
THE BLUE BANNER

Volume 12, Issue 2

For Christ's Crown & Covenant

April/June 2003

In this Issue.

CONTENTS

- 1 *In this Issue*
- 2 *Concerning the extent of the merit of Christ's death; is it a satisfaction for all men? by James Durham.*
- 27 *WSC Cards*
- 28 *The Basis For A Confession Of Faith Among Constitutional Presbyterian Churches, by Richard Bacon.*
- 35 *33 Sermons on First Peter by Richard Bacon*
- 35 *Sermons on Song of Solomon*
- 35 *Lectures on WLC 1-4*
- 35 *More Tapes and CDs*
- 36 *Order Form. About The Blue Banner & FPCR.*

All material in this issue Copyright © 2003 by *The Blue Banner*, a ministry of First Presbyterian Church Rowlett, unless otherwise noted. Session: Pastor Richard Bacon. Ruling Elders: Rev. Todd Ruddell, David Seekamp, Carl Betsch, Thomas Allie. *The Blue Banner* Editor: Christopher Coldwell. *The Blue Banner* is supported by gifts. The cost of an annual subscription is \$15.00 per year. If you are able, please consider giving a gift of \$30.00 to support your subscription and one other.

Concerning the extent of the merit of Christ's death; is it a satisfaction for all men? by James Durham ❀ The Basis For A Confession Of Faith Among Constitutional Presbyterian Churches, by Richard Bacon.

by Richard Bacon



The first article in this issue of *The Blue Banner* is, in a sense, a continuation of the excurses in James Durham's Commentary on the book of Revelation. The previous installments (*The Blue Banner* Vol. XII, no. 1 (January-March 2003), pp. 2-21) answered the relationship between faith and works in the Covenant of Grace and spoke to the nature of Christ's death. As Durham stated in the previous issue, "When men ... could give no price, our Lord Jesus did actually undertake, and accordingly did pay; therefore it is a freedom that was bought, and he is a redeemer, because he did buy it, and satisfy for it;" In the installment (a separate excursus in his commentary) in this issue, Durham directly answered the question of the extent of Christ's redemption. Durham demonstrated, "it was neither intended by the Son, nor accepted by God, as a satisfaction for all, but ... for such as he had chosen," Interestingly, Durham also spoke of the relationship between Christ's atonement and what is today called "common grace" (Durham referred to it as "common mercy").

The second article contains an early form of the research for my Th.D. dissertation for Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. The "chapter" or section in this issue addresses the first stage of explaining how a church that believes *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone – or the sufficiency of Scripture for all of life and godliness) could rightly have an official church confession comprised of the uninspired works of men. The section in this issue does not deal directly with the subject of "subscription," but does lead up to it – and Lord willing, future issues of *The Blue Banner* will take up that subject as well. This installment touches upon the issue only in a rudimentary way. ❀



Concerning the extent of the merit of Christ's death; is it a satisfaction for all men?

This text is edited from an excurses entitled *Concerning the extent of the merit of Christ's death; or, if it may be accounted a satisfaction for all men*, appended at Lecture II on Revelation chapter five in "A Complete Commentary upon the Book of the Revelation," by James Durham.

By James Durham



he second doctrine that we propose from these words,¹ is that though the death and sufferings of Christ be properly a satisfaction to the justice of God for sin; yet is not this intended by Christ, nor accepted of by God, as a price and satisfaction for the sins of all men, and for the procuring of redemption to them, but only for some peculiarly chosen of God, and by his decree of election separated from others.

It is true that Christ's death, being considered abstractly and materially in itself, in respect of the person who died, and in respect of the manner of his performing this obedience with so much cheerfulness, reverence, etc. may be, and by divines is said to be of an infinite value; so that if it had been so intended and transacted in the covenant of redemption, it might have been in the former respects accounted and accepted as a price for many more; yea, for all: because, such suffering, performed by such a person, is equivalent unto, and in respect of his excellency who suffers, beyond the eternal sufferings of all mere creatures. But Christ's death, being considered formally as a price and satisfaction, with respect to the transaction that is made in the covenant of redemption, it must be qualified and understood with respect to the Lord's proposing of the terms, the Mediator's condescending thereto,

and his intention in undertaking and executing the same; as also with respect to the Lord's accepting of the same as such. Therefore it is not to be enquired here, what Christ's death is in itself abstractly? nor what it might have been, if the sovereign Lord had so thought good? But it is to be enquired, if the Lord's purpose in giving of his Son to die, and the Son's in obeying the same, was to have that death and these sufferings laid down as a price and satisfaction for all? We say, that in that respect, it was neither intended by the Son, nor accepted by God, as a satisfaction for all, but allenary [*solely*] for such as he had chosen, and by his purpose had separated to himself out of all kindreds, tongues, and nations: which, by several arguments, may be strongly concluded from this place.

Argument 1. Christ's death and sufferings were not intended as a price and satisfaction to buy or redeem any but such as were proposed by God to the Mediator in the covenant of redemption to be redeemed by him. But all and every one were not so proposed. Therefore Christ's death and sufferings were not intended as a price and satisfaction to redeem all and every one. The major of this argument does not only appear, at the first, to be very reasonable, but does necessarily flow even from the emphasis of this word redeeming: which does suppose, (1) that man, being under a kindly relation to God, did, by sin, fall from the same. (2) It supposes, that man, by sin, is made obnoxious to God's curse, and also, that he is unable to extricate or expedite himself therefrom. (3) It supposes the Lord's condescending to think of the redeeming of some from the curse; and for that end, to propose and accept of such a satisfaction, for such persons, and on such terms, as himself should propose, or had proposed: and therefore any redemption does first presuppose the Lord's condescending to admit of such a bargain in the general; and it

¹ Ed. See Revelation 5:8-14. This article comes from an excurses appended at Lecture 2 on Revelation 5 in *A Complete Commentary upon the Book of the Revelation*, by James Durham. It is the second of two Durham takes up from the text (the first appeared in the previous issue of *The Blue Banner*, pp. 18-21, and was incorrectly identified as being appended to the third lecture on chapter 3). The first concerned the nature of the merit of Christ's death, and briefly defended the doctrine, *that Christ's death and sufferings are properly a price and satisfaction for sin, and were purposely offered unto the justice of God as such*. This second excurses concerns the extent of the merit of Christ's death. The text has been edited against both the 1788 and the 1799 editions.



being an act of his sovereignty, there can be no other rule but his good pleasure, whereby either the persons to be redeemed, or the terms upon which, or the time when, such a satisfaction is to be made for such persons, etc. are to be regulated: we must therefore look to his proposing of the same, as the foundation whereby all that follows is to be squared. For this phrase redeeming, being borrowed from the manner of men, holds forth the Lord upon the one side as the party offended, making offer to accept of such a satisfaction for such offenders; and on the other side, it represents the Mediator as Buyer and Redeemer, accepting of such an offer in all the circumstances thereof, viz. to engage to be a Redeemer to such and such persons, to consent to lay down such and such satisfaction and price for their redemption, and to perform the same in the time and manner condescended upon by the Lord. And it is the conceiving of this great transaction of the elect's redemption under this form, viz. as having such an offer upon the one side, and such an acceptation upon the other, that makes it get the name of a covenant in scripture; because so it is represented as a mutual bargain, in the manner as bargains use to be [commonly are] transacted amongst men: which yet is done for the helping of us to understand this mystery, and is not beyond this scope to be extended. From all which it appears that the Father's proposal, to say so, or his intention and purpose, most regulate this whole business of redemption; and therefore must the extent of Christ's death, as it is a satisfaction, be understood according to the same. Hence, the Lord Christ does so frequently assert, *that he came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work, and to give eternal life to as many as God hath given to him*, and such like. Whereby it is evident that the Lord has particularly ordered the work of redemption according to his good pleasure, in the respects formerly mentioned; and that the Mediator's death and sufferings are to be looked upon as regulated and qualified in respect of their effects, according to what has been proposed to him.

This first proposition, we suppose, is now clear, and may be yet further confirmed. For it cannot be said that God intended to have any redeemed, but these whom he did propose to the Mediator. Again, it cannot be said, that any were by him intended to be redeemed, whom he did not thus propose in the covenant of redemption, and give unto the Mediator for that end. And, in the last place, it must be said, that all whom he did propose in that bargain of redemption, were designed by him actually to be redeemed:

otherwise many absurd conclusions (reflecting upon the Lord's serious manner of proceeding in that business, and upon his wise manner of contriving the same, as also upon his effectual way of bringing about what he has intended) will follow; which without horror cannot be imagined. Therefore it will follow that the Son's actual bearing the iniquities of such as are redeemed, and the Father's proposing of such and such to him for that end, must be of equal extent.

Now as to the minor proposition of the argument, it is certain, that all and every one were not proposed (much less all indifferently) by the Lord JEHOVAH to the Mediator, to be bought or redeemed by him; and may be made to appear thus:

1. Because the Lord did never intend that all should be glorified, and actually partake of redemption, he having decreed the glorifying of his justice on some, as the manifesting of his mercy upon others; and therefore it cannot be said that the Lord did intend such to be redeemed by the Son, or that he did, for that end, propose them to him.

If it be said, that though he did not intend their salvation, as he did intend the salvation and redemption of the elect, yet may it be said, that he did intend their redemption conditionally, and so propose them to the Mediator to be redeemed on these terms, that is, if they should believe.

Ans. Of this we may afterwards speak a word; yet here we say: (1) That this does attribute to the only wise God a most derogating intention to his own glory: for it cannot be denied but he foreknew the event, and that such a conditional intention would not be sufficient to [carry] through the same: and to say, that he intended what he knew would never come to pass, or to apply such means as he knew could not be effectual to the end, cannot but with horror be thought upon.

(2) We say, that the scripture only mentions one kind of proposing and giving to Christ, which is to be given absolutely to him to be redeemed; and the opposition between this giving of some to Christ, and the not giving of others, is not as it were between two givings of divers kinds, viz. one conditional, and another absolute, but it is such an opposition as is between giving and not giving, or passing by; and therefore that former twofold giving, or proposing to Christ, cannot be admitted.

(3) We say, if there be such a conditional proposing of the reprobate to Christ to be redeemed, it will not be easy to conceive the terms of the covenant; for there is but one covenant



mentioned, wherein, to say so, the bargain with Mediator is concluded. This will infer two, viz. one absolute in reference to the elect; another conditional in reference to the reprobate. Again, it will be difficult to determine whether Christ were to pay so much for them as for the elect; for it seems not just that he should pay as much for these who are but conditionally redeemed (and for whom he does not purchase the condition, and whom he has not intended to make partakers of the benefits) as for these who are absolutely redeemed, to whom the condition is purchased, and for whom the benefits are intended. On the other side it will be difficult to say, that a less price is required for this conditional redemption; because so it were no redemption at all. For if the redemption must be at such a price, then what is less cannot procure the same. Further, there is but one covenant of redemption mentioned in scripture; and the elect, or these who were given to Christ and proposed to him, are still mentioned as the object about which the bargain is transacted: we cannot therefore think of a conditional proposal, except we can see a distinct bargain and covenant concerning the same; which yet will be no covenant of redemption. But we may touch this afterward.

2. That all were not proposed to Christ, or given to him, will thus appear; because by these titles, viz. *these that thou hast given me*, etc. such are contradistinguished from others, as from these who are not given to Christ. Neither can there be any other reason why these are designed by such a name, but that in God's purpose they were designed peculiarly to be redeemed, and accordingly were committed to the Mediator, and undertaken for by him in the covenant of redemption. Now, it cannot be said that any other were proposed by God to the Mediator, but such as were thus given to him; and seeing it is clear, that all were not thus given to him (for such are expressly distinguished from the passed-by world, John 17:6, 9); therefore all cannot be said to be proposed by God to the Mediator; and so consequently (which is the conclusion of the main argument) his sufferings and death cannot be said to be intended as a price and satisfaction for the redeeming of all and every one; nor, without the intention of the blessed parties contracting, can they be said to be a price for any. For, the price must needs relate to what is proposed to be redeemed or bought, this being the series, the Mediator did redeem these for whom he engaged, and whose debt he did undertake. Again, he did undertake for these, and for these only, who are proposed and given by the Lord to him for that end; but these were not all men, but some few

that were peculiarly given to him, as separated from others. Therefore from the first to the last it will follow, that not all men but some few, peculiarly chosen by God and given to Christ, were redeemed by his death, and have these sufferings, intended by the Mediator, and accepted of by the Lord JEHOVAH, as a price and satisfaction for their sins.

Argument 2. It may be thus concluded: If these that are redeemed by Christ's blood, be not all of every tongue, kindred, and nation, but some out of every tongue, kindred, and nation, etc; then all are not redeemed; for these are opposite in this respect, viz. *a whole nation*, or, *every person of a nation*, and *some of them only*. But the redeemed are not all of every nation etc; but *some out of all tongues, kindreds and nations*, etc, as was cleared (verse 9). Therefore all are not redeemed. And what can be the reason of this expression here: *Thou hast redeemed us out of every tongue, kindred*, etc, if it be not to distinguish these few redeemed ones of these nations, from the great number of the unredeemed in the same; and thereby to set out the peculiarity of God's love to them whom he redeems, who has designed this benefit to them, when he has passed by others to whom he was no less obliged, or rather to whom he is no more disobliged in respect of any thing in men? Also, by this expression, there is a clear difference put between the song of the redeemed (which is grounded upon Christ's death) and the song of a visible church, which does arise from a visible church-relation. For (11:17-18, etc.), the whole nations become the Lord's in that respect, and they praise him upon that ground; but the song of the redeemed is of *some out of every tongue, kindred, and nation*, etc, which expressly insinuates that redemption by Christ's blood is not of equal extent with the visible church, but is peculiar to the elect therein: and therefore much less can it be of equal extent with the whole world.

[Argument 3] If this redemption of Christ's, and his laying down of his life for any, be the evidence of his most special and peculiar love, then it cannot be extended to all; because his peculiar love does not extend itself to all indifferently. For, if so, then it would not be peculiar but common; and therefore the effect thereof cannot be of more general extent. But the former is clear in this place, viz. that redemption by Christ's death is a fruit and evidence of his most peculiar love. Therefore, etc. That this is a special and peculiar favor, appears (1) from their being so affected in this song as having this mercy peculiarly to praise him for, viz. that he had *redeemed them by his blood*, which others had not. And (2) that they



mention this as a favor, beyond which there cannot be a greater, and which does singularly engage them to him beyond all other favours that have been bestowed upon them. (3) The very expressions of their song bear forth their sense of the peculiarness of this mercy, as *thou hast redeemed us out of every tongue, kindred, and nation*, that shows his taking notice of them singularly beyond others; and that he did this by his blood, shows this to be an expressing of his love to them in a most wonderful and singular manner. (4) If this mercy were not peculiar to them, then it might be said that one person were no more obliged to praise for this redemption, and to be affected therewith, than another; and how inconsistent that will be with the scope in this place, and with the present frame and conviction of these that praise, may be easily discerned, seeing their scope is to hold out themselves to be peculiarly obliged to be thankful for this mercy beyond all others. (5) Lastly, that this is a peculiar mercy, even the greatest that our Lord Jesus does bestow upon any, appears from other scriptures, as: John 15:13. *Greater love hath no man than this, to lay down his life for his friend*, etc. And Rom. 5:8-10. *God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*, etc. All which show, that the love of God cannot more shine to one in any thing than in this, that Christ has died for him, and therefore it cannot be intended for any but such as he does peculiarly love, and whom he has designed to be partakers of the most eminent and special effects thereof.

[Argument 4.] If all who are redeemed by Christ's blood be made *kings and priests unto God*, and be effectually called and made to *reign upon earth*, etc. and if the connection be certain between these, so that they who may claim to the one, may also claim to the other; then Christ's death is not a satisfaction for all, but for some. Because, in experience it is clear, that all are not made *kings and priests unto God*, etc. But the former is true, viz. all who are redeemed by Christ's blood, are made kings and priests, etc. Therefore, etc. The truth of this minor, or, of the certainty of the connection of being redeemed by Christ's death, and being made kings and priests to God, is clear in the text: for, all who say in the 9th verse. *Thou hast redeemed us by thy blood*, say in the 10th verse, *And hast made us kings and priests unto God*, etc; which expressly imports that the one part of the song is of equal extent with the other. And if it were not so, then it might be divided, and some might say, *Thou hast redeemed us, but we are not made kings and priests unto God*; which would look most unlike the language of a

redeemed sinner, and weaken exceedingly the consolation of the redeemed, who could not be so comforted in Christ's laying down his life for them, as they are held forth to be in this song, if it were possible that all the parts thereof could be divided. Also, it would mar the beauty of the inconceivable grace, and peculiar love that shines in this ground of their praise, and no-way rouse the redeemed sinner to praise, because Christ had laid down his life for him, if it might be said, that *thou hast redeemed me by thy blood, yet am I not sure if I shall be made a king and a priest unto God*, etc.

