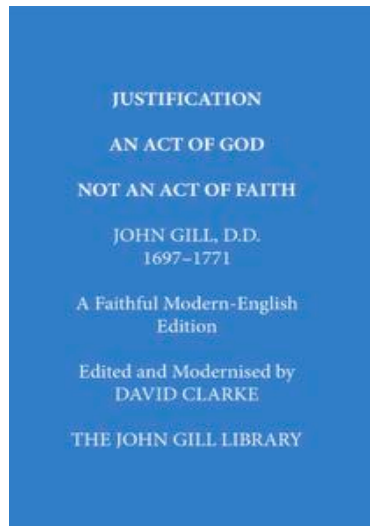
David Clarke is a Christian editor, writer, and publisher specialising in historic Reformed and Particular Baptist theology. He has spent many years preserving, editing, and republishing doctrinal and theological works for modern readers while retaining their original theological integrity and reverent style.

This edition of *A Body of Divinity* by John Gill has been carefully reformatted and edited for readability, structure, and print presentation while preserving Gill's doctrinal terminology and theological precision.

David Clarke is also the editor and author of several Christian and theological publications relating to sovereign grace, church history, Christian experience, and Reformed doctrine.

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JUSTIFICATION AN ACT OF GOD, NOT FAITH



John Gill

In this clear modern-English edition, John Gill explains and defends the biblical doctrine of justification as the free and sovereign act of God, founded wholly upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Gill shows that sinners are not justified by personal works, religious sincerity, or faith as a meritorious act. Rather, faith receives

and rests in the perfect righteousness Christ accomplished for his people through his obedience, death, and resurrection.

With Scripture quotations retained in the King James Version, this unabridged edition makes one of Gill's most important theological works accessible to modern readers while preserving his original argument and Reformed conviction.

John Gill, D.D. (1697–1771), was an English Baptist pastor, biblical scholar, and theologian. He served for more than fifty years as pastor of the Baptist church at Horsleydown, Southwark, London.

Gill was one of the foremost exponents of Particular Baptist and Reformed theology. His major works include *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, *A Body of Practical Divinity*, *The Cause of God and Truth*, and his *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*.

His writing is distinguished by close biblical argument, a strong defence of sovereign grace, and careful treatment of the doctrines of election, redemption, justification, and the covenant of grace.

David Clarke is the editor and moderniser of this faithful modern-English edition. His work seeks to make classic theological writing accessible to contemporary readers without abridging its argument, altering its doctrine, or replacing its Scripture references.

He is the founder of Trojan Horse International and the editor of modern editions within The John Gill Library, including *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity*. His publishing work is dedicated to preserving and introducing the doctrinal writings of John Gill and other historic Christian authors for pastors, students, and serious readers.

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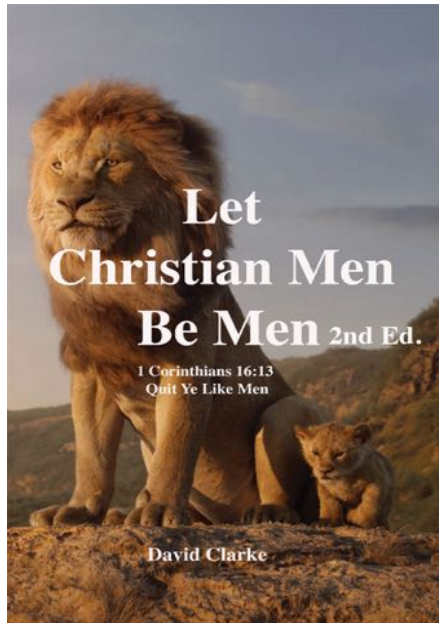
A Body of Doctrinal Divinity — John Gill

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The Bondage of the Will — Martin Luther, modern-English edition edited by David Clarke

LET CHRISTIAN MEN BE MEN



David Clarke

Originally published as *The Bierton Crisis* (1984), this deeply personal and theological account traces the journey of David Clarke—minister, church secretary, and committed member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church, a historic Gospel Standard cause founded in 1832.

This book documents a significant crisis that shook the foundation of the Bierton Church in 1984. As doctrinal errors and questionable practices crept into the fellowship, David stood firm in proclaiming the doctrines of grace—particularly Particular Redemption—and affirmed that the gospel of Christ, not the Law of Moses, is the believer's rule of life. His stance led to a withdrawal of fellowship, yet the church never terminated his membership, desiring his return.