The force of this argument may be conceived these two ways: 1. Thus: If Christ's death, as it is a satisfaction, has ever the justification and glorification of these for whom it is a satisfaction, following upon it, then Christ's death cannot be a satisfaction for all. But the former is true, viz. Christ's death has ever justification and salvation following upon it, to these for whom it is a satisfaction. Therefore, etc. That justification and salvation ever follow thereupon, appears: (1) From the text, these only, and all these who are redeemed by his blood, are also made kings and priests, and have also saving effects following thereupon, as was said. (2) It is clear from the nature of the covenant; for, if Christ's undertaking to satisfy for some, in whose name he did become surety, did make him, in justice, liable to their debt, and to the payment thereof, so as he could not be conceived to be the cautioner [*surety*] according to the terms of the covenant, but also he behooved to have the imputation of their sin actually following thereupon; so, on the other side, his satisfaction cannot but be equally effectual for the procuring of actual freedom to these whose room he sustained in the laying down of that satisfaction. Again, this effect, viz. the justification of these for whom he undertook, is, to speak so, the recompense and satisfaction which is by the Lord engaged for, and made sure to him for his sufferings, and the travail of his soul, according to that word (Isa. 53:11), *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied*.² And if it be so, then there must be a necessary connection between Christ's suffering in the stead of any, and their obtaining of justification: otherwise it might be said that the Mediator, for that part of the travail of his soul, did want [*lack*] the promised and engaged-for satisfaction. And as we cannot conceive but both sides of that covenant of redemption must be fulfilled, and the

² Ed. Durham discusses much of the same topic as this excurses in *Christ Crucified: The Marrow of the Gospel in 72 Sermons on Isaiah 53* (Dallas, TX: Naphtali Press, 2001).



Mediator cannot but be satisfied in his design; so we cannot but conceive the necessity of their justification and salvation, whose iniquities Christ has borne.

This is also further clear in the following words, viz. *by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities.* Where these three things are clear: (1) What it is that Christ accounts satisfaction for the travail of his soul; that is, *to have many justified.*

(2) What the ground is that procures this justification: that is, *his bearing of their iniquity.* For this is the reason of the former, many shall be justified, because Christ shall *pay for them and bear their sin.* And if this connection were not certain and peremptory between these two, then this consequence and reasoning would be utterly brangled [*confounded*] and made void, if it might be said that Christ did bear the iniquity of any, who yet should not be justified.

(3) It is clear also from that place, what these many are that shall be justified; viz. those whose iniquities Christ does bear; for, he shall justify many, because he shall bear their iniquities; where, the many that shall be justified in the first words. and these *whose iniquities Christ doth bear*, in the last words, are of equal extent; and this relative, *their iniquity*, does expressly relate to the many spoken of before. Which words do strongly confirm what is said, viz. that there is an inseparable connection between Christ's bearing the iniquity of any, and their obtaining of justification; for the prophet does not only make them of equal extent, but he does also draw the necessity and certainty of the justification and salvation of many, as a consequent from this antecedent, *That Christ hath borne their iniquities.* And is, in a word, this: Christ has borne the iniquity of many; therefore it cannot be but these many must be justified. Which reasoning, being the reasoning of the Holy Ghost, must be sure; and therefore none can be said to be redeemed, or to have their iniquities borne by Christ, but such as come actually to obtain justification.

(4) Lastly, the necessity of this connection between Christ's dying for any, and their obtaining of actual justification and salvation, may thus be made out: if the Lord bestow the greater benefit upon any, then the lesser cannot but be expected from him also; but the giving of his Son to death for any, is a greater mercy than actual justification and salvation: therefore he cannot but bestow the last on these upon whom he has bestowed the first. Both parts of the argument will be confirmed from Rom. 5:8-10 and

8:32. In the one place, the apostle reasons thus: *While we were yet sinners, God commended his love to us, in giving Christ to die for us: therefore having obtained such a mercy, we may much more look to be saved from wrath through him.* And to deny the consequent in the former argument, would enervate [*overturn*] this reasoning of the apostle. In the other place, it is *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?* where the apostle does not only show that all things do follow where Christ is bestowed; but also he does it in such a manner, as does show the absurdity and unreasonableness of thinking the contrary, viz. that it can be possible that God will bestow so excellent a gift as his Son to be delivered up for any, and yet withhold any good thing from such.

2. A second way, by which we may conceive the force of the former argument, is this, which also, is a new argument of itself: that which would weaken the redeemed's consolation, and enervate the grounds of their praise, contrary to the strain and scope of this song, ought not to be admitted in the doctrine of redemption; but to say, that all are redeemed by Christ's death, yet so, that the greater part of them shall never be justified, nor partake of life through him, etc. does exceedingly weaken the redeemed's consolation, and enervate the grounds of their praise, contrary to the scope of this song. Therefore, that doctrine of universal redemption is not to be admitted, as being derogatory to the solid consolation of the redeemed, whatever be pretended.

That it derogates to their consolation appeareth thus: If the justification, salvation, etc. of the redeemed be not necessarily and peremptorily knit unto Christ's laying down of his life for them, then were even their justification and salvation uncertain, and so none of them could heartily praise for the same, or comfort themselves therein; much less could all do this: both which are expressly contrary to the words and scope of this song. Again, if no redeemed person, believer, or child of God, can so comfort themselves, by drawing conclusions from this doctrine, *Christ hath died for all, yet, all shall not be saved*, as they may be comforted and have their hearts cheered to praise from this, *That Christ hath not redeemed all, nor hath died for them, yet all for whom he died, and whom he redeemed, shall be justified and saved*, then must the former doctrine be exceedingly derogatory to the people of God's consolation. But the former is true. Therefore, etc.

That this doctrine of such an universal redemption, does not yield such comfortable



conclusions to the believer as the other, will appear by comparing them together; for the great consolation of the believer is upon solid grounds to conclude an unchangeable interest in God; but the latter, and not the former, will yield this. For this is solid and comfortable reasoning: these that are redeemed are made *kings and priests to God, and shall reign with him*, etc. because there is an indissoluble and peremptory connection between these; but may one assume I am redeemed, therefore, etc. If this assumption be questioned, viz. whether I be redeemed or not? because redemption is not universal, then it may thus proceed: all these that are spiritually kings and priests, and being made subject to Christ, are freed from the dominion of their corruption, and admitted with boldness to offer themselves and their service to God by Christ Jesus, etc. these are redeemed, and shall certainly obtain salvation; but the conscience, upon self-examination, where there is ground for it, may assume it is so with me, therefore I am redeemed, and shall obtain salvation, etc. This is a comfortable and solid conclusion, and cannot fail where the promises are well grounded, because of the necessary connection that is between redemption, justification, sanctification, and salvation, so that one of them being evidenced, does infer all: and spiritually to reign in some measure over the world, and a body of death, and spiritually to perform worship unto God, etc. being infallible evidences of sanctification, and fruits of this redemption, they give good ground for a conscience to make application of the former general truth: whereas, on the contrary, if we will lose this connection, and say that all are redeemed, or Christ has died for them, and yet few will be saved, it cannot but ever leave the soul at an uncertainty under this most comfortless conclusion: although I be redeemed, yet I may perish; because many for whom Christ has died, are never actually freed from the wrath of God. And thereby the soul should be still left in a comfortless condition, which is most unlike the nature of this redemption which Christ has purchased, and most disagreeable to the consolation which is allowed to the redeemed by God, and wherein they comfort themselves in this song.

We conclude then, that it is more comfortable to a believer to reason from this universal, all *that are redeemed, and are kings and priests unto God, shall be saved*, where the consequent and antecedent are of equal extent; than to say *all are redeemed, and yet few or none shall or may be saved*. And this being the way of the Lord, it cannot but be most comfortable to his people; and

it is a vain thing for man to imagine by his carnal reasonings, to mold a more comfortable doctrine: for though, at first, it look more plausible-like to flesh, to say that all are redeemed, than to say but some; yet indeed it does not prove so. For even upon supposition that that ground were laid, no man could gather any solid consolation therefrom, but upon condition of his receiving of Christ, and resting upon him by faith: now faith in Christ being supposed [*supposed*], this ground, *few are redeemed, but all these who are redeemed shall be saved*, does yield more solid consolation than the former, because it carries with it a certainty of salvation to such: whereas the other ground, pretending to bear forth a possibility of salvation to all, or a salvability, does indeed make it certain to none.

If any shall say that this is true indeed, upon supposition that one be by faith in Christ; then it cannot be denied but so to conclude, is more comfortable: but supposing one not to be a believer, is it not then a comfortable doctrine to say, *that all are not redeemed?* etc. because it leaves this stumbling block before the person, that he knows not whether he ought to believe or not, because he knows not whether he be redeemed or not: and this thought may also follow him, if he be not redeemed can his believing be useful to him?

Answer. There are several mistakes in this objection; therefore we shall answer several ways thereunto:

1. We say: That even upon supposition that one does not believe in Christ, this doctrine asserted is more comfortable than the other. Because: (1) He has no less warrant to believe in Christ and rest on him, than if the other doctrine were supposed: for it is not Christ's dying for any that warrants him to believe, or is the object of his faith; but it is God's call, requiring faith of him, and God's offer and promise knitting life to the performance of that condition of believing called for. These are contained in God's revealed will, which is the rule of our practice, and the ground of our faith. And according to this doctrine, a hearer of the gospel has these grounds for his warrant; and there can no other be given, even upon the contrary supposition.

(2) If he be brought to yield to his call, to receive his offer, and to trust himself to his promise, he has then more solid ground of consolation (because of the certain connection that is between faith and salvation) than he can have by the other doctrine; which by the interwoven errors concerning free-will, the falling away of such as



sometime have been true believers, etc. is wholly brangled [*confounded*]. And so, supposing him not yet to have closed with Christ, he has the more effectual motives to engage him thereunto; because, by so doing, all is made sure.

2. We answer: This doctrine of particular redemption, to call it so, does never make salvation impossible to any that will receive Christ, and rest on him. But on the contrary, though it deny that all men are redeemed, or shall be saved; yet does it asset this universal: *That all whosever shall believe, are redeemed, and shall be saved.* Which certainly does make the expectation of life through faith in Christ to be the more certain, and does lay the more solid ground for a tossed [*disquited*] sinner to cast himself upon, when it says, there was never a sinner of any rank or quality that did believe, or shall believe in Jesus Christ, but he shall be saved: from which he may conclude, 'then if I can or shall believe in Christ, I shall also be saved.' Which conclusion will not follow from the other doctrine. And seeing this is the very express letter of the gospel, *Whosoever believeth shall be saved*, there is no ground left to question the same, without manifest reflecting upon the faithfulness of God.

(3) We answer, if any thing follow from this ground, *all are not redeemed*, it is this: therefore, all shall not be saved; or, therefore, all will not believe: both which are true. And it does only make salvation impossible to him who does not believe in Christ. For to such it says, 'if thou believe not, thou shalt not be saved; neither in such a case hast thou ground to think thyself redeemed.' And what absurdity is in these? Yea, upon the grounds of the other doctrine, there is none without faith that can promise themselves life, or comfort themselves in their pretended universal redemption, more than upon the grounds which we have laid down; therefore it can never be said that believing in Christ is useless, according to this doctrine. Yea, it is asserted to be always useful and profitable; whereas, by the opposite grounds, it may be often without these comfortable effects following thereupon.

4. In the fourth place, we answer, that this objection (as much more in this controversy) does flow from a mistake of the true nature of justifying faith. For it suppones [*supposes*] it to be the heart's receiving of, and closing with this as a truth, that Christ has died for me in particular, and that his death was particularly intended for me. This is the more dangerous, because it has been entertained by many, and has been the occasion of mistake, even to some great men, who

have laid this for a ground (as Cameron³ does on this subject): *Christus mortuus est pro te, si tu id factum credos.* That is: *Christ hath died for thee, if thou believe it so to be.* Now according to that ground, it is impossible but to miscarry, both in reference to this doctrine, the doctrine of justification, and several other most concerning truths. It is to be adverted then, that when we are called to believe in Christ, we are not called instantly to believe that Christ has offered up himself as a satisfaction for us in particular; but we are to conceive it in this order:

(1) We are called to believe the truth of the gospel, and way of salvation laid down therein, viz. *that there is no name under heaven by which a sinner can be saved, but by the name of Jesus*, and that yet all who believe in him shall be justified and saved, etc. Thus we may apply that word (Heb. 11:6), *He that cometh to God, must first believe that he is*, etc. For if this general truth be not acknowledged, saving faith wants [*lacks*] the discovery of a sufficient and fit object to rest itself upon.

(2) We are then called to receive this Christ, offered to us in the gospel, and by faith to betake ourselves to him so discovered, and there, as on a solid foundation, to rest for obtaining of justification and life by the virtue of his satisfaction, according to the offer that is made in the gospel. This is the main act of saving faith, whereby a sinner comes to be entitled to Christ, and to the benefits of his death.

(3) Whereupon, thirdly, follows (our accepting of the foresaid offer being supposed) a warrant to look upon Christ as ours, upon the benefits purchased by him as belonging to us, and upon ourselves as actually redeemed by him; none of which, before that, could have been warrantably concluded. But this being supposed, there is good ground for it; because a sinner by receiving of Christ, comes to have interest in him, and so consequently in all that is his. For Christ and his benefits are not separated; and therefore except there be ground to bear out this title to Christ himself, there is no warrant to believe that any of his benefits do belong to us.

Now, it is to be observed, that according to this foresaid order, no hearer is ever called to believe what is false, because these three are ever true, viz. (1) That life is certain through faith in Christ, and no otherways. (2) That one who is called to believe on him, ought to obey, and that God's call is a good ground for that obedience. (3) This is

³ Ed. John Cameron, *Scottish syncretistic divine* (1579?-1625).



also a truth, that one who has yielded, may look upon himself as accepted of God, and redeemed by Christ Jesus, because, in the method foresaid, there is warrant to believe all these. But if any will invert the order, and at first persuade himself that the benefits of Christ's purchase do belong to him, as being particularly redeemed by his death, before he actually rest on him by faith; this will prove but strong presumption, and never give title to Christ, or any thing that is his. But, on the contrary, greatly provoke the Lord; because in all the word of God, there is no promise of justification, life, or salvation; or any benefit of Christ's redemption made to any person, but to him that believes. And to do otherwise is, as if a woman that were wooed for marriage, should fancy herself to have title and right to all the privileges of such a man's wife, before the marriage were actually consummated, or before she had given her formal consent thereunto. And so according to these ground, we see that all hearers are not simply and instantly called to believe that Christ did die for them; but, first, to receive him as their Savior, and then to draw such a conclusion, which upon the performance of that condition, can never fall.

From this also, we may see the fallacy and weakness of that much tossed vain objection, viz. that which every one is obliged to believe, that must be truth; but every one is obliged to believe that Christ did die for every one in particular must be a truth. This argument, I say, depends only upon the former mistake of faith: and this being denied, that all men are instantly called to believe that Christ died for them in particular, when therefore that Christ died for every one in particular, they are called to believe in him for obtaining of life, the strength of it will vanish. Because, supposing that many in the visible church (which experience does put out of question) do never believe in Christ, or by faith rest on him for the obtaining of life; then it will follow, that many, even in the visible church, are never obliged to believe that Christ has died for them in particular: because, none have warrant to make that application, but such as have first betaken themselves by faith unto Christ: whereby the assumption of that argument is palpably false. For it must be so assumed, [that] every man that hears the gospel, and has received Christ, ought to believe that he has died for him: and so the conclusion will be, that Christ has died for all that believe in him, which is true; or it must be, that every one that hears the gospel, is obliged to receive Christ and rest upon him, and upon that condition may expect life; which will make nothing to the intended purpose.

This occasion gives ground to insist a little further, in clearing the extent of the merit of Christ's death in respect of the effects thereof: and though it be neither possible for us to make everything fully clear, nor pertinent to our purpose, to insist long on the same; yet the former grounds being laid, we may enquire shortly in some things, and answer to them with a particular respect to this place.

I. It may be enquired, what is the proper effect of Christ's satisfaction, and that which is purchased thereby to sinners. II. If this purchase extend to the procuring of faith and the first grace, as it does to the procuring of pardon and justification? III. If it may be said, that any benefit in any respect redounds to any reprobate from Christ's death, as the proper effect of that purchase: And IV. If there may be an universal conditional redemption admitted, as consistent with the former grounds; yet so, as the effect thereof is made sure to the elect, and to them only?

I. THE EFFECT OF CHRIST'S PURCHASE OF THE REDEEMED.

To the first, viz. What is the native, proper, and immediate effect of Christ's purchase unto the redeemed? We answer: That we conceive it to be not only the procuring of salvation to be possible to them, so that now, by the intervening of this satisfaction, there is a way for the just God to pardon men's sins without wronging of his justice, which without this could not have been: and so some say that by Christ's death God is made *placabilis*, or, to say so, put in a capacity to be pleased, or made placable; but is not actually appeased; or *placatus*, which is the assertion of the Arminians. Nor yet is only to make reconciliation with God upon the condition of believing, and faith in Christ possible, that is, by this intervening satisfaction, to give a ground for faith to rest upon, with hope of obtaining salvation thereby, which otherways would not have been profitable, had not this satisfaction of Christ's procured a new covenant to be made upon that condition. Thus, according to some, Christ by his death has procured an object to be held forth to all, to be by faith rested upon; and has established this general, that all who should believe on him should be saved; and that faith alone should have salvation annexed to it, in whatsoever person it should be found: but such do deny, that actually and absolutely he has redeemed any; or procured faith, justification and salvation to them. But we say further, that the immediate and proper fruit and effect of Christ's purchase to these for whom he suffered, is actual



redemption, and the benefits following thereupon, to be applied in due order and manner, and not the possibility thereof only.