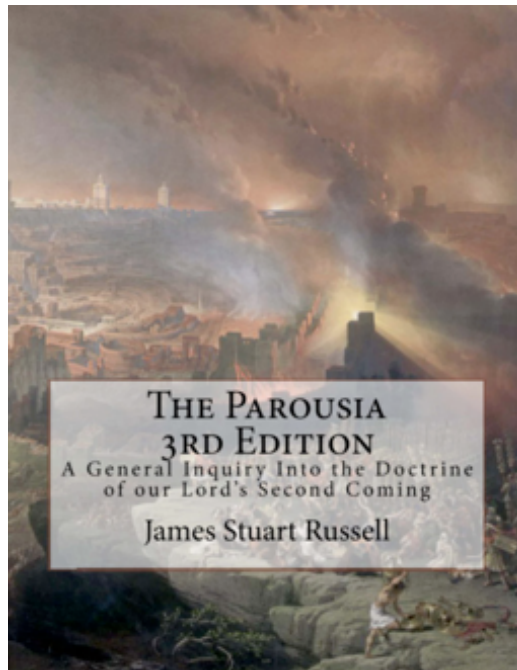
David's testimony not only exposes the theological and ecclesiastical struggles within the church but also chronicles the unexpected closure of the Bierton chapel in 2002, while he was engaged in gospel mission work in the Philippines. Upon returning to the UK, he discovered that a new, unelected group of trustees had taken control of the chapel, denied his rightful membership, and

ultimately sold the historic building as a domestic property in 2006.

This book is both a warning and a call: a warning against doctrinal compromise and a call for ministers and believers to ground their faith and practice in Scripture alone—not tradition, not personal opinion, and not the fear of man.

Let Christian Men Be Men is an appeal to return to biblical conviction, gospel clarity, and godly courage—so that men may truly stand, teach, and live as Christ’s ambassadors in an age of confusion.

[THE PAROUSIA 3RD EDITION](#)



A General enquiry into The Second Coming Of Our Lord

Authored by James Stuart Russell, Preface by Ed Stevens.

Foreword By Ed Stevens

Eschatology matters because everything crucial to Christianity is at risk. The Deity of Christ, the integrity of the apostles and prophets, and the inspiration of the New Testament is at stake. Jesus and the NT writers repeatedly make time-restricted predictions about His return and the other end time events. They do not merely suggest that Christ’s Parousia might occur in their lifetime, they

unequivocally affirm it.

Liberals, skeptics, and Jewish/Islamic critics use those “time statements” to discredit Jesus and the New Testament. Inspired men cannot make mistakes. Since Jesus and the NT writers predicted Christ’s return to occur in their lifetime, and it supposedly didn’t happen, they assume Jesus and the NT writers were mistaken. Indeed, if we cannot trust their prophetic utterances, we cannot trust anything else they say. Christianity is totally discredited if those predictions failed to materialize exactly as they prophesied.

Theologians who study end-time prophecy consider Russell’s book a classic defense of the Preterist view. It is this book, more than any other during the past 125 years, which has moved so many toward Preterism.

Many in the Reformed faith (e.g., R. C. Sproul, Sr., David Chilton, Gary DeMar, Ken Gentry, Gary North, Jim Jordan, et al) credit Russell’s book as having a significant impact on their eschatological views. R. C. Sproul, Sr. says he looks favorably at Preterism because it is the only view of prophecy which effectively counters the liberal-skeptic-critic attack. He has written much to recommend Russell’s book and encourage the spread of Preterism, even though he does not go as far as Russell does. Sproul says: Russell’s work is valuable chiefly for his analysis of the timeframe references of New Testament prophecy and his understanding of the main reference to the parousia. ...Russell’s book has forced me to take the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem far more seriously than before, to open my eyes to the radical significance of this event in redemptive history. It vindicates the apostolic hope and prediction of our Lord’s close-at hand coming in judgment.... I can never read the New Testament again the same way I read it before reading The Parousia.

The Preterist view flourished in Germany and Britain. But America, still recovering from civil war, took little notice. In global terms, its impact is still marginal, but it has seen significant growth in the past ten years, and the Internet is one of the big factors stimulating that.