1. This is clear from the 9th verse of this chapter, where they acknowledge and praise for this, that redemption and justification, etc. are not only made possible unto them, but that absolutely they are purchased by Christ's death for them, and that they are actually *redeemed to God by his blood*.

2. This does clear it, that by his blood he is said to *make them kings and priests unto God*: which cannot be understood of the possibility only of any privilege, but must take in the absolute purchase, and the actual conferring thereof, in due order and time. Hence, Rev. 1:5, *washing from our sins in his blood*, is mentioned as the proper effect of his purchase: and justification and salvation are frequently derived from Christ's blood as from their immediate meritorious cause, particularly in that place, Isa. 53:11. whereof was spoken a little before. And if there were no more but a possibility of salvation flowing from Christ's death, then Christ might never have seen his seed, or never had satisfaction for the travail of his soul. And if by Christ's death only, faith and salvation should be knit together, and so faith made thereby to have an object proposed to it, and that indifferently in respect of all; then it will follow, that the grounds of the redeemed's song would not be, *Thou hast redeemed us by thy blood, and made us kings and priests*, etc. Neither could these be accounted the immediate effects of his purchase, but that he has given them a ground to believe upon, and made salvation certain upon condition of believing: which would not be so cheerful a song to the redeemed, neither would it warrant them to say, *thou hast redeemed us*, in a peculiar sense, seeing these effects are common to others. Also many might have ground to bless for these mercies, beside these who are made kings and priests. All which are most inconsistent with the strain and scope of this place.

It is true, if we will consider the way and method how these benefits are applied to the redeemed, or the order by which they come to be possessed of them, that instantly upon Christ's suffering all cannot be said to be actually justified, nor glorified, more than they can be said all to have really existed; because the Lord in his covenant has particularly concluded when, and by what means, such persons, and no other should be brought to believe in Christ, and actually to be justified, even as well as when they should have a being, or at what time their life should be brought to an end, and they actually be glorified. Yet, if we

consider the things purchased, in respect of the bargain, we will find that they were absolutely and actually bought unto such persons, and satisfied for by the Mediator, so as not only, in his intention, he aimed to make their justification and salvation possible, but really and simply to make it sure, and to procure it to them; yet so, as in due time and method it is to be applied. And we conceive, that it is a dangerous assertion to say, that Peter before his believing, had no more interest any way in Christ's death than Judas: which yet follows upon the last opinion that was casten [*rejected*], and is acknowledged by the author thereof. See Cameron, part. 3. p. 583.⁴ Indeed, if we will consider Peter's own estate, as considered in itself, without respect to the covenant of redemption; and if we consider any actual claim, which he might lay to Christ's death in that condition for his own peace and comfort, there was no difference. But if we will consider Christ's sufferings as in the bargain of redemption before the Lord, the procuring of Peter's justification and glorification was really undertaken for by the Mediator, and his debt satisfied for by his suffering in his name, so as it could not fail in reference to him, more than if he had actually had a being, and had been justified and glorified when that transaction was closed; none of all which can be said of Judas, whose name was never in the covenant of redemption as Peter's was.

II. ARE FAITH AND OTHER SAVING GRACIOUS THE FRUITS OF CHRIST'S PURCHASE?

The second thing moved, was to consider if faith and other saving graces be fruits of Christ's purchase, so as by his satisfaction he did not only really intend the purchasing of pardon upon condition of believing, but also the purchasing of regeneration, faith, etc. that so the elect might come to the obtaining of pardon? Arminius, and the patrons of free-will, do deny faith to be a fruit of Christ's purchase. So does Cameron and some others, but with this difference: that these last do assert, that the gift of believing does not flow from man's free-will, or any sufficient grace bestowed upon all, but from God's sovereign good-will, thinking meet to bestow that gift upon some whom he has elected, and not upon others. And this they say, is a mere fruit of his sovereign good-will, without respect to the merit of Christ's death, even as his decree of election was. The reason of the denying this, we conceive to be their making of the fruit and effect of Christ's death to be

⁴ Ed. Cameron, *Opera* (Genevae: In officina Iacobi Chouët, 1642).



common to all; and it being clear in experience, that all men have not faith, it cannot be consistent with the former ground to account it the fruit of Christ's purchase: for what he has purchased, cannot be brought to pass, as elsewhere Cameron asserts, and so according to their first ground, faith would be common to all men. And to say that Christ has purchased faith conditionally, as he has purchased life and salvation unto all, were absurd. Because there is a clear condition, upon which men may expect life, viz. believing: but there can be no such condition conceived, upon which faith may be said to be purchased.

But to answer what was moved, we say, that conversion, regeneration, faith, repentance, etc. are no less the fruit of Christ's purchase than pardon and justification, etc. Because:

1. By his purchase, *we are made kings and priests unto God*: and wherein do these privileges consist, but in the having and exercising of these inward saving graces of the Spirit, whereby the elect are made, in a spiritual sense, kings and priests?

2. It cannot be well understood how justification and glorification may be said to be purchased by him, if all the steps by which these are necessarily brought about, be not in the same manner procured.

3. We are said to be blessed with all spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3), which must thus be understood, viz. that by his merit we have these communicated to us. and is not faith and saving grace to be accounted amongst spiritual blessings?

(4) He is made to us of God, not only righteousness, but also wisdom, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30-31). So certainly under these expressions, all saving graces, needful to the working out of our salvation, are comprehended. And the end of this is, that whosoever glorieth, may glory alone in him, as having all in him, and nothing but by him. Neither would there be such occasion of glorying in him, if these were not purchased by him.

(5) The considering of the covenant of redemption, will also fully clear this. For, no question, that must be a fruit of Christ's purchase, which the Lord has promised to the Mediator, as a satisfaction to him for his sufferings. Now this is clear, that it is not only promised to Christ, that many, through faith in him, shall be justified; but that certainly *He shall see his seed and the fruit of the travail of his soul*

(Isa. 53:10-11). *That his people shall be willing in the day of his power* (Psa. 110:3). *That these whom the Father hath given him shall come unto him ... and that they shall all be taught of God* (John 6:37, 45) etc. And what else can these special promises import but this, viz. that the Son, the Mediator, for laying down his life shall have many given him, and actually, by the Spirit drawn to him, and made to believe in him, and to acknowledge him as the author of their eternal salvation, without which, that promise of *seeing his seed* could never be accomplished? Yea, must not all the promises of the covenant have one rise, and be derived through one meritorious cause?

Now, these promises of sanctification, such as to take away the stony heart, to give a new heart, to cleanse us from all our idols, and wash us with clean water, etc. are in one bundle with the promises of his pardoning our iniquity, and remembering our sins no more, as is clear in Ezek. 36:25-26, etc. and Jer. 31:33-34, etc. And seeing it cannot be denied, but the last promises are grounded upon Christ's satisfaction, must not the first be so also? Especially considering that without him there is no access for binding up a covenant between God and sinners? Neither can it be denied, but faith is a part of that new heart, and a special fruit of that Spirit, which he promised to pour out upon his people.

(6) In Tit. 2:14, *our being separated to be a peculiar people to Christ, and zealous of good works*, etc. is expressly asserted to be his design in laying down of his life for his people. Also [in] Titus 3:5-6, *the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost* (which must take in all particular graces) are said to be shed on us abundantly through Christ Jesus; which cannot otherways be understood, but that we have these by the intervening procurement of Christ's satisfaction.

(7) Lastly, All that we pray for, we pray for it in Christ's name, as having obtained access to seek the same through his purchase. Now, it cannot be denied, but faith, holiness, and increase therein, may be prayed for: and therefore these must be understood to be procured by him also.

III. DO THE REPROBATE ENJOY ANY FRUITS OF THE REDEMPTION PURCHASED BY CHRIST?

The third question was, if it may be said that the reprobates, or any reprobate, do enjoy any common mercy by virtue of Christ's purchase and redemption; or if any mercy bestowed upon any reprobate, or enjoyed by them, may be said to be the proper fruit of Christ's purchase, or properly



to be purchased by his death to them? In answer to this we shall lay down these assertions, which being granted, there will be no great hazard to the main matter.

Assertion 1. There is no saving nor eternal mercy procured to any reprobate by Christ's death: and so according to the scripture-language, it cannot be said that Christ has redeemed, satisfied for them, or borne their iniquities in their room before the justice of God, thereby to procure any such mercy to them. Because: (1) To be *given to Christ*, to be redeemed, and to be justified, are ever of equal extent in scripture, and necessarily knit together with his bearing their iniquity. (2) The proper and native fruits of Christ's death are not divided, but they all go together; so that for whom he satisfied, and to whom he purchased anything in one respect, he did so in all. Therefore we will find him praying for these who were given him, and for whose sake he did sanctify himself (John 17), even when he does exclude the reprobate world who were not of this number, from these his prayers. (3) The proper fruit of Christ's purchase, is that which is satisfaction to himself for the travail of his soul, etc. But no mercy which is common to a reprobate can satisfy him; for his satisfaction consists in peculiar saving mercies, such as actually to see his seed, to have many justified, etc. which mercies cannot be said to be purchased to any reprobate. And so it cannot be said, that any saving or eternal mercy is purchased to them; for if they were purchased to them, then necessarily they were to be bestowed unto them; and if so, they could not be called reprobates. We take this for granted then, that no saving thing is purchased to them, and that Christ cannot in any proper sense be called their Redeemer, nor to have sustained their place and persons before the justice of God.

Assertion 2. We say, that yet many reprobates do here in time enjoy many things, which they had never enjoyed, had not Christ suffered. Of these, Christ's death may well be called the cause (*sine qua non*) or, without which these had not been enjoyed. Such are the preaching of the gospel, and the glad-tidings of the conditional offer of life which is made in it. Yea it may be, that the keeping off of many temporal judgments and eternal also for a time, does flow from this: whereby (as it were by the gardener's intercession, Luke 13) the cutting down of many a barren tree is for a time suspended, that thereby the glory of grace may be the more manifested, the honor of the Mediator the more highly advanced, and in the close, the glory of spotless justice made the more clearly to shine, because of their greater

inexcusableness. This cannot be denied to follow upon Christ Jesus' sufferings, in so far as they necessarily follow upon the agreement wherein they were transacted, and upon the promises made to him in the covenant of redemption; unto all which his sufferings are presupposed as the stipulation upon his side. Now, it being certain that there are some elect ones given to him by that covenant, in all ages of the world, and that he has a visible church and ordinances granted to him from the ingathering of them, which is so and so to be administrated, viz. by gathering under ordinances both sheep and goats, and such like; it must necessarily follow upon the supposition of this transaction in these terms, that the world must continue for so many ages, that the gospel should be preached in such and such places, and at such and such times, that such and such lights should shine for holding forth clearly the truth of the gospel. Yea, that such and such common gifts should be bestowed upon many reprobates for the adorning of this visible church, the honor of the head thereof, the furtherance of the edification of the elect, and many other things necessary for the attaining of the ends foresaid. And according to the former supposition, these cannot be denied to be decreed in the counsel of God, and contained in the covenant of redemption, largely taken; because accidentally, to speak so, and by reason of the manner of administration concluded, they conduce to the honor of the Mediator, and to the furthering of his design, which is to have the pleasure of the Lord prospering in his hand.

Assertion 3. Although these former assertions be true; yet we say, that the saving blessings that are purchased to the redeemed by Christ's death, may be, and are far otherwise to be conceived, as the proper effects and fruits of Christ's purchase to them than any common mercy can be which follows thereupon to any reprobate.

1. For, first, the purchasing of the elect, and of saving grace and salvation to them, and what may tend to their good, was intended by the Mediator, in a subordination to the glorifying of his grace in them; and so his glory, and their good, are jointly intended in the same. This cannot be said of the other; for though the things which flow from his death be good in themselves, and though it cannot be denied but that therein also he intends his own glory; yet it cannot be said, that these things are purchased by him as advantageous to them, in respect of any fruit that should flow therefrom unto them. Because the effect shows that in the end they have no advantage by them: and therefore it cannot be said that he intended them as advantageous to them.



I know some learned men do think, that some reprobates, by the power of common restraining grace, and the force of ordinances, are kept from falling in many gross evils, which otherwise they might have fallen into; and so in the end are kept from the greater degree of punishment, which they might have been liable to. I grant that it may be said, that some civil and formal hypocrites will be punished with a more gentle degree of wrath, to speak so, than others, or than themselves would have been punished with, had they not been by such common grace restrained. Yet this must be understood comparatively, with respect to the case as it now stands; that is, a civil hypocrite, living under the gospel, with many common moral endowments, and giving much outward countenance to ordinances, etc. shall be more gently dealt with in the day of judgment, than if he had not come that length in a common reformation under the means. Yet, I suppose, it cannot be said that such a person shall have less punishment than if Christ had never died, or he had any knowledge of the gospel, or any common gifts of the Spirit, but had lived in more profanity without the same. For, although the sins of a civil moral hypocrite, be less in themselves than the gross profanity of a blind heathen; yet, considering the circumstances that do aggrege [*aggravate*] the same, they will be found to be of a more bloody dye before God. Hence, so often in scripture, the sin of refusing Christ in the most civil hypocrites, is aggregated beyond the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon, etc. Neither does this flow casually from the gospel's being revealed to such persons, but from their abusing and slighting of the same. Whatever mercies therefore of this kind are bestowed upon any reprobate, they are bestowed upon them for the honor of the Mediator, and the good of the elect; and so, as such must be said to have been purchased by Christ's death.

2. Whatever Christ has procured to the elect, he has procured it by satisfying justice for them, and by sustaining in his own person the curse that was due to them, so that the Lord's forbearing of them, his making offer of the gospel to them, etc. are not only consequents following upon the Mediator's death and the covenant of redemption, but are properly purchased fruits thereof. And so the gospel is preached to them, they are called unto a church-state, etc; because Christ Jesus has satisfied justice in their name, for the quarrel which the holy God had against them, and has purchased peace, and everything needful for their salvation; so that now the Lord cannot but be kindly to them, and bestow these mercies on them according to the order and terms laid down in the

covenant. But on the other side it cannot be said, that our Lord Jesus did so purchase to the reprobate any of these mercies (which are indeed so in themselves) that are bestowed upon them, or that he satisfied in their room, or in their name paid any debt, or that the Lord is upon that account, as it were, engaged to be friendly to them, and bestow these things on them, as was observed to be in the case of the elect; because, in no respect is Christ their cautioner, as having undertaken for them. These mercies then which come to them, are rather to be accounted consequents following upon Christ's purchase, than proper effects thereof as to them; yet necessarily they follow, that what properly has been purchased by Christ to the elect, may, according to the order laid down, be accomplished.

This will be somewhat clear by considering Matt. 24:22, where it is said: except these days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: yet, for the elect's sake they shall be shortened. The mercy promised there, viz. the shortening of those troublesome days, is a temporal mercy, and common to many reprobate as well as elect, during that time; yet, in respect of the elect, it may be accounted a fruit of Christ's purchase, and of God's covenant-love; because otherways, these whom Christ had redeemed might be in hazard, against which the covenant has fully provided. But, on the other side, as to the reprobate, it is but a consequent of his death unto them, and bestowed upon them, not for themselves, but for the good of the elect amongst them, for whose sake it is said expressly, that these days shall be shortened. And so it is to be conceived, as supponing [supposing] it to be conditioned to Christ simply, that such a tribulation shall not continue, because the performing of the articles of the covenant does require the same; in that case consequently the reprobate living in that time and place, are sharers of that outward deliverance. Yet considering it as a covenanted mercy, and a proper fruit of Christ's purchase, it agrees to the elect only, for whose good it was covenanted; and to them it may well be called a purchased mercy. It is true there does no consequence follow upon Christ's death, but what was foreseen and intended by him to follow thereupon. Yet it cannot be said that all these consequents were intended as proper fruits of his purchase to reprobate, as the mercies are that come unto the elect; but we must acknowledge a difference between a consequent and a proper effect. Otherwise we might say, that the greater inexcusableness and condemnation of many reprobates, are proper



fruits of Christ's purchase, because these do follow thereupon, and had not followed had he not died. And we might say, that the suspending of the shutting up of the devil in hell in his everlasting torments, were a fruit of Christ's purchase; because, supposing Christ to have a church, and such work for devils, in the exercising thereof, while it is on earth, and that Christ is to judge the devils at the last day, and, as a part of his glory, to pass the final sentence in reference to them, etc. It must necessarily follow, upon their suppositions, that the devil's last judgment, and absolute shutting up in the pit, must be suspended for such a long time; yet there is none that will esteem this to be a proper fruit of Christ's purchase, though it be a necessary consequent depending upon the same.

And if any more be pleaded for, because the offer of the gospel is made to many reprobates, this may be said, that Christ's having of a visible church, and the gospel preached therein, is properly purchased by him, that being necessary for the end proposed; yet, if we consider the preaching of the gospel, in reference to such a person, as suppose to Judas; or, how it comes that he is a minister thereof, we conceive it is hard to say, that it was purchased by Christ's death as a mercy to him, as if Christ had intended, by his sufferings, to satisfy God's justice in less or in more upon his account. And if it cannot be said, that any satisfaction is made to God in his name, how can it be said that properly anything is purchased by Christ's sufferings to him? For this is certain, that it is Christ's death, as it is a satisfaction and price offered in the name of any, that procures any good to them. Besides, Christ's bearing of the sins of any, and their obtaining of justification, are still linked together, as was formerly said: and therefore seeing no reprobate is justified, it cannot be said that Christ has borne their sins, and consequently, upon that account, has procured anything to them.

This difference may be thus illustrated: suppose one having intended out of a number of slaves to relieve so many, should therefore covenant a price for them, and actually pay the same, having withal this included in the bargain, that so many other slaves should be appointed to wait on him till these ransomed ones were safely transported, and for that end that they should be for a time freed from some common drudgeries that other slaves are lying under, and be someway fitted in their apparel and otherways, as might become his honor, and further him in the gathering together, shipping and transporting of these whom actually

he had bought. Yet still he neither minds the relieving of these, nor does for that end pay in the least measure their ransom, but only has this articulated to him, as conducing to the good of the main bargain. In this case, it cannot be said that he had properly bought these whom he minded never to transport, or that any price laid down in the principal bargain, was laid in their name; yet it cannot be denied, but that many advantages do follow upon that bargain to such beyond others; which yet, in the end, by reason of their own miscarriages, might turn to their greater hurt: as suppose they should refuse to obey him, or put on the clothes bestowed upon them, but should abandon him, and renounce their present liberty, and not wait on till the end, etc. and to procure themselves justly to be deprived of any favor, and to be punished for their ingratitude; so may it be said in the present case. Yet we shall not much contend for words, as whether such a thing should be called a consequent or an effect, providing Christ be not said to have sustained the room of, or by being made sin, to have satisfaction in less or more for any whom he does not actually redeem and own for his.

IV. CAN CHRIST BE SAID TO HAVE REDEEMED ALL MEN CONDITIONALLY?

The fourth question is, if Christ Jesus, the only absolute Redeemer of the elect alone, may not yet be said to have redeemed all men conditionally, and in the laying down of his life, to have intended the purchasing of life to all, upon this condition, *If they should believe in him?*

This conditional redemption is diversely expressed by learned men, who, in their writings, do abhor the grossness of the Socinian and Arminian doctrines concerning the redemption. Some say, that Christ died absolutely for none, but conditionally for all that is, that he purchased life for all, upon condition that they should believe that he had died for them: and that God, by his decree of election, has decreed to give faith to some and not to others, whereby Christ's death becomes effectual to them, and not to others: which difference does yet flow from nothing in Christ's death. They say also, that Christ, by his death, procured freedom to all from the curse of the law, so that that is removed from all, except any, by not believing that Christ has died for them, shall make themselves liable to that curse, as Cameron asserts (page 584).⁵ This opinion does not lay the weight of men's making themselves to differ upon themselves, but it does acknowledge

⁵ Ed. Ibid.



the freedom, sovereignty, and power of grace, as also the impotency and corruption of nature; yet we conceive it is dangerous, and does directly contradict what has been asserted from the text. For:

1. It denies any, even the elect, to be absolutely redeemed: which, though true in some sense, viz. in respect of the method and manner of the application of the purchased redemption; yet can it not be said to be true in respect of the purchase and bargain itself, or in respect of the parties bargaining in this purchase. Because Christ did not buy pardon of sin and salvation to sinners abstractly, upon condition that they should believe; but did absolutely purchase the pardon of sin and salvation to such and such as were proposed to him. And this he did, not by buying salvation to the elect upon condition they should believe, without making both the condition, viz. faith and salvation sure unto them; but he absolutely redeemed Peter, John, and other elect persons, by purchasing salvation, and everything needful for the making of it sure unto them, although in due manner these are to be communicated according to the terms of the covenant.

2. It denies faith to be fruit of Christ's purchase; which is contrary to what was formerly said.

3. This asserts the reprobate by Christ's death to be freed from the curse of the law (In the day that thou eatest, etc), which is not to be understood, as if upon condition of believing they were to be freed from it, if so they did fulfill that condition; for that is not controverted. But it must be understood of some freedom from the curse of the law that redounds actually to the reprobate from Christ's death. And it does suppone [suppose] them to have attained some freedom thereby, which their after-unbelief and ingratitude do make void unto them. And so they have not this freedom from the curse offered to them upon condition of their believing, but they have it, if by their unbelief they do not mar their right to it. Now this, so understood, will infer that Christ was made a curse in the room of all men, which is contrary to what is said: for they cannot be thought to be freed any way from under the curse, except by his sustaining it for them. And his bearing of the curse in the stead of any, or his taking on their iniquity, has ever their freedom following upon it, for whom he did the same, as was formerly marked. Again there are many of mankind (suppose young children, dying before any actual sin) who cannot be liable to any other curse but the curse of the law; yet cannot all these (even such as are without [outside] the

visible church and the promises) be said peremptorily and absolutely to be saved. Besides, this will infer, that either the reprobate shall not have the breach of the first covenant imputed to them, or that they shall have that debt imputed to them, which Christ himself did pay in their name; which is inconsistent with the scriptures formerly mentioned.

4. This makes Christ's death considered as to him, and in itself, to be equally laid down for Peter and Judas which the authors of this opinion will abhor: yet does it necessarily follow thereupon. For supposing Christ to die absolutely for none, but conditionally for all, there is in that respect no more regard had to Peter than to Judas: for he died conditionally for Judas, and he did no more for Peter; and so salvation, upon the condition of believing, is made equally possible to both. And though, in God's purpose, Peter has faith decreed for him, whereby he comes to be absolutely justified, in which respect, there is a great difference between Peter and Judas, for whom there is no such thing proposed; yet considering that this faith which makes the difference, according to the former opinion, is no proper effect of Christ's purchase, but of God's absolute sovereignty, as election is, it cannot be said, that because thereof there is any inequality in reference to elect and reprobate in respect of Christ's death. It is true, their acknowledging faith to be God's sovereignty and peculiar gift, does not make the difference flow from Peter himself; yet it cannot in respect of his sustaining the person of the one more than of the other.

5. This also infers that Christ has paid for such as shall again be brought to reckon for their own debt; yea, for the same debt which he has paid. Now, in scripture, these two are ever put together, viz. Christ's bearing the iniquity of any, or paying of their debt, and these persons being absolved from that charge in whose name he had paid. This is so sure, that the one does still infer the other, as was formerly marked. As Isa. 53. *He was wounded for our transgressions*: whereupon it follows, *by his stripes, we* (viz. we for whose transgression he was wounded) *are healed*. And again, ver. 11. *He shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquity*; that is, these whose iniquity he shall bear, and whose debt he shall pay, they shall be certainly justified and absolved from the same. So is it [in] 2 Cor. 5:21. *He became sin for us*, that is, took on him to answer for our debt, *that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*. Which shows that his end in becoming sin for any, was to have them actually freed from the same. The like is [in] Gal. 3:13-14. *He redeemed*



us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, etc. that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, etc. Where actual redemption from the curse, and obtaining of the blessing, are made of equal extent with Christ's suffering of the curse in the room of any. And so is it in many other scriptures. And to say that such for whom he paid, were again to be brought to reckoning themselves, directly contradicts the scope of these places.

If any should say, that these scriptures do not deny but such may be brought to reckon for their own sin, for whom Christ did only conditionally pay the debt; and the condition not being fulfilled by them, there is no absurdity that they themselves should be again called to reckon for the same: as also considering, that the Lord's acceptance of such a price for them, was only upon the fulfilling of the condition of believing, wherein they have failed.

To this we answer: 1. That according to the former grounds notwithstanding of Christ's death, payment might be exacted again, even from the elect, if the Lord himself did not graciously and freely enable them to fulfill the condition, because they are but conditionally redeemed also, and have not faith purchased to them by Christ's death more than the other. But because some may shift this, we answer:

2. That such a conditional payment is not spoken of in scripture; neither do these places of scripture speak of some whose iniquity Christ has borne, who shall thereby have freedom from being called to a reckoning. But they do speak absolutely of all for whom Christ has suffered, and in whose name he has paid any thing to God: for, all of them give ground for this connection, Christ hath borne their sin, was made a curse for them, etc. Therefore, they shall be justified and freed from the curse, etc. And this reasoning will not hold, except this universal proposition be presupposed, viz. that all whose sins Christ has borne, whose debt he has undertaken, and in whose name he has paid any price to the justice of God, etc. shall be justified, absolved from their debt, and not brought to a reckoning for the same. Now, it must either be assumed, that Christ has paid a price in the name of many reprobates, and has borne their sin before the justice of God; and it is evident how false the conclusion will be. Therefore the minor must be false, seeing the major is true; or, we must subsume thus, but none of the reprobates shall ever be justified or absolved from their own debt, therefore it will follow, that for none of these did Christ become a

curse or satisfy the justice of God: which is a truth.

If it be yet said that his suffering in their name, was but conditionally, and so it cannot be said simply, that he paid their debt, but upon such and such conditions only; and so he did not bear their iniquity, but upon condition that they should believe: To this we answer: 1. This is almost one with the former objection, and may be again repelled, thus: either that conditional bearing of their iniquity, was a paying something in their name, or it was not. If it was a paying in their name, and a laying out of any price by the Mediator, then the consequence from the former scriptures will still be urgent, whatever the condition be; because they assert, that all for whom Christ has laid out his sufferings, and in whose room he has sustained any part of the curse, etc. shall be partakers of justification and life. And whatever the condition be, this conditional redemption supposes a price actually to have been laid down. If it be said, that actually Christ did lay down nothing for them, and in their name, when he suffered, but upon condition that it should be imputed to them when they should actually believe, then it must be said, that Christ has paid for none till they believe, because it is his purpose and covenant with the Father that makes his sufferings to be accounted a price for any: and if so, then faith cannot be said to be purchased contrary to what was formerly said. Besides, if none can be said to be redeemed but a believer, then it cannot be said that Christ has paid anything in the name of any reprobate, seeing he has paid only for them who shall believe, which no reprobate can do. Further, though the imputation of Christ's laid down price be conditional; yet the paying of it is absolute: for he, according to this opinion, did really lay it down; and if such should after believe, there were need of paying no more in their name. Yea, what is actually laid down is supposed to be equivalent to their redemption, and with what is laid down for the elect; otherwise the price would not be proportioned to the supposed end, viz. redemption. And so it would be nothing.

That we may follow this conditional redemption a little, it is otherwise in some things expressed by some others, thus: viz. that Christ in some sense is a ransom for all, and yet not in that special manner as for his people: he has brought others under the conditional gospel covenant, but them under the absolute: he has according to the tenor of this covenant procured salvation to all, if they will believe; but he has procured for his chosen, even this condition of believing. Thus learned



Baxter in his *Saint's Rest* (part 1. page 153),⁶ which may be yet variously understood as to one branch thereof. For though he there speaks of all to be conditionally redeemed, and elsewhere often hints this, yet by several expressions of his it would seem to be restricted, at least in a special manner to the visible church: because, he says, these are by his death brought under the conditional gospel covenant, which elsewhere viz. in the appendix to his *Aphorisms* (page 241),⁷ in the last edition, is acknowledged to be that which is revealed, and offered in the church. And in that part of his *Saint's Rest*, page 156, it is said not to be offered to all; and that expression is used by him, that the conditional covenant is made with all, at least with the church. Also, others have many hints to this purpose, and the learned Tuisse [Twise] cites this saying out of Vorstius (lib. pri. page 195):⁸ *Et sane nisi pro vocatis saltem omnibus, mortuus esset Christus, tum frustra hi omnes credere juberentur.* Therefore it will be meet to touch a little this conditional redemption, as it may relate to all men indifferently, and more particularly as it may relate to the visible church; and because of the nearness of the matter, and grounds thereof, both may be done as we do go on.

Although this opinion, as thus expressed, may seem more plausible; yet we conceive that it will neither be found agreeable to the former grounds, nor to the text, nor to reason, nor yet any way more conducing to remove, or prevent these difficulties which are supposed to follow upon the doctrine of particular redemption, as it was formerly explained. For:

1. What we urged from these scriptures that speak but of one absolute redemption, and do ever knit justification and life with Christ's bearing the iniquity of any, or satisfying in their room, will also be binding here against this conditional redemption. For if any way Christ has

⁶ Ed. Richard Baxter (1615-1691). *The saints everlasting rest, or, A treatise of the blessed state of the saints in their enjoyment of God in glory ...* (London: Printed by Rob. White for Thomas Underhill and Francis Tyton ..., 1650). This is the first of many editions published in the 1650s.

⁷ Ed. Richard Baxter, *A holy commonwealth, or Political aphorisms, opening the true principles of government: for the healing of the mistakes, and resolving the doubts, that most endanger and trouble England at this time ...* (London: Printed for Thomas Underhill and Francis Tyton ..., 1659).

⁸ Ed. Probably: William Tuisse (1578?-1646). *The riches of Gods love unto the vessells of mercy, consistent with his absolute hatred or reprobation of the vessells of wrath, or, An answer unto a book entituled, Gods love unto mankind* (Oxford: Printed by L.L. and H.H. ... for Tho. Robinson, 1653).

borne their iniquity, then they must be justified; otherwise, the former connection, which is so strongly urged in the scripture, will fail; or, if he has not borne their iniquity, nor paid anything in their name, then it cannot be said that he has any way died for them, or redeemed them.

2. The text will confirm this; for in it, all men are divided in these two ranks, viz. the past-by body of nations and kingdoms, etc. and these few that are redeemed out of these tongues, nations, etc. But this conditional redemption can agree to neither member; therefore it cannot be admitted. It cannot be applied to the redeemed who praise; for they are all absolutely redeemed, and made kings and priests to God, etc; nor will it agree to the past-by multitude of the unredeemed that are contradistinguished from the former; because:

(1) The place does assert the actual enjoyment of friendship with God, (and being made kings and priests, etc.) to be the proper fruit of Christ's blood and purchase, and not the having of these things made possible upon a condition, as was formerly laid down.

(2) Because that past-by multitude is expressly contradistinguished from the redeemed, and these who partake of the benefits of Christ's purchase: and therefore the one being called the redeemed, the others may be called the non-redeemed; and they are distinguished from, and opposed to the other here, not by any distinction simply founded upon the effect of Christ's death, viz. that the one are made kings and priests, and the other not, but it looks to the meritorious cause procuring these effects, and making them certain to the one, and leaving others without all title thereunto, viz. Christ's death. And so it is to be understood, we are redeemed by thy blood, that is, thou hast paid the price of our redemption in our name, by thy blood, which has not been done in respect of the multitude of these same nations, whereof we are a part.

(3) There is but one class of the redeemed, and these are absolutely redeemed, so there is but one class distinguished from these, and these must be such who are no ways redeemed. For what must be said of the one, as to redemption by Christ's blood, must be denied of the other; for thus not to be amongst the redeemed, is indeed to be unredeemed. This will strongly militate against any who should restrict this conditional redemption to the visible church; for that would make upon the one side, two classes of such as are redeemed, viz. some absolutely, and some conditionally to be such, whereas the text does acknowledge but one. And it would also constitute



two classes of the unredeemed, viz. some that are without [outside] the visible church and conditional covenant, and some that are within; whereas it is clear that these within the church, who belong not to Christ, are equally contradistinguished from the redeemed with others that are without.

3. In the third place, this opinion will not be found consistent with reasons drawn from the scripture. As (1) It cannot be denied but Christ's satisfaction and intercession must be of equal extent, seeing they are both parts of his priestly office; and it is his satisfaction that regulates, to say so, his intercession. Now, it is clear in scripture that Christ's intercession is qualified by God's decree of election; therefore he prays (John 17), For these whom God hath given him: whereby it is not only implied, that he does not pray for the world which were not given him, but expressly he excludes them. I pray not for the world, he says (ver. 9). Therefore it must be supposed, that he did no way die for the world, seeing he does not pray for them, because he did not satisfy for them: and he did not satisfy for them, because they were not given unto him. And we can no more say that there is a conditional satisfying for, and redeeming of all, than we can say that there is a conditional praying for all; and we cannot say that there is a conditional intercession for all, seeing he does so expressly and absolutely exclude the reprobate world from his prayers; and upon that implied ground, because God did not own them as his, and had not given them to the Mediator to be owned and redeemed by him. Therefore he does solemnly disown them.