What the Gutenberg printing press did for the Protestant Reformation, the Internet did for the Preterist reformation.

This book is destined to remain a Preterist classic.

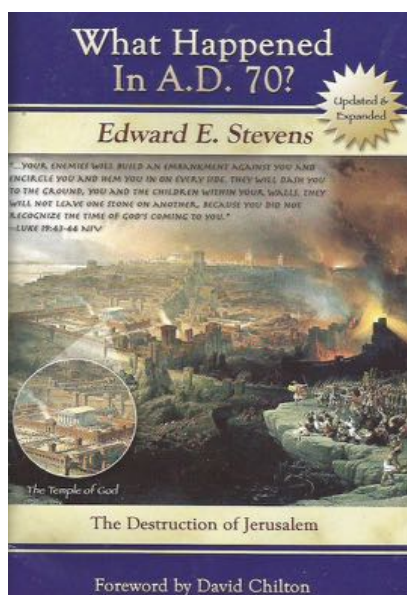
Russell leaves no excuses for Futurism. His survey of all the “Parousia” (second coming) references is a tour de force in Preterist exegesis. This book was the first wave of what has become a whole storm of books defending the AD 70 fulfillment of end-time prophecy.

Edward E. Stevens

Bradford, Pennsylvania

July, 2003

WHAT HAPPENED IN A.D. 70



Edward E. Stevens

This book introduces a view of Bible prophecy which many have found extremely helpful in their Bible study. It explains the end time riddles which have always bothered students of Bible prophecy. It is a **consistent view** which makes the book of Revelation much easier to understand. It establishes when the New Testament canon of scripture was completed, demolishes the liberal attack on the inspiration of the New Testament, and is more **conservative** on most other issues than traditional views. And there is **no compromise** of any essential Biblical doctrine of the Christian faith.

The key to understand any passage of scripture has always been a good grasp of the historical setting in which it was originally written (**audience relevance**). Two thousand years from now our history, culture, politics and language will have changed dramatically. Imagine someone then having to learn the ancient language of “American English” to read our USA newspapers! If they saw one of our political cartoons with a donkey and elephant, what would they think? How would they go about understanding it? Not only would they have to study the language, but also our culture, history, politics and economics. The same applies to Bible study. If we are really going to understand what all the “donkeys and elephants” (beasts, harlots, dragons, etc.) Symbolize in the book of Revelation, we will have to seriously and carefully study the language, history, culture and politics of the First Century. Of course, the truths essential for salvation are couched in simple language that everyone can grasp. But there are numerous scriptures in the Bible which are “hard to understand” (cf. 2 Pet 3:16), and Bible prophecy is one of those things which must be approached with much more focus on the original historical and cultural context (audience relevance)

One of the main purposes of this book is to provide a closer look at the historical framework behind the New Testament. Many have found it helpful to lay aside (at least temporarily) the legion of speculative opinions about the book of Revelation, and look at a more historical alternative, which is that **the book of Revelation was written to the first century church and had primary relevance to them**. It warned of events that were about to happen in their lifetime, and prepared them for the tribulation and other events associated with the End of the Jewish Age.

Atheists, skeptics, Jew, Muslims, and liberal critics of the bible use the supposed failure of those end times events to occur in the First Century to undermine the integrity of Christ and the inspired NT writings.

Non-Christian Jews laugh at this supposed non-occurrence, and use it as evidence that Jesus is not the Messiah. Their forefathers in the flesh rejected Jesus in His first coming because He did not fulfill the Old Testament prophecies in the materialistic and nationalistic way that they were expecting, even though Jesus told them that His

Kingdom was not of this world, and that it would be within them instead. Yet it seems that many futurists today are expecting that same kind of materialistic and nationalistic kingdom to arrive at a future return of Christ. Are they making the same mistake about the Second Coming that the Jews made about His first coming? Jesus repeatedly said His Kingdom is “not of this world” and that it would “not come with observation.” It is a spiritual entity, and it has arrived. We live in it. Both futurist Christians and non-Christian Jews need to realize this.

Christians are finally beginning to seek alternatives to the fatally flawed **futurist** interpretation. This book introduces the Preterist view.

“Preterist” simply means past in fulfillment. It means that Christ has already fulfilled His promise to return and consummate redemption in Himself and His ongoing spiritual kingdom (the church). We should be like the noble-minded Bereans and “search the scriptures daily to see whether these things are true” You might want to have your Bible open alongside as you read.