If it be said, That, in that place, our Lord Jesus doth only pray for these who did actually believe? The very contrary will be found in the text: for [in] John 17:20, he intercedes for all who should after believe; and through the chapter, for all these whom God had given him. Besides, it were hard to say that our Lord Jesus did comprehend all that were unrenewed under the title world; for so many unrenewed elect would have been excluded. Seeing therefore Christ excludes the reprobate world from his intercession, even when he includes many unrenewed elect then lying in profanity and nature, the former argument binds the more strongly. From which also we may remove a second exception, viz. that by world there are understood such as Christ foresaw should reject the gospel, and continue members of this world, notwithstanding of his death and call, or such as did for that time violently reject the same. To this we say, that if Christ meant by world, present contemners and rejecters, then

would many elect be excluded, as is said. Again, if he understood such as he foresaw would continue in opposition and unbelief to the end, can it be reasonably thought that he would immediately offer himself in their room, upon condition of their believing in him, whom he did not only foresee to continue in unbelief, and never to perform that condition; but also whom he had instantly in express terms excluded from his prayers and intercession, as having nothing to do with them? And so according to the former ground, viz. that his intercession and satisfaction are of equal extent, they cannot be understood any way to come in under either of them.

If it be said, That his intercession respects only the efficacy of his death; and therefore must be bounded with the elect: this will say, that this satisfaction also must respect that only, seeing they are of equal extent. Again, why prays he only in reference to the efficacy? It is because he has ground to own no more as God's or his; and that will say, that he will not satisfy for them either. Lastly, He boundeth [binds] his dying and praying in these words, ver. 19. of the forecited chapter, for their sakes sanctify I myself, viz. for their sakes for whom he prayed, in their room allanerly [only] did he devote himself to be a sacrifice.

(2) In the first ground laid down, we said that Christ's satisfaction, as to the object thereof, was to be regulated by the Father's proposal to him; so that he died and satisfied for such, and such only as was proposed to him. It being cleared there, that all were not proposed; therefore there is no warrant to say that Christ, in any respect, did bear the iniquity of any other. Neither can there be any end of his undertaking to pay for more than was proposed to him; neither can it be thought that any other was proposed to Christ, but such as were given to him absolutely to be redeemed; because there is no word in scripture that speaks of proposing any to Christ to be bought, but the elect, who, for that cause, are peculiarly named by this title, those that were Christ's own and given to him, etc. If any should say, that they were conditionally given and proposed (which indeed must be supposed in this conditional redemption) then, besides what was said, it may be asked, if the Father, by proposing such, did intend their redemption, and their obtaining of any benefit by Christ's death? If he did, why is it not effectual? If he did not, to what end was such a proposal made by the only wise God? Again, we may conceive this conditional proposal to be thus upon the Father's side: 'I do propose and give such and such persons to thee that are not elected to be redeemed, and to



partake of thy redemption, providing they shall believe, and I will absolutely exact the price from thee, which yet is not to be imputed to them till they believe;' and yet they cannot believe except God give the same freely, according to the first opinion: or, till Christ purchase the same, according to the second. Yet, might he say, 'neither do I mind to give it them, nor mind I to propose it to be bought by thee for their use.' This certainly would not look like the wisdom, sovereignty and grace that do shine in the bargain of redemption: yet, such a conditional proposal must be supposed as in these terms. And so they are proposed to the Mediator to be redeemed by him, when yet the necessary mids [means], and supposed condition of redemption is never so much as proposed to be purchased, but the contrary is included; and so at the most, the Father proposes but one part of their redemption to the market, viz. the end without the mids; and therefore consequently, the Mediator must undertake, for paying for the end, when he has not the mids by which it is attained, made, to speak so, redeemable, because it is never offered to the market: and what wise man would make such a bargain?

(3) It seems not consistent with reason and equity to say, that such as are by God's sovereign decree absolutely reprobated, and discerned to be made to reckon for their own sins; and yet to say, that our blessed Lord Jesus should have that debt imputed to him, and thereby conditionally to purchase for them a freedom from that curse which is already determined to be executed justly upon them: for the decree of reprobation must be, even in order of nature, as soon as the decree of election. Now, it being clear, that the work of redemption presupposes election to have preceded; so that in the order of nature, and according to our uptaking of things, we must conceive God's absolute electing of some to eternal life, to be prior to the covenant of redemption, because these who are given to Christ in that covenant, are said to be God's own by virtue of that decree before that (John 17:6), which will infer, that God's absolute decree of reprobation must be so also, seeing the decree of election necessarily infers the decree of reprobation; for, where there is an election of some, there is a preterition [passing by] of others. And therefore we must say, that Christ conditionally had proposed to him, and did conditionally pay according to that proposal the debt of many, that by a prior decree were absolutely reprobated. And as to the last opinion hinted, there being but one decree of reprobation, it will follow, that either all these must be under a conditional redemption, which

yet cannot be said so confidently, as to such who are without the conditional covenant; or, all must be excluded therefrom.

(4) From the ground of this opinion it may be thus argued: if Christ redeemed any reprobate conditionally, then the performing of this condition is either in their own power, or it is a singular gift of God procured by Christ's death. The first they will not assert, who own this opinion, as was formerly observed: therefore it must be something that can no otherways be procured but by Christ's purchase. And according to what is said, it is not purchased to any reprobate, though it be necessary for their obtaining of any benefit of Christ's purchase, therefore it cannot be said that they are redeemed. For, at most, it says that they are redeemed upon a condition, which they can never possibly perform; and this will infer, that they are not redeemed at all: for a peremptory, exclusive, conditional offer, where the condition is impossible, and known to be so to the offerer, is equivalent to an absolute refusal: as, suppose one would offer to relieve another from bondage, or to pay their debt for them, upon condition, and no otherways, that such a person should at once drink up the whole sea: that offer so circumstantiated, could not be looked upon otherwise but as an absolute refusal. Again, if he has not purchased faith to them, then there is no saving grace purchased to them; and if neither faith nor any saving grace be purchased to them, it will be hard to say that Christ has died for such, for whom no saving is purchased.

(5) We say further, if all men be conditionally redeemed, then we must say that all the midses [means] necessarily concurring in the work of redemption, for making it complete, must be conditionally purchased also. For as by the acknowledged ground, that is called absolute redemption, wherein faith and all the midses are absolutely purchased, so it will follow, that in this conditional redemption all these midses must be conditionally purchased. For the end and midses are in one bargain; where the one is purchased, the other is purchased; so where the one is absolutely purchased, the other is also. And therefore where the one is conditionally purchased, the other must be also: but it cannot be said, that the midses, viz. faith, regeneration, and other graces, are conditionally purchased, because this will be the sense thereof, that Christ has purchased faith in himself to such persons, upon condition that they should believe in him: which, I suppose, none will affirm. It will follow



therefore, that they cannot be said to be conditionally redeemed, even as to the end.

(6) If any conditional redemption be supposed to be, or if Christ be said to have paid the debt of all, even conditionally, then this must be looked upon as a singular effect of God's grace, and a special evidence of the excellent freeness thereof for provoking the hearts of all such to praise for the same. Now such a mold of conditional redemption as is proposed, does no way look like grace, nor tends to the engaging of such as are so redeemed to bless and magnify God; therefore it is not to be admitted. That it does not look like grace, will easily appear by considering: [1] That grace is every way grace, else it is no way grace (according to an ancient saying of Augustine). That is, it is grace in the end, and grace in respect of the midses also. But here, whatever may be said of the end, sure[ly] there is no grace in respect of the midses seeing no necessary and effectual mids for attaining of the end is provided for in this supposed bargain of this conditional redemption. Therefore it can neither be said to look like a bargain of grace, nor yet to tend to the commendation thereof.

[2.] We may consider, that as to the effect or end, this bargain does not make the same free unto these that are comprehended under it; for it leaves them to perform a condition for obtaining of the end, and that in their own strength, without furnishing them for the performance of it, even though they be of themselves in an incapacity to perform the same: and how unlike this is to a covenant of grace, may easily be gathered.

[3] This conditional redemption does neither make the effect, supposed to be purchased, certain nor possible: certain it cannot be, seeing it never comes to pass: possible it is not, seeing it depends upon a condition (which as it is circumstantiated) is simply impossible. Yea, and is supponed [supposed] to be so in the covenant of redemption; for we must look upon this condition in respect of its possibility, not only with regard to men, as men endued with natural faculties; but we must look upon it with respect to men, as they are in their corruption incapacitated to do anything that is spiritually good, such as this act of believing is. Now, in the covenant of redemption, it is supposed, not only that faith is necessary; but also that man is corrupt, sold under sin, and so cannot of himself (except it be given him) believe: and yet in the same covenant it is agreed, that faith be purchased and bestowed upon some, because of the former reasons; and even them, such who are supposed conditionally to be redeemed, are bypast, and deliberately no

such thing is capitulated for concerning them. Therefore the effect notwithstanding of this, be still impossible. And if so, can it be said to be of grace, which is so clouded in the terms thereof, and does neither make any good possible to these who are comprehended in the same, nor give thorough occasion to glorify grace as shining in the freedom, comfortableness and refreshfulness thereof? And in effect, it seems rather to obscure grace, than to manifest the same: and therefore ought not be pressed in the church. For a conditional transaction in this mold would be, as if one should be said to have paid the Turks for so many slaves, to be sent home to him in such and such ships, as himself only could send for them; and that this purchase should be valid, as to these slaves, upon condition allenaryly [solely] that they should return in such and such ships unto him; and yet in the mean time he never intended to send these ships for them, but in the same bargain conclude, that ships should be sent only for such and such others. Would not these slaves necessarily continue under their bondage? And would this so be accounted a redemption amongst men, or yet a wise conditional bargain? And is that to be attributed to the only wise and gracious God, and our blessed Lord Jesus, which is upon the matter, the same? viz. that our Lord Jesus should pay the debt of so many, upon condition that they should believe in him, by such faith as he only can procure unto them; and withal, that in the same covenant it should be expressly capitulated, that our Lord Jesus, his sufferings, should be accepted for procuring of faith to some others allenaryly, and to none else; whereby these, supposed to be conditionally redeemed, are absolutely excluded upon the matter? This conditional redemption therefore is not be contended for.

(7) Besides these, this opinion will infer many absurdities and intricacies not easily extricable, as:

[1] If Christ Jesus has died for all conditionally, then it will follow that either he died equally for all, or one way for some, and another way for others. To say he died equally for all, is absurd, and acknowledged to be so by the asserters of this opinion: And of this we spoke in the former part of this question. If it be said he did, in a different manner die for the elect, and for these that are not actually redeemed, then it may be enquired, wherein this difference consists? For it must either be in the matter, or price, to say so, that is given, viz. that he gave more for those whom he absolutely redeemed, than for these whom he only did conditionally purchase; or, it must be in his



intention in the laying down of his life, and in the Father's will in ordering of the same, viz. that it was not Christ's intention, nor the Father's will to bestow faith upon such, and actually to redeem them; and so to have his death accepted as a satisfaction for them, as he had condescended in respect of others. If the first be said, viz. that Christ has given more for the one than the other; then it will follow that Christ has not satisfied for these who are said to be conditionally redeemed, because he has not paid sufficiently for them. Besides, it will not be found in scripture, that Christ has paid a part of the debt of any where he has not paid at all.

If it be said, that the price materially considered was equal, then it will follow that Christ suffered as much wrath and curse materially for Judas as he did for Peter, which will not look like peculiarity of the love that appears in Christ suffering for any, nor yet sound well to the thankful heart of a redeemed one, as if Christ had paid no more for him than for Judas. If it be said, that the difference is in God's purpose and Christ's intention who did design these sufferings to purchase faith to the one, and so to make their redemption effectual; which was not purposed in reference to the other: To this we say: {1} If the price laid down be equal, in reference to all, then it would seem just that Judas should have no less fruit thereby than Peter, seeing no less was paid for him. But {2} We say, that this answer does confirm our argument: for if it was not the purpose of the Father and the Mediator, that the fruits of Christ's death should be effectual to such and such, then Christ's death cannot be called a satisfaction for such; because his death is regulated in its extent according to that purpose, and is a satisfaction for none, but such for whom it was purposed to be made effectual. For to make it a satisfaction for any, not only is it necessary that there should be a sufficient price, but also that it should be intended to be paid and accepted as such, for such and such persons. Therefore, seeing it was not intended for them as such, they cannot any way be said to be redeemed by Christ's death, seeing still the purpose and intention of the parties contracting, is wanting, without which it can neither be a satisfaction, nor a redemption.

If it be said, that there was an intention to make a conditional redemption. Answer. This being understood as contradistinct from the absolute redemption, as necessarily it must be, it's as much as to say, that the Father and Son in the covenant of redemption did intend for such and such persons, instead of a conditional

redemption, a non-redemption, or ineffectual redemption; and so it comes to this, that their redemption was never intended at all.

[2] A second absurdity is, that this seems to imply a contradiction, viz. that the reprobate whom God has passed by, are redeemed by Christ's death; yea, that the unredeemed are redeemed: for, if the redeemed be distinguished from others in this place, then these to whom they are opposed must be unredeemed. Neither can it be said, that the opposition is not ad idem, because the one are absolutely redeemed, and the other conditionally; for, upon the matter, the denying of an absolute and effectual redemption, is the denying of any redemption at all. Again, as to the first part, if any say that though Christ died for all men, yet did he die for no reprobate, as a reprobate: which some of late (even walking under the name of orthodox) do assert, because it is absurd to say that Christ died for any reprobate. We answer: In Christ's redemption the elect are considered as elect; for them he redeemed absolutely: therefore, on the contrary, he must consider others as reprobates, or at least as not elected; but he must also be considered as a reprobate, seeing there is not a mids [means]: therefore either Christ must be said to redeem all men, without respect either to election or reprobation, which is false, because the elect are in all the business of redemption considered as such: or, he must be said to die for the reprobates as reprobates, which is the absurdity they would shift: or it must be said, that in the laying down of his life, he had no respect to them under any consideration: which is the truth. For, the decree of reprobation, being in order of nature, and according to our conception, prior to the decree and covenant of redemption, as was said, such as are contained therein, cannot but be looked upon under that consideration. And, by the way, it would not seem inconsiderable as to our purpose, to think, that before this transaction of redemption were concluded (to speak according to our uptaking of first and last in God's purposes) he should determine concerning the ultimate estate of all men by his decrees of election and reprobation, and when marches are rid,⁹ and bounds (never to be changed) set, then to come to the transaction of redemption. Which certainly must suppose, that he intended not to confound the difference he had made by that after-covenant, but thereby to provide a means for making the

⁹ Ed. Marches: borders; confines. "*Riding the Marches*, a practice retained in various boroughs, especially at the time of public markets. 'It is customary to *ride the marches*, occasionally, so as to preserve in the memory of the people the limits of their property.'" *Jamieson*.



decree of election effectual; which mids was necessary for this, but not necessary as for the others.

[3] A third absurdity is, that this extends Christ's death further, and made it more common than the scripture does: for in scripture Christ is said to die for his people (Mat. 1:21); for his sheep (John 10:11, 15); to gather the sons of God (John 11:52); for his own (John 17:6 with 19); and such like. And in this place it is said to be for some of all kindreds, tongues, and nations, and not for all indifferently. Now, according to this opinion, Christ may be said not only to die for his sheep, but for all and every man, etc. There are two special objections against this:

{1} The first is, that although Christ be said to die for his sheep, and to have redeemed some out of every nation, etc. yet says a late learned abettor of this opinion (viz. Dallaeus in his apology¹⁰) that it will not follow, because he died for these, therefore he died for no others; more than it will follow from Paul's word (Gal. 2:20), He loved me, and gave himself for me, therefore he did love and gave himself for no other. It is sad that learned men should so please themselves, to shift arguments; for certainly, a clear difference may be observed between Paul's saying, Christ gave his life for me, and Christ's saying, I laid down my life for my sheep. This does expressly hold forth Christ's differencing of these for whom he was to die, and his contradistinguishing of them from others who were not of his sheep, nor given to him; and therefore for them he was not to lay down his life. Whereas that word of Paul's is not spoken to contradistinguish him from any other believer, but to comfort himself in the application of that truth to himself, that Christ who died for his sheep, did also lay down his life for him as one of them. Again, when Christ speaks of his people, of his sheep, and of his own in this case, he does particularly (to say so) consider them as a species or kind of people by themselves, and differenced, in the respect mentioned, from others, as the scope clears. But when Paul speaks of himself in the application foresaid, will any think that he speaks of himself as differenced from all, and not rather as one individual of the species foresaid? Therefore although we may conclude thus, God has made man a reasonable creature according to his own image, therefore no other creature is

such, because, by this qualification, man, or that species, to say so, is differenced from all other creatures on earth; yet, it will not follow, Peter is a reasonable creature according to God's image. Therefore no other man is so: because, Peter is but an individual person under the same species with others. Just so is it here. Christ's sheep, own, people, etc. denote a species, as it were, differenced by such relations from others, whereas Paul is but an individual believer comprehended under the same.