Edward E. Stevens

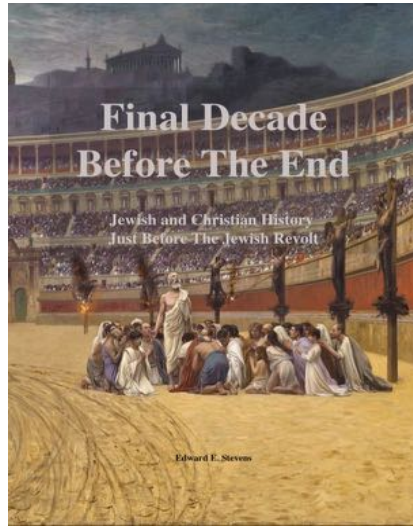
INTERNATIONAL PRETERIST ASSOCIATION

<https://www.preterist.org/>

Bradford, Pennsylvania

April 17, 2010

FINAL DECADE BEFORE THE END



Edward E. Stevens

Ever since the booklet, **What Happened In AD 70?** Was published in 1980, there have been constant requests for more detailed information about the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish, Roman, and Christian history associated with it. Over the years since then I have studied Josephus, Yosippon, Hegesippus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Eusebius, the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, Pseudepigrapha, Church Fathers, Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish/Christian writings, trying to determine exactly what happened, when it happened, and the effect it had upon the Church.

Then in 2002, after I began to promote J. S. Russell's view of a literal rapture, the demand for historical documentation of the fulfillment of all eschatological events dramatically increased. That forced me to dig much deeper. So in 2007 I put together a 21-page chronology of first century events. Two years later in 2009, we published a more substantial 73-page manuscript entitled, *First Century Events in Chronological Order*. That helped fill the void, but it did not go far enough. It only increased the appetite for a more detailed and documented historical reconstruction of first century events.

The book of Acts does not give a lot of details about the other Roman and Jewish events that were happening while Paul was on his

various missionary journeys. For those events, we have to go to the other contemporary Jewish and Roman historians such as Josephus and Tacitus. The closer we get to AD 70, the more important all of those Jewish and Roman events become. They form an important backdrop behind the Christian events, and show how all the predictions made by Jesus were literally fulfilled. Every High Priest and Zealot leader that we encounter from AD 52 onwards are directly connected with the events of the Last Days. Things are heating up, not only for the Christians, but also for the Jews and the Romans.

Paul on his missionary journeys was clearly following a plan which was providentially arranged for him by Christ: (1) to plant new churches among all nations and not just Jews, (2) appoint elders and deacons in every church (Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 4:17), (3) write inspired epistles to guide them, (4) instruct his fellow workers to “teach these things to faithful men who would be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2), and (5) establish the Gentiles in the Church and make them one united body with the Jews (Eph 4). Everywhere Paul went, he followed this pattern. We see this clearly as we study the historical narrative in Acts and Paul’s other epistles that were written during this time. These are essential patterns that the apostles evidently bound upon both Gentile and Jewish Christians, and which were intended to be the pattern for all future generations of the eternal Church (Eph 3:21; 2Tim 2:2).

We begin our study by looking at the most likely dates for Matthew (AD 31-38) and Mark (AD 38- 44), and then proceed to the first three epistles of Paul (Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians), which were written on his second missionary journey (AD 51-53). Including these five books in our study allows us to date all twenty-seven books of our New Testament, and show how the NT canon was formed and completed before the outbreak of the Jewish War in AD 66. The study of New Testament canonization in itself is a good reason for reading this work, without even looking at the historical fulfillment of all of the end time prophecies that we document here.

After looking at the dates for those first five books, we then move on into the third missionary journey of Apostle Paul which began in AD 54. It was during this final dozen years (from AD 54 until AD 66) when the birth pangs and signs of the end started increasing in both

intensity and frequency, along with a quickening pace of NT books being written. We show how 19 of our 27 NT books (70 percent) were written during those last five years just before the Neronian persecution (AD 60-64). The Great Commission was finished, and the rest of the end time events predicted in the Olivet Discourse were fulfilled during that time of “tribulation” upon the church and the “days of vengeance” upon the unbelieving Jews (Luke 21:22).

Edward E. Stevens

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