{2} A second objection is, that many other scriptures do assert Christ to be given, and to have laid down his life for the world: therefore it cannot be absurd to say, that in some sense Christ has redeemed all. And particularly that place, John 3:16, is urged (for our scope suffers us not to digress to more) viz. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son: that whosoever should believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. In reference to which place, we say, first, That the scope is not to show that Christ was given for all the world, taken distributively, that is, for every person that should be in the world; because it is only brought in here to confirm this general sum of the gospel which is laid down, verse 15. That whosoever believeth in Christ should not perish, but have eternal life. Now, ver. 16. is brought in as a confirmation of this; for, he says, God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, for this very end, That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. Where God's end in giving of his Son, is mentioned to be a ground of quietness to all that should believe, and will bear that universal well. Whosoever believeth are redeemed, and may expect the benefits of Christ's redemption; because the justifying and saving of such, was the end for which God sent his Son: and to extend the place any further, will not be consistent with the scope thereof. If it be said, that God's respect and love to the world indefinitely, is mentioned here; be it so, yet that will not infer, that because he had respect to the world, that therefore he intended that Christ should die for all and every individual person in the world; but it will only infer this much at most, as if we had said, such a Christian king, or potent man, had such a respect to Christians, or to men of such a nation, as to send such a great sum to redeem so many of them as he particularly descended upon, from the bondage of the Turks: it may well be said, that such a great man had respect to Christians, or to such a nation, because he purposed to redeem many of them when he took no thought of others; yet it cannot be said, that he intended the redeeming of all, either

¹⁰ Ed. Jean Daille (1594-1670). *Apologie pour les Eglises reformees* (Charenton, 1641). English: A treatise concerning the right use of the Fathers in the decision of the controversies that are at this day in religion. / Written in French by John Daille ... (London: Printed for John Martin ..., 1651).



absolutely, or conditionally, seeing he did appoint the price given, to be paid for such as himself thought meet to redeem, and not for others. Just so is it here in this case at the most; and so God's respect to the world may be opposite to his passing by of all the fallen angels.

Again, secondly, we say, that if world, in this place, be to be understood of particular persons, and an universality of them, it must be understood of the elect world, as in the verse following is clear, where God's purpose of sending his Son is expressed to be, that the world through him might be saved. Now, there can no other universality be thought to be intended, to be saved by God, as was formerly cleared, but the universality to speak so, or the world of the elect. Neither will the reading be absurd, to understand it thus: That God so loved the elect world, that he gave his only begotten Son to death for them, that by their believing on him they should not perish, but have eternal life. And so this place will be interpreted by the parallel thereof, 1 John 4:9: In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him: for us and we, in the one place, are equivalent to the world, and whosoever will believe, in the other. That thus it is to be understood, appears in this, that even according to the grounds of this opinion, there can none be expected to believe but the elect: and in the text there are none profited by this fruit of Christ's love to the world, but the believers. Therefore this love which gives this gift, must be said to respect the elect only, especially considering that it is in a matter which is the evidence of God's most special love, as was formerly said. Only it is expressed in this general, Whosoever shall believe, etc. because the extending of it, in this indefinite expression, does suit best with the proposed mold of the offer of the gospel, which is not to invite men to believe, because they are particularly elected or redeemed; but to invite men to believe, because God has promised to save such as believe, and because he does by the outward ministry call hearers thereunto. And this is the more to be observed, because Christ here, as a good minister of the gospel, is preaching to Nicodemus, and laying before him the sum of the gospel, and that which must be the object of his faith; and therefore it was necessary that he should take that way of preaching these truths to him, so that as upon the one side, he does hold forth God's peculiar respect to the elect world; so upon the other, he does hold forth God's acception of all whosoever shall believe, that the peculiarity of the redemption may not stumble any in their

approaching to Christ, who have the offer of the gospel made unto them. For the word says in sum, a believer cannot fail of salvation, seeing God had that respect to his elect, as to give his only begotten Son to purchase this unto them: and this is to be preached in these indefinite terms, and cannot but be true, seeing it is the revealed will of God.

[4] A fourth difficulty following this opinion is, that it will be hard to conceive how Christ could conditionally die and lay down his life for the redeeming of many, who were actually already condemned in hell. Yet, this universal conditional redemption will infer this, otherwise the reprobates, who lived before Christ's death, were not so much obliged to him as these who did succeed. If it be said, that although Christ actually died in time, yet the transaction was eternal before any man lived in the world: This will not remove the difficulty, because, though it was transacted before time, yet, no question, it was so regulated as it might be performed in time. Now can it be supposed, that the transaction was in these terms, that the Mediator should die and lay down a price for so many elect, who by the virtue of his death were to be brought to glory before his sufferings; and that also he should pay so much in the name of so many reprobates, who for their own sins were to be actually damned at the time of payment? And whatever be said of the transaction, yet when it came to Christ's suffering, it must either be said that these were scored [*marked*] out, so as Christ did not bear their iniquity, or die for them, in any respect; or, it must be said, that before God's justice, Christ did bear the iniquity, and pay in the name of such as were actually in hell, suffering for their own sins at that same instant of time.

[5] It may be asked, What becomes of all infants, whether in the visible church, or without it, who die in their infancy? According to the former grounds, it will be hard to determine: for none can say, upon the one side, that they are all absolutely redeemed and saved, there being no warrant in scripture for this; on the other side, to say that Christ died for them, upon condition that they should believe in him, cannot be well understood: for, though some of them be within the conditional covenant made with the church, and therefore cannot be more rigidly constructed of than these at age; yet are they not in a capacity to perform acts of faith, and to fulfill that condition. And this incapacity does not merely flow from men's corruption, as it does in men at age; but is natural to young ones, as not to understand, speak, or walk. Now, it were unreasonable to say,



that such children who die in their infancy, were redeemed by Christ, upon condition that they should understand, speak, walk, etc, or, of a child dying in such a condition, suppose it be one not absolutely redeemed, it cannot be said that the child was redeemed upon this condition, that it had walked, spoken, etc, when as yet it was not, possibly, of one hour's age. Again, can it be said of children within the visible church, which are not absolutely redeemed, that it is undeterminable whether Christ did die conditionally for them, or, not at least till they come to such an age as they themselves may act faith? Neither can it be said here that he redeemed reprobate children in the church conditionally, as he did absolutely redeem these that are elect, although even these cannot act faith: for he purchases to the elect saving grace in the seed thereof, a new nature to be communicated to them, whereof the youngest children are capable, seeing therein they are merely passive. But, in that conditional redemption, there is nothing purchased to any, but upon condition that they receive Christ offered and believe in him; which does suppose an activeness, and acting, to be in these to whom the offer is made: of which, children are not capable. And if this condition could be supposed only to infer something wherein children might be merely passive, then this will be the meaning thereof, viz. that Christ redeemed such children, upon condition that he himself should confer such and such things on them, in receiving of which, they could only be passive: which would not look like a conditional covenant; for, the performing of the condition will be on Christ's side, and not upon theirs: and so it would be absolute, as in the case of the elect children.

Neither will it remove this difficulty, to say that children are partakers of the father's privileges, and are to be reckoned accordingly: for this cannot be said of saving privileges, so as if no elect parent could have a reprobate child; or, no reprobate parent an elect child dying at such an age; because these things belong unto the sovereignty of God, and he is not so to be bounded in respect of all particular children. Besides, experience in the Word gives ground to us to call it in question. It must then be understood only of federal privileges, and that in respect of the external administration of the covenant. And this will say nothing to the difficulty; because the doubt is still, what to say of children that are within the conditional covenant, in respect of their parents that are within the visible church; yet, supposing them to die instantly, or in their nonage, they cannot be said

to be conditionally redeemed, because of the reasons foresaid.

[6] If the reprobate be conditionally redeemed, then that redemption of theirs is either transacted in the same covenant with the absolute redemption of the elect, or not. They cannot be said to be comprehended within the same covenant, because all such are comprehended in it, are contradistinguished from others, as being the Lord's chosen, and such as are given to Christ, etc. Again, this covenant of redemption includes the means with the end; for it is ordered in all things and sure; which cannot be said of this conditional covenant: therefore they cannot be comprehended in one. And it would not found well, to say that the elect's redemption, and that of the reprobates, were contained in one covenant. Nor can it be said, that it is a distant bargain beside the covenant of redemption. Because, {1} That were indeed to grant that it is no redemption, seeing it is not comprehended in the covenant of redemption. {2} The business of Christ's death is only transacted in that covenant where the redemption of the elect is absolutely concluded; because it is the great mids [means] designed for making of that effectual: therefore ought it, as to the extent of its merit, to be proportioned to the object of that covenant, seeing by his undertaking therein allenerly [solely], he becomes liable to death. {3} This would infer two covenants of redemption, whereas the scripture does but speak of one. And although some speak of a conditional covenant with the visible church; yet, neither can that be said to be made with all men, and so none without [outside] the visible church should be redeemed; neither can that be called a covenant of redemption, distinct from that which is made in reference to the elect; because nothing can be counted a covenant of redemption, even a conditional covenant, but that wherein God and the Mediator are parties; for, no other can determine absolutely or conditionally upon the business of redemption. Besides, what is revealed to the visible church, and has the form of a conditional covenant, does but flow from this, as the administration, application, or execution thereof: and therefore cannot be thought to contain any new article concerning the extent or fruit of Christ's death, but must be regulated by the former, and is not to be looked upon as a distinct covenant in itself.

[7] The last thing which we have to say, is, that this mold of a conditional redemption of all men, does not bring with it any more solid way to satisfy or remove the difficulties that are pretended to follow the former. And indeed the



way of grace being a mystery, and depth which is unsearchable, and the giving of Christ unto death being the most mysterious part of all this mystery; what wonder is it that carnal reason cannot reach the grounds of the Lord's sovereign proceeding therein? And what presumption may it be thought to be, to endeavor such a mold of this, as may mar the mysteriousness thereof, and satisfy reason in all its proud objections? Yet we say, this will not do it; for:

{1} It does not prove any way more conduceable for the glorifying of grace, in respect of these who are conditionally redeemed, as was formerly shown, but rather the contrary. Nor does it conduce any more to the quieting and comforting of wakened consciences, whereof also something was spoken; nor does it any way tend to make reprobate sinners more inexcusable, as if thereby the justice of God were more clearly vindicated: for, by this doctrine, he did not redeem them absolutely, neither did purchase faith unto them, without which, even according to this conditional covenant, they cannot be saved; and yet they can no more obtain faith of themselves, except by his purchase, than they can by themselves satisfy divine justice, had he not, by his death, interposed. Now may not carnal reason still cavil here, and say, that though Christ has died, and purchased them conditionally, yet seeing he has not purchased faith to them, their salvation is no less impossible, than if there had been no such conditional redemption at all. Neither can it be ever instanced, that this mere conditional redemption did profit any person as to life, or any saving good, more than if it had not been at all: and so the matter upon which the pretended cavil does rise, is but altered, but no way removed.

{2} Seeing the asserters of this conditional redemption do admit of an absolute election unto life as we do (at least for aught I know), then they will have the same cavils to meet with: for the connection between election, faith, and salvation, is no less preemptor (so that none can believe and be saved but an elect) than the connection is between Christ's dying for one, and his obtaining of salvation. Yea, the connection is no less peremptory and reciprocal (to say so) between absolute redemption and life, and between mere conditional redemption and damnation (to speak of a connection simply, without respect to any casualty) and that according to their grounds, than there is between redemption and life, and non-redemption and death, according to the grounds which we maintain. Yet I suppose, that none will account this absolute election of some few, when others are bypast, to be any spot upon

the sovereign and free grace of God; or yet any ground of excuse to such as are not thus elected by him. And yet without this, as to the event, it is certain that they can never believe nor attain unto salvation: yea, supposing that election were grounded upon foreseen faith, and supposing reprobation to be grounded upon foreseen sin and impenitency therein; yet, now both these decrees being peremptorily and irrevocably past, this is certain, that no other will or shall be saved but such as are so elected; and so that all others, to whom the offer of the gospel cometh, shall necessarily perish, or the former decree must be cancelled, which is impossible. And this is true, although it be past, as they say, voluntate consequente, now when the offer of the gospel comes, may not carnal minds raise the same cavil and say, 'seeing the Lord foreknew that such and such would not believe, and for that cause did determine to glorify his justice upon them; to what end then is this offer made to such, who are now by a decree excluded from the same, whatever be the ground thereof?' And indeed there is no end of caviling, if men will give way unto the same: for flesh will ask, even in reference to this, Why doth he then find fault? and who hath resisted his will? For certainly if he had pleased, he might have made it otherwise; and seeing he pleased not to do so, therefore it could not be otherwise, as the apostle has it [in] Rom. 9:19-20; unto which he gives no other answer but, Nay, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? hath not the potter power over the clay? etc. In which also we must acquiesce; otherwise no such mold of a conditional redemption will give satisfaction.

{3} It can no more warrant the application of the fruits of Christ's purchase to any, so as to comfort them in this conditional redemption, more than if there were no such thing at all. For if the sinner believe, the doctrine of particular redemption warrants any to make application of Christ's purchase: if they believe not, this doctrine of conditional redemption gives no more warrant to make application for the comfort of any, than if it were not at all.

{4} Neither does it warrant a person with any greater boldness to take hold of Christ, or to close with the offer of the gospel made unto him; because that person, who is jealous to close with Christ, upon this ground, because he knows not whether he be redeemed by him or not, seeing all are not redeemed, may be no less jealous upon this account, because he knows not if by his death he that procured faith to him or not, and so



if he be absolutely redeemed; for this is no less necessary for his peace and confidence than the former, and yet will be as difficult to be known to any that will needs search into what is secret, and not rest upon the revealed offer of God, as the sufficient ground and object of their faith. And if only by actual believing, and no otherwise, they may be assured that faith is purchased unto them; by the same ground also may they be cleared, that they are redeemed by Christ, yea, and elected also; because there is an equal peremptory connection between faith and all these.

{5} Neither does this way, and the grounds thereof, give ministers any more solid ground to make the offer of the gospel indefinitely in their public preaching: for, by the truth formerly laid down, we can assure hearers, that whosoever believeth shall partake of life, and of the benefits of Christ's redemption; and by virtue of the general call, and warrant which we have in the gospel, we may invite them to believe in Christ, require faith in them; and, upon condition thereof, assure them of pardon, etc. because the nature of the administration of the covenant of redemption is such in plain terms, viz. that whosoever believeth shall be saved. Also, the nature of our commission to preach this gospel, does fully import the same, as it is summed, Mark 16:15-16, for ministers warrant to preach and offer salvation, is not to preach and offer the same to the elect only, whom the Lord has kept secret from them; but it is to preach and make offer of this gospel, to those unto whom the Lord shall send them, and whom he shall gather into a visible church-state. Yet, this is done for the elect's sake among such, whom God has thought fit to gather out among others by this preaching of the gospel, without signifying to the minister who is elect, and whom he has designed to believe. Therefore it is suitable to this manner of administration, that the gospel be preached indefinitely in respect of its call, and that indifferently, as to these who preach; that so while the call does reach all particularly, the elect may withal be gripped with the same.

And, upon the grounds of this conditional redemption, others can do no more, but publish the offer of the gospel indefinitely, and assure any who shall believe in Christ, that they shall thereby obtain life and pardon. It is true, we cannot say that Christ has died and satisfied for them all to whom we preach; yet that does not lessen our warrant to call hearers indifferently on the terms of believing; because, though Christ's redemption be the ground which has procured this gospel to

be preached, even in these terms, as from that forecited place, John 3:16, may be gathered: and though it be that which bounds the Lord's making of preaching effectual; yet our commission is bounded according to the express terms in which it has pleased the Lord to draw up the same unto us: because the transaction of redemption, as it relates to the names of the redeemed, is a secret between God and the Mediator, and therefore the book of life is never opened until the day of judgment (Rev. 20). But a minister's commission in his treating with sinners in the visible church, is a thing which he has thought good to reveal: and therefore has done it so, as the former secret may not be revealed, and yet the end be made effectual, viz. the effectual calling and ingathering of so many elect. And upon the other side, these who may require faith of all, and plead it of them, upon this ground, that they are conditionally redeemed; yet they cannot say to their hearers, that Christ has by his death procured faith to them all, and so they leave them still at a loss, except they betake them to the external indefinite call, which warrants ministers to require faith of all hearers indifferently, and that without disputing whether Christ has redeemed all or not; or whether by his redemption he has procured faith to them all or not; because, faith is a duty, and is called for warrantably by virtue of that call, as is said; and this we do in so far acknowledge.

And so in sum, their warrant then to preach the gospel indefinitely, and ours, is found to be of the same extent, and to be founded upon the same general call: therefore there needs not be much contending for a different doctrine, or, as some call it, a different method to derive this warrant from, which does so natively flow from the received truth. And though the scripture does sometimes use this motive indifferently to the members of the visible church, to stir them up to glorify God, viz. that they are bought with a price, as 1 Cor. 6:20; yet will not that infer an universal or conditional redemption of them all, more than these places immediately going before (vs. 15, 19, where it is said, that they are members of Christ, and temples of the holy Ghost) will infer an universal or conditional regeneration of them all: the first whereof is false; the second is absurd: for so it would be upon the matter, that they were renewed, sanctified, and had the Spirit dwelling in them, upon condition that it were so; seeing regeneration, the Spirit, and faith (which is a fruit of the Spirit) cannot be separated. The like phrases also are [in] chapter 3 of the same epistle (vs. 16-17, etc). Besides, will any think that when the apostle says, ye are bought with a price, etc, that he does only intend that conditional




redemption which can never be effectual, but he must be understood as having respect to that great mercy in its most peculiar respect; because he does speak of it to the elect as well as others, and that as having with it the greatest obligation that can be?

{6} It cannot be thought that this mold of a conditional redemption so qualified, can be more acceptable to these who plead for an indifferent or equal universal redemption: because this does not any whit remove their objections, whereby they plead for nature against the sovereignty of God; nor answer their cavils, whereby they reflect upon the justice of God, for condemning men who cannot possibly (according to the case they are in) be saved. Therefore there is still ground for them to plead man's excusableness, seeing his salvation, even according to these grounds, is still impossible as has been formerly cleared. Neither, I suppose, will it be instanced, that any holding the Socinian, Arminian, or Lutheran principles in these things, have been brought to judge more favorably of that way than of the other; but on the contrary, may be strengthened, or rather stumbled by this, to continue in their former errors, as finding many orthodox divines in part to yield, because of the supposed strength of their arguments; and from such concessions they have some ground given to make their conclusions the more strong; for this conditional redemption alleges, that there is need to vindicate God's justice, and to declare man's inexcusableness, and to have clearer grounds of dealing with men for bringing them to faith, etc, than can be consistent with the principles that are ordinarily maintained by the orthodox in that point; and seeing by the length which this conditional redemption goes, such ends are not attained, as has been formerly hinted, therefore it will follow, that even more than that is necessary, and so that there can be no halting till it be their length. Also it must stumble and strengthen them not a little, to find orthodox divines taking up and managing their arguments; and by their weapons, bearing down the answers which hitherto have been made thereto, and to see them also enervating [destroying] the arguments which have been brought against them by homologating¹¹ of their answers. Sure[ly] Cameron, the author of this method, went as far in several points to allay the heat of Arminians and others, against this

¹¹ *Homologate* – Scottish Law. To ratify or render valid (a deed itself defective or informal) by some subsequent act which expresses or implies assent to it. OED.

doctrine, as any; yet Episcopus,¹² in his dealing with him, does load his way with no less absurdities, nor does any whit inveigh less bitterly against him than against others whom he dealt with; yea, in some respect he does insist more, as alleging his way to be more inconsistent with reason and with itself, than the way of others; because still, Cameron did assert the absoluteness of election, the efficacy of grace in conversion, and the impossibility of frustrating the frame (when God does apply it to effectuate conversion), or to convert themselves without it; though he endeavored to maintain these things upon grounds different from what are commonly made use of.

We conclude then, that these who are redeemed, are peculiarly obliged to Christ more than any other; and yet that no other has any just ground to quarrel with him; this being certain, that though the reasons of his proceeding may sometimes be unknown to us, yet can they never be unjust. And there is no question but these who dispute most against his way now, shall, in the day of judgment, have their mouths stopped, when their consciences shall convincingly bear witness of the justice of all the Lord's proceeding in this work of redemption, and even in their own condemnation. But who can search into these depths of the riches both of the knowledge and wisdom of God? O! how unsearchable are his ways, and his judgments past finding out! To him be praise for ever. 

Westminster Shorter Catechism Memory Cards

**Flash Cards, business card size, with WSC
Question and Answer on one side and
A Scripture proof on the other.**

\$4.95 per set or \$14.95 per 5 sets (postage extra)

¹² Ed. Simon Episcopus, Remonstrant divine (1583-1643). Episcopus wrote a critique of Cameron's views, *Epistola viri docti ad amicum, in quo expenditur sententia Johannis Cameronis de gratia et libero arbitrio* (1624). *Operum Theologicorum* (1650; 1665) 2 vls. See Rev. H. M. B. Reid, D. D., 'John Cameron,' *The Divinity Principals in the University of Glasgow 1545-1654* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1917) 227-228.



The Basis For A Confession Of Faith Among Constitutional Presbyterian Churches.

The following is a fuller treatment of the subject covered in Dr. Bacon's *Pattern in the Heavens*, volume 2.

By Richard Bacon, Ph.D.



he church in both the Old Testament and the New Testament is a confessional (confessing) church called by its head to confess what it believes, Deuteronomy 26:5ff; Romans 10:9. In fact, it was upon Peter's confession that Jesus is "the Christ the Son of the living God" that Jesus said he would build his church, Matthew 16:13ff. Thus from the earliest days, the Christian church has been a creed-making or confessing church. As John Leith pointed out,

Theology and 'creed making' are as old as the Christian community itself. Precise, fixed, official creeds did not appear until the third and fourth centuries, but the process that culminated in them had its beginning in the historical *credos* (Deuteronomy 26:5-9 and 6:21-25) and declaratory affirmations (Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and I Kings 18:39) of the Old Testament. It was continued in Jesus' self-interpretation and in the reflection of his disciples upon his significance for them and for the world.¹

Similarly, in his compendium, *Early Christian Creeds*, Dean J. N. D. Kelly asserted:

...the early Church was from the start a believing, confessing, preaching Church. Nothing could be more artificial or more improbable than the contrast so frequently drawn between the Church of the first century, with its pure religion of the Spirit and its almost complete absence of organization, and the nascent Catholic Church, with all its institutional appurtenances, of the late second century.²

It is therefore considerably foolish to attempt to maintain, as some have, that the church ought to have no creed apart from the Bible or from belief in Christ. Dr. Joseph A. Pipa, in a well-circulated

article, points out that creedal expressions were used even from apostolic times. Pipa even goes so far as to maintain that the Scriptures themselves, far from detracting from the use of confessions, actually teach that creeds should be used to maintain the faith once delivered to the saints.

In 2 Timothy 1:13, 14, God commands the use of creeds. We find here a two-fold command: 'Retain the standard of sound words,' and 'Guard the treasure entrusted to you.' Many opponents of creeds argue that they detract from the sufficiency of Scripture. On the contrary, Scripture teaches us to make and use creeds.³

Pipa explains that in these two verses Paul gave Timothy a "two-fold summary of his message. First, he referred to the 'standard of sound words.' Sound words express the truths taught by Scripture."⁴ Paul communicated those sound words to Timothy in a summary that Paul called a *standard* or a *form*.⁵ "Thus Paul declares that he has given to Timothy a form or pattern of Apostolic doctrine. He is not referring to the entirety of his inspired corpus, but to the summary that he has entrusted to Timothy."⁶

However, whether one considers the Greek ὑποτύπωσις, or the terminology of ὁμολογία (confession) or some other similar term, he may define a creed, confession, or symbol as a summary, compendium, or *enchiridion* of the Christian faith. Thus, Robert L. Dabney defined a confession as

...a summary statement of what some religious teacher or teachers believe concerning the Christian system, stated in their own uninspired

3. Joseph A. Pipa, "The Confessing Church," published on the internet at <http://www.credoquarterly.com/credo2.html> and at <http://www.gpts.edu>.

4. Pipa, "Confessing Church," 2.

5. The Greek word for this is a form of the word "τύπος," "ὑποτύπωσις."

6. Pipa, "Confessing Church," 2.

1. John Leith, *Creeds of the Church* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1963), 12.

2. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (NYC: David McKay, 1966), 7.



words. But they claim that those words fairly and briefly express the true sense of the inspired words.⁷

In a similar fashion, the earlier Presbyterian Samuel Miller, in his *Creeds and Confessions*, recently republished by Presbyterian Heritage Publications as *Doctrinal Integrity*, defined his terms toward the beginning of his work.

By a creed, or confession of faith, I mean an exhibition, in human language, of those great doctrines which are believed by the framers of it to be taught in the Holy Scriptures; and which are drawn out in regular order, for the purpose of ascertaining how far those who wish to unite in church fellowship are really agreed in the fundamental principles of Christianity.⁸

This definition of creeds and confessions has served Presbyterians well during the intervening years. John Leith, in his presentation of numerous creeds, points out that the Christian church has always been theologically oriented. So much is the church from apostolic days until now a theological community that Scripture often refers to creeds as “the faith.” Thus Leith maintains,

No pre-theological era has been discovered in the New Testament or in the history of the Christian community. From the beginning Christianity has been theological, involving men in theological reflection and calling them to declarations of faith.⁹

Leith rightly pointed out that Christianity is a theological religion: a religion that begins in reflection, moves to declaration, and then acts on that declaration. The stage of declaration might correctly be called the “confessional stage.” The church, considered as the community of the redeemed, has the primary responsibility for declaring the confession of the Christian faith. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth;¹⁰ and as such it has the primary responsibility before the watching world of confessing the faith contained in the Scriptures. As Norman Shepherd stated in a collection of essays from Westminster Seminary,

The warrant for confessional documents is grounded in the revelation of God through prophets and apostles, and committed to writing in Holy Scripture; but it is necessary to inquire further into the motivation for the actual drawing up or adoption of confessional documents. The motivation will determine to a large extent the comprehensiveness and emphasis of the confessions.¹¹

The church, then, has a continuing responsibility to confess the truth of Scripture to the fullest extent necessary in any given generation. It may be that a particular branch of the church will have a need only to confess a particular part of the truth in order to overcome a particular error. It may also be that even the entire church militant will find it necessary to deal with only a particular issue in a single creed.¹² But when it becomes necessary for the church, the community of faith, to profess a full-orbed explanation of the Christian faith, then a more comprehensive confession of faith should be the result. A more comprehensive confession is not destructive of Christian liberty. Rather, it has often been the case that the most ardent friends of Christian liberty have set forth the most comprehensive Christian creeds because required by the circumstances of their day to do so. Miller wrote of the importance of creeds and confessions even as those opposed to creeds cited Christian liberty in opposition to confessional statements.

When the friends of truth in all ages and situations, even those who were most tenacious of the rights of private judgment, and most happy in the enjoyment of Christian liberty, have invariably found it necessary to resort to the adoption of creeds, in order to ascertain for themselves, as a social body, and to communicate to others, for their benefit, their sense of the holy scriptures; we are naturally led to conclude, not only that the resort is neither so ‘unreasonable’ nor so ‘baneful’ as many would persuade us to believe; but that there is really no other practicable method of maintaining unity and purity in the Church of Christ.¹³

So then, neither the sufficiency of Scripture, nor Christian liberty, nor the importance of

7. Robert L. Dabney, “Doctrinal Contents of the Westminster Confession of Faith,” in *Discussions*, ed. J. H. Varner (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1999), V.132.

8. Samuel Miller, *Doctrinal Integrity* (Dallas, TX: Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1989), 5. Hereafter, *Integrity*.

9. Leith, *Creeds*, 1.

10. 1 Timothy 3:15, “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

11. Norman Shepherd, “Scripture and Confession,” in *Scripture and Confession*, ed. John H. Skilton. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1973), 20.

12. As, for example, the *Nicene Creed*. Though the Nicene Creed touched on other topics, it was the result of a council called for the purpose of settling the Arian controversy.

13. *Integrity*, 23.



remaining “teachable” respecting new light is a valid objection to the making and using of Christian confessions to set forth the truth contained in the Scripture.¹⁴ As Pipa says in his article,

Thus, rather than violate the sufficiency of Scripture, we see that Scripture requires the use of creeds. Creeds do not add to the Bible but are simply the summary of what the Church believes the Bible teaches. Thus they do not challenge the authority of the Bible. They simply are the summary form of what the Bible teaches.¹⁵

The confessions of the church, then, are not replacements or additions to Scripture. Rather, they are statements of what that particular branch of the church that owns the confession believes the Bible teaches regarding the Christian faith. The makers and subscribers of creeds do not maintain that there is an authority in creeds apart from Scripture; simply that the authority of the creed derives from its being in compliance with the Scriptures. Miller said of those Protestants who frame creeds:

They have no idea that, in forming this summary, they make anything truth that was not truth before; or that they thereby contract an obligation to believe what they were not bound by the authority of Christ to believe before. But they simply consider it as a list of the leading truths which the Bible teaches, which, of course, all men ought to believe, because the Bible does teach them; and which a certain portion of the visible Church catholic agree in considering as a formula, by means of which they may know and understand one another.¹⁶

Thus, the making of creeds is a necessary part of the church’s duty. The church has a responsibility before God to reflect theologically and critically, and then to proclaim the results of that reflection to the world at large. It is not enough for a church to say it believes the Bible, because every church makes the same or a similar claim, whether Romanist, Unitarian, Mormon, or Protestant. The question is not only whether the church believes the Bible; there is a second question that follows this one, viz. what the church believes the Bible says. Once again,

Leith explains the church’s functions regarding creeds to be that of thinking and speaking:

What cannot be thought through critically and expressed with reasonable clarity cannot demand the allegiance of man’s whole being. Understanding is necessary for man’s full commitment. Hence faith must be spoken and made intelligible.¹⁷

Nor can it rightly be maintained that this is a new process. The church has been making creeds since at least the early fourth century. However, it is also the case that there was even in New Testament times a corpus of theology that was regarded as a *paradosis* (sacred tradition) from the apostles. Paul, as well as the other apostles, regarded it to be of utmost importance that the very doctrines that they taught to the young churches in their day be maintained and then passed along to generations that would follow. Robert P. Martin explains this idea in *ISBE*,

In NT times, a corpus of distinctive doctrines was held as a sacred deposit from God. The references to such a web of saving truth are set forth with a fullness of description and variety of detail, although the evidence must not be pressed to suggest that there was anything approaching the later creeds that are couched in a style and language different from the NT. The following shows the diversity of credal terminology used by the early Christians: ‘the apostles’ teaching’ (Acts 2:42); ‘the standard of teaching’ (Rom. 6:17); ‘the word of life’ (Phil. 2:16); ‘the words of the faith and of the good doctrine’ (1 Tim. 4:16); ‘the pattern of the sound words’ (2 Tim. 1:13); ‘sound teaching’ (2 Tim. 4:3); ‘sound doctrine’ (Tit. 1:9).¹⁸

In a subsequent article the author will consider the content of some of the earliest Christian creeds and confessions; i.e. those contained within the New Testament itself. But for now, it should be plain from the passages adduced by Martin above that the same credal terminology was being used in apostolic times, especially in the Pastoral Epistles. We should expect that the Pastoral Epistles would abound more in this kind of language, given the purpose of the Pastoral Epistles of instructing Timothy and Titus in the governance of the church. But also in the very context of pastoral work and instruction in governing the church we find it is primarily the church’s function, and only secondarily the

14. Objections to creeds, together with answers to those objections, will be considered more formally in a separate subsequent article.

15. Pipa, “Confessing Church,” 4.

16. *Integrity*, 6.

17. Leith, *Creeds*, 1.

18. R. P. Martin, “Worship,” in Geoffrey W. Bromley, ed. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, electronic edition. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001, c1979-1988).



function of the private believer, to maintain sound doctrine by formulating creeds and confessions. In the broadest sense of a creed or a confession of faith, it might be argued that the Scriptures themselves are a sort of confession of faith. Certainly Kelly was of this opinion:

The Gospels themselves are carefully elaborated expositions of certain dogmatic beliefs about Jesus which they seek to explain and justify.... It is impossible to overlook the emphasis on the transmission of authoritative doctrine which is to be found everywhere in the New Testament.¹⁹

The church, then, as the pillar and ground of the truth, has not only a *right* to frame confessions of faith; she has a *duty* to do so. This right in no way conflicts with the first principle of Presbyterianism. Constitutional Presbyterianism does, indeed, insist upon a principle of *sola Scriptura*. However, the principle of “Scripture alone” does not preclude making confessions of faith that, for their content, arise from Scripture. The witness-bearing function of the church is accomplished by the framing and proclamation of creeds; and this function is properly accomplished by presbyters sitting in council and together considering what Scripture teaches.²⁰

Another revealed precept is equally plain: that God appointed his church to be a witnessing body, ‘the pillar and ground of the truth.’²¹ This must mean that the church is to testify constantly to the whole body of revealed precepts and doctrines, and not to parts or fragments only. The distinction of this witness-bearing is expressly committed to the presbyters of the church.²²

The idea of the church framing creeds and confessions did not arise with the Presbyterians of the Reformation, nor with Constitutional Presbyterianism. As is well known, the church, considered as the church, has framed creeds since at least the fourth century. But both

Scripture evidence and the evidence of early fragments also demonstrate that the church has been a creed making community from the beginning. Vernon Neufeld, in his study of the Christian confessions (*homologia*), demonstrates that the church has formulated symbols of its faith from apostolic times, as the earlier and later church fathers picked up the terminology of ἡ πίστις from Scripture itself in such places as Jude 3 where “the faith” is “delivered” to the saints.²³

...it is not altogether surprising to find πίστις used in early Christian literature for the body of faith or belief, i.e. of Christian doctrine. Indeed, later church fathers employ the word πίστις in the sense of a creed: the faith was the body of doctrine formulated in the creed, acknowledged by the Christian community, and adhered to by the church. The similarity between the faith and the *homologia* in this sense is apparent.²⁴

Thus even in other places in Scripture, the *homologia* and the *pistis*²⁵ are used nearly synonymously. Where the verb is “to believe,” the confession is the object of belief, and where the verb is “to confess,” the faith is the object of confession. Neufeld explains this relationship as being the “heart of the Christian belief.”

The not infrequent use of πιστεύειν to introduce the *homologia* (e.g. John 20:31; 1 John 5:1, 5), as well as the presence of the noun ὁμολογία in such citations (1 Timothy 6:13; Hebrews 4:14; 10:23), gives additional support for the conclusion that the formula expressed the heart of the Christian belief.²⁶

As James Bannerman explained in his two-volume *The Church of Christ*, it is the beholden duty of the church to communicate the doctrine of Scripture to its generation. The church must do this, first, in order to preserve the truth for itself and against heresies. But there is a secondary reason for the church to frame confessions, and that is to be able to teach it to generations to come and to evangelize the world beyond the church’s borders.

The very existence on the earth of a supernatural communication of His own wisdom from God for the instruction and salvation of men, imposes upon the Church the duty both to

19. Kelly, *Creeds*, 8.

20. WCF XXXI.2(3) “It belongs to synods and councils ministerially to determine controversies of faith and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God and government of his Church; to receive complaints in cases of maladministration, and authoritatively to determine the same: which decrees and determinations, if consonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God, appointed thereunto in his Word.” *Confession*, 122.

21. 1 Timothy 3:15.

22. Dabney, “Doctrinal Contents,” V.136.

23. A wooden-literal rendering of Jude 3 refers to “the once-delivered-to-the-saints faith.”

24. Vernon Neufeld, *The Earliest Christian Confessions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 32.

25. The “confession” and the “faith” respectively.

26. Neufeld, *Confessions*, 141.



keep it, that it may be guarded from injury or destruction, and to teach it, that it may accomplish the very ends for which it has been given.²⁷

Thus Bannerman continued by establishing that there was, in fact, a creedal testimony in the church from the earliest days:

...the conclusion is inescapable that, however anachronistic it may be to postulate fixed creedal forms for the apostolic age, the documents themselves testify to the existence of a corpus of distinctively Christian teaching. In this sense, at any rate, it is legitimate to speak of the creed of the primitive Church. Nor was it something vague and nebulous, without precision of contour: its main features were clearly enough defined.

And this office of a protest the Church has usually discharged by framing and exhibiting a summary of truth, or confession of faith, directed particularly against the particular heresy or unbelief which may have arisen; so that, in addition to defending and preaching the truth it may bear specific testimony against the corresponding falsehood.²⁸

The terminology of creeds and confessions is precisely what we should expect, according to Neufeld. It was as the church desired to demonstrate the unity of its faith that it confessed a common faith. Thus Presbyterian Minimalism maintains that unity in the church does not arise from organizational unity, but that organizational unity or connectionalism is a natural outworking of the church making the same confession of its faith. "The basic meaning of ὁμολογεῖν and ὁμολογία, as the component parts of the compound indicate, is that of *agreement*, a connotation which appears to pervade all instances of their use during the classical period."²⁹ Thus, the Nicene attributes of oneness (unity) and apostolicity for the church must eventually be understood not in an institutional sense, but in a confessional sense.³⁰ Neufeld points to both the Septuagint usage and to the basic lexical etymology of the terms, when he points out, "Thus the word-group receives a strong religious coloring in the Septuagint. The cultic elements of vows, oaths, and offerings are evident, and the relationship to such classical

meanings as *agreement*, *promise*, and *concession* may readily be seen."³¹

Kelly, too, mentioned several occasions in which creeds would have been especially warranted in the New Testament primitive Church: baptism, i.e. a first avowal of Christianity. This implies also a catechetical or didactic use of creeds. Second, preaching, i.e. the content of sermons would have been measured against a creed of sorts. Third, confessions are useful for polemics against Jew, Pagan, and heretic. Fourth, in the liturgy or at solemn covenantal occasions where an expression of faith would be expected confessions of faith are useful for that expression. Finally, in correspondence which includes, but is not limited to, the inspired epistles there is an apt use of confessions of faith.³²

Neufeld also supposed that creeds and confessions did not arise full-grown from the apostles' foreheads. Rather they grew and developed as the needs of the fledgling church grew from simple affirmations to more encompassing confessions of the person and work of Christ. Neufeld, in fact, claims to be able to see a development even in the pages of Scripture from a less developed to a more developed "creedalism."

The *homologia*, thus having a place of importance as the succinct expression of Christian faith, subsequently served as the basis for the developing creeds of the church, when the simple confession of Jesus as Christ (or Lord or Son of God) was expanded into more formal, articulate, and complete statements concerning his person and work. The beginnings of this process are discernable in the New Testament, where the simple Christological confession is enlarged (1 Corinthians 15:3-5; Romans 1:3-4; Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Peter 3:18-22; 1 Timothy 3:16), the two article formula is frequently expressed (1 Corinthians 8:5-6; Ephesians 4:5; 1 Timothy 2:5 cf. Acts 2:36; 4:10), and the three article creed is occasionally suggested (2 Corinthians 13:14; Romans 1:3-4).³³

J. N. D. Kelly also claimed to see a progression, though not necessarily a progression over time, of creeds and confessions in Scripture. Thus, he claimed, the confessions of Scripture developed from simple Christological *kerygmas*³⁴ to bipartite

27. J. Bannerman, *op. cit.*, I.279.

28. J. Bannerman, *op. cit.*, I.281.

29. Neufeld, *Confessions*, 13.

30. Raymond, *op. cit.*, 838ff.

31. Neufeld, *Confessions*, 15.

32. Kelly, *Creeds*, 13-14.

33. Neufeld, *Confessions*, 145.

34. 1 Cor. 15:3ff.; Rom. 1:3-4; 8:34; 2 Tim. 2:8; Gal. 1:4; 1 Thes. 4:14; 5:9; 1 Pet. 3:18ff.; Phil. 2:6-11; 1 Tim. 3:16.



creeds,³⁵ and finally to implicit and then explicit Trinitarian creeds.³⁶ Many of these passages will be examined in more or less detail in a subsequent article.

...the reader of the New Testament is continually coming across creed-like slogans and tags, catchwords which at the time of writing were being consecrated by popular usage. In addition he lights upon longer passages which, while still fluid in their phrasing, betray by their context, rhythm, and general pattern, as well as by their content, that they derive from community tradition rather than from the writer's untrammelled invention.³⁷

Thus Neufeld maintained that the confession, by being a part of the church's confession and not merely the confession of a single individual, was objectified. The confession itself was the expression of the faith of the entire church. Regarding the word-group of the ὁμολογία or ὁμολογεῖν, then, Neufeld opined "...the word-group is utilized specifically to introduce or express a conviction; i.e., the objective *confession* which especially has reference to 'confessing Christ or the teaching of his church.'³⁸

Like Kelly, Neufeld was of the opinion that the various creeds and confessions of the primitive church arose as the result of specific occasional needs. Those needs may be liturgical or polemic, but the church found that confessions were suited to its purposes in either case.

The *homologia* was an open declaration of this faith, whether expressed in public worship (Philippians 2:11), in some special service (1 Timothy 6:12), in preaching (Romans 10:8-10), or in controversy with Jews (John 9:22; 12:42), with pagans (1 Timothy 6:13), or with heretics (1 John 4:2-3).³⁹

Neufeld went on to notice the sense in which the terminology of confession is often used with the syntax of direct discourse in Scripture. Thus these syntactical signposts form clues that an early confession is being included in the pages of Scripture.

35. 1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; 1 Tim. 6:13; 2 Tim. 4:1; Rom. 4:24 (implied); Rom. 8:11; 2 Cor. 4:14; Gal. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:10; Col. 2:12; Eph. 1:20.

36. 2 Cor 13:14; Matt. 28:19 are explicit. Kelly claims that there are also implicit Trinitarian creeds such as 1 Cor. 6:11; 12:4; 2 Cor. 1:21; 1 Thess. 5:18; Gal. 3:11-14; 1 Pet. 1:2; and Heb. 10:29. *Op. cit.*, 19-23.

37. Kelly, *Creeds*, 13.

38. Neufeld, *Confessions*, 17.

39. *Ibid.*, 20.

...the ὁμολογεῖν-ὁμολογία word-group itself suggests the presence of the formula, and that other verbs of a kerygmatic, didactic, or confessional nature also provide certain clues pointing to the *homologia*. In addition, syntactical considerations may be indicative of formulary material, such as the use of ὅτι, the double accusative, and the infinitive to express a statement which is quoted directly or indirectly.⁴⁰

Every great period of revival and reformation has produced a great creed or confession, such as The Apostles' Creed, The Nicene Creed, The Heidelberg Catechism, The Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, The Belgic Confession, The Canons of Dort, etc. Thus Leith likened those periods of reformation or revival to specific memories of the church and claimed that the creeds that arose as a result of those revivals of religion and were thus not only a result of theological reflection, but composed a milestone for future generations to do additional theological reflection.

The theological reflections that are embodied in creeds become part of the theological memory of the Church and are the source and context for future theological decisions. None of the great creeds of the Church were produced independently of what the Church thought and said in the previous generations.⁴¹

The Free Church of Scotland theologian James Bannerman stated nearly the same thing when he explained "...both in the inspired and uninspired history of the Church, in connection with its holding of Divine truth, we see examples of the necessity arising for a re-statement in a new form of words of the faith professed by the Church, in opposition to new forms of unbelief."⁴² Modern Presbyterians Gary DeMar and Peter Leithart, in answering Dave Hunt's *The Seduction of Christianity*, point out the same necessity.

A creedless faith opens the door to all types of theological aberrations and the unwelcome necessity of books like *The Seduction of Christianity* and *Beyond Seduction*. Why should we be surprised when we find heretical doctrines littering the theological roadside? In the attempt to abandon the creeds, we have opened Pandora's box and let loose a whole host of false

40. *Ibid.*, 42.

41. Leith, *Creeds*, 3.

42. J. Bannerman, *op. cit.*, I.291.



doctrines. The issue, therefore, is not ‘creed or no creed,’ but ‘*which* creed.’⁴³

There are those, such as the fundamentalist Dave Hunt, who proclaim that having a creed or confession of faith is simply nothing more or less than setting the words of men on the same footing as the word of God.⁴⁴ However, it is necessary to distinguish between a genuine apostolic tradition (*paradosis*) and the *uninspired* traditions of men. As Neufeld pointed out,

...the *paradosis* is something which is given as a trust to the one who receives it, so that it may be guarded and preserved, but also passed on to the faithful. There is clear evidence that the Christian *paradosis* represents the correct faith, and ‘orthodoxy’ means adherence to the *paradosis*.⁴⁵

A supposedly creedless Christianity is not and cannot be a protection of the truth. DeMar and Leithart correctly averred that it is impossible to test the statements of heretics against the Scriptures without having a creed by which we may do so.

So then, a creedless Christianity will not do. In fact a creedless Christianity is a contradiction, an impossibility. There must be a constant appraisal of what the Bible teaches about itself and about what it means to be a Christian. We are to ‘test’ everything by the standard of truth. Confessions and creeds are expressions of unity, demonstrations of a common faith that help the church gather around truth and fight against error.⁴⁶

No less a Presbyterian light than Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield was of the same opinion. He pointed out that it was not only an ecclesiastical necessity, but an anthropological necessity as well, for the church to frame creeds. It is a part of the human way of thinking that requires that we systematize our thinking about Scripture. It is impossible for us to hold two thoughts simultaneously without also knowing how those thoughts fit together.


There are some, no doubt, to whom it may seem presumptuous to attempt to systematize our knowledge of God. If we possess any knowledge of God at all, however, the attempt to systematize it is a necessity of the human spirit.

If we know so much as two facts concerning God, the human mind is incapable of holding these facts apart; it must contemplate them in relation to one another. Systemization is only a part of the irrepressible effort of the intelligence to comprehend the facts presented to it, an effort which the intelligence can escape only by ceasing to be intelligence.⁴⁷

Professor John Murray pointed out that framing of creeds is not only a necessity from the nature of the human spirit. It also arises from the necessity of demonstrating the unity of the Christian message with Scripture itself. This has been referred to by theologians as the “analogy of faith” or as the “analogy of Scripture.” But whichever term is used, we must see that there are not “many truths,” but a single truth with numerous aspects to it.

Since there is in Scripture the consent of all the parts and the unity of the whole, there is what has been called the analogy of the faith, or in other words, a system of truth. Creedal statement can and should take account of this and formulate its creed accordingly. This is the principle that governed the representative creeds of the sixteenth century Reformation.⁴⁸

Thus the nineteenth century southern Presbyterian Robert L. Dabney maintained correctly that the need for creeds arises *not* from the insufficiency of Scripture, but from the possible ambiguities of human language. “The necessity of a further test in form of a subsequent creed results not from any lack of proper selection or infallible accuracy in the words of the language of inspiration, but from the human nature and infirmity of mankind in their use of language.”⁴⁹ Dabney concluded,

A more imperative need of subsequent definition has arisen out of the infirmity of human intellect, and the blindness of the human heart which prompted professed believers in Scripture to frame new and discordant concepts of the leading terms of holy writ. Here we are face to face with a large group of stubborn facts, which it is simply childish to attempt to disregard.⁵⁰ 

43. Gary DeMar and Peter J. Leithart, *The Reduction of Christianity* (Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1988), 8.

44. The author will deal with objections to the use of confessions in subsequent articles.

45. Neufeld, *Confessions*, 27.

46. DeMar and Leithart, 10.

47. Benjamin B. Warfield, *Studies in Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1988 reprint of 1932), 95.

48. J. Murray, *Collected Writings*, II.284.

49. Dabney, “Doctrinal Contents,” V.138.

50. *Ibid.*, V.138-39.



Sermon CDs & Tapes, Tracts, Booklets, Etc.

Blue Banner Ministries offers the following products which can be ordered using the order form on page 36.

Speaking in Tongues: The Reformed View of the Charismata.

Pastor Bacon demonstrates clear meaning of the Scriptures regarding "speaking in tongues" by a careful exegesis of the passages concerned.

Three two hour video tapes. \$23.95.

Also available as 6 cassette tape set: Special Pricing for this issue only:

6 tapes in binder \$10.00 plus postage.

Sermon Subscription Service

Song of Solomon

Psalm 25:14 reminds the people of God that "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant." God adopts his people into communion with himself and calls them not servants, but friends. They know the fellowship of the Father and the Son. Sign up now for this on going series and hear each sermon as it is preached week by week. Available now on cassette tape or audio CD for \$10.00/month (Postage paid). Order together with the morning sermons on the book of Hebrews (Pastor Bacon is currently in Hebrews 12) and receive both for only \$15.00/month (postage paid). Specify audio CD or cassette tape.

33 Sermons on the Book of First Peter

During the spring of 1994, Pastor Bacon was preaching through the book of 1 Peter. His preaching and studying of this book was interrupted when God chose to lay Pastor Bacon aside for awhile with advanced heart disease which resulted in his having quadruple bypass surgery. In hospital, with tubes in his arms and wires holding his breastbone together, Pastor Bacon was given the opportunity to meditate on Saint Peter's teaching on afflictions and why they come into the life of believers. By God's grace, Pastor Bacon was able to return to his preaching through 1 Peter with a repaired heart and a humbled spirit. These sermons are available on 33 CDs (for audio CD players) or on cassette tape.

Set of 33 Audio CDs \$33.00, plus shipping.

Set of 33 Audio Tapes, \$41.25, plus shipping.

WESTMINSTER LARGER CATECHISM

Questions 1 -4

10 sermons now available on tape or Audio CDs

Tapes in Binders \$12.50

Audio CD in cases \$10.00

Best Bargain: God's Covenant with Man. 42- sermon series now available on CD ROM. **The Churches of the Revelation.** 20- sermon series now available on CD ROM.

Each CD \$10.00 postage extra. Specify series.

PLEASE NOTE: These are *not* audio CDs and require a multimedia capable computer with a web browser and Real Audio. Real Audio is available free over the Internet.

The Blue Banner



A Publication of First Presbyterian Church Rowlett

P O Box 141084

Dallas, TX 75214

Return Postage Guaranteed

**BULK RATE
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
ROWLETT, TX
Permit No. 242**

Volume 12 Number 2 — April / June 2003

The First Presbyterian Church of Rowlett

The Blue Banner is published by The First Presbyterian Church of Rowlett, Texas (Reformation Presbyterian Church). **Session:** Pastor Richard Bacon. Ruling Elders: Rev. Todd Ruddell, David Seekamp, Carl Betsch, Thomas Allie.

Contact Information: Email: pastor@fpcr.org WEB: <http://www.fpcr.org> Church Mail: P O Box 141084, Dallas, TX. 75214. Phone: 972-475-9164 or 972-475-2184. Fax: 972-475-5317

Worship Services: 10:30 AM and 2:00 PM on each Lord's Day. Visitors are welcome to stay for **lunch** between the two services. **Biblical Institutes:** 4:00 PM.

Location: First Presbyterian Church of Rowlett meets at 8210 Schrade Road, Rowlett, TX. From Interstate 30, take exit 64 north on Dalrock Road. From the Diamond Shamrock gas station, go 1.5 miles north to Schrade Road. Turn left and go approximately 1/4 mile. We are in the first building on the left. Parking is in the rear of the building.

Order Form

THE BLUE BANNER, P O BOX 141084, DALLAS, TX 75214

Item	Qty	Price Each	Total
Psalter (single copy)		\$15.00	
Psalter (case of 24)		\$216.00	
Note: Do not add any postage charges for Cases of Psalters ordered. A bill for postage will be sent once the cases are shipped.			
Add 10% for postage and handling (\$3.50 min) USA Only.*			
Total			

*Orders from outside the USA must be paid in US funds drawn on a U.S. bank. Please write for additional shipping costs.