

THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE ATONEMENT

I. The necessity of the atonement.

A. The atonement flows out of God's attribute of justice (Gen. 18:25; Lev. 10:1-3; 2 Sam. 6:1-8; Psa. 119:137; 145:17; Jer. 12:1; John 17:25; 2 Thess. 1:10; 1 John 2:29; 3:7; Rev. 16:5-7) and his attribute of grace and love (Rom. 5:6-11; 1 John 4:9,10; Eph. 1:3-14).

It is important to understand the difference between justice and mercy. Justice is that which is due or owed to a person; mercy is freely given.

God was not under the obligation to redeem anybody. Consider: Gen. 2:17; Luke 13:1-9. God did not need man to be an object of his love.

Jonathan Edwards wrote: "The grace of God in bestowing this gift is most free. It was what God was under no obligation to bestow. He might have rejected fallen man, as he did the fallen angels. It was what we never did anything to merit; it was given while we were yet enemies, and before we had so much as repented. It was from the love of God who saw no excellency in us to attract it; and it was without expectation of ever being requited for it - and it is from mere grace that the benefits of Christ are applied to such and such particular persons. Those that are called and sanctified are to attribute it alone to the good pleasure of God's goodness, by which they are distinguished. He is sovereign, and hath mercy on whom he will have mercy." From: Sermon on 1 Cor. 1:29-31: "God Glorified in Man's Dependence" in *Jonathan Edwards On Knowing Christ* 37.

John Murray wrote: "The accomplishment of redemption is concerned with what has been generally called the atonement. No treatment of the atonement can be properly oriented that does not trace its source to the free and sovereign love of God" (*Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* by John Murray, 9).

B. Two historical positions concerning the necessity of the atonement.

1. Hypothetical necessity.

This position holds that there is nothing inherent in the nature of God that requires the shedding of blood for the atonement of sin. God could have used other means to bring out salvation,

but, in his wisdom, he determined that the sacrifice of the Son of God was the way that most fully magnified his grace and had the greatest advantages. In God's sovereign decree, he determines only to save through the atonement, but he could have accomplished the same results in another manner.

2. Consequent absolute necessity.

This is the classic Protestant position. It maintains that consequent upon the good pleasure of God to save men, God was under the absolute necessity to accomplish this through the death of his Son.

John Murray writes: "In a word, while it was not inherently necessary for God to save, yet, since salvation had been purposed, it was necessary to secure this salvation through a satisfaction that could be rendered only through substitutionary sacrifice and blood-bought redemption" (*Ibid.*, p. 12). He also writes: "But is it not presumptuous for us to say that certain things are inherently necessary or impossible for God. It belongs to our faith in God to avow that he cannot lie and that he cannot deny himself. Such divine 'cannots' are his glory and for us to refrain from reckoning with such 'impossibles' would be to deny God's glory and perfection.

The question really is: does the Scripture provide us with evidence or considerations on the basis of which we may conclude that this is one of the things impossible or necessary for God, impossible for him to save sinners without vicarious sacrifice and inherently necessary, therefore, that salvation freely and sovereignly determined, should be accomplished by the blood-shedding of the Lord of glory" (*Ibid.*, 12-13).

The following points defend the concept of consequent absolute necessity:

a. The infinite disvalue of sin.

If God is the kind of God that requires a ransom to offset the infinite disvalue of sin, then that payment must be of infinite value. God, because he is just and holy, he must act in divine judgment against sin (Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10-13; Hab. 1:13; Ezek. 18:4; Nahum 1:2; Rom. 1:18; 2:5,6; 6:23).

John Murray writes, "Sin is the contradiction of God and he must react against it with holy indignation. This is to say that sin must meet with divine judgment (cf. Deut. 27:26; Nahum 1:2; Hab. 1:13; Rom. 1:18; 3:21-26; Gal. 3:10, 13). It is this inviolable sanctity of God's law, the immutable dictate of holiness and the

unflinching demand of justice, that makes mandatory the conclusion that salvation from sin with expiation and propitiation is inconceivable. It is this principle that explains the sacrifice of the Lord of glory, the agony of Gethsemane, and the abandonment of the accursed tree. It is this principle that undergirds the great truth that God is just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. For in the work of Christ the dictates of holiness and the demands of justice have been fully vindicated. God set him forth to be a propitiation to declare his righteousness.
Redemption: Accomplished and Applied, 18.

b. John 3:16 and other similar passages suggest that the only alternative to Christ's work of atonement is the eternal perdition of the sinner.

c. Since God is inviolably holy, the man to be accepted by him must be positively righteous. This implies the necessity of the doctrine of justification which implies the active or preceptive obedience of Christ, an obedience which has infinite merit.
 See: Gal. 3:21.

d. Passages where a strong necessity is found: Heb. 2:10-18; 9:18-28. See: *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* p. 15, 16 for an excellent exposition of Heb. 9.

e. Passages that teach that the efficacy of Christ's work is dependent on the unique nature of his person - truly God and truly man: Heb. 1:1-3; 2:9-18; 9:9-14, 22-28.

f. The supreme demonstration of God's love is presented in Scripture as the cross of Christ (Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:10). Would the cross be a supreme demonstration of God's love if there were no necessity for such an action? Would not the cross be a revelation of a unique and interesting plan, if it was not a necessity? In fact, if the necessity concept is removed from the cross, the action could bring into question God's love. Why would he allow his Son to suffer if it was not a necessity.
 See: Matthew 26:36-42.

See the concluding paragraph on page 18 of *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* by John Murray.

g. The eternal and immutable decree of God demands the atonement.

It is important not to misconstrue the term "consequent" in this classic terminology. This term needs to be perceived in terms of the atonement being logically consequent. God's eternal determination to save men is the logical antecedent to the eternal determination to save them by Christ. It could, therefore, be thought of in terms of "antecedent absolute necessity." However, "Consequent" could imply that there was a moment in the divine decree when God deliberated whether he would save some men or not, and a second moment when he deliberated whether he would save them by this means or that means. However, God's decree is eternal and immutable. Whether God would save and the means by which he would save are eternal, immutable determinations of his decree. Therefore, his eternal and immutable purpose makes all things absolutely necessary.

Robert Reymond writes, "To propose that he could have purposed in any other way than he did is to suppose that God's omniscience and his eternal decree could have been other than it is. To propose that anything could have been other than it is, is to suppose that God could have been other than he is. But this is impossible because he is the eternal and immutable God. . . . Therefore, God *had* to save the elect because of his eternal, immutable decree, and he *had* to save them the way he did because of the specific perfections of his character. To suppose otherwise is to conclude that God's *eternal* purpose had at some moment a degree of mutability about it which is foreign to the immutable character of God. So I would urge as a sixth, and perhaps, the most telling reason for the absolute necessity of Christ's atonement simply the eternal and immutable decree of God himself (*A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* by Robert Reymond, 667).

II. The nature of the atonement.

A. In the atonement, Christ was doing something positive and undoing the satanic kingdom. We will observe the positive action of the atonement when we look at the particular aspects of the atonement. The undoing action focuses on the destruction of Satan's kingdom. See: John 12:31; 1 John 3:8; Heb. 2:14,15; Col. 2:15.

B. All that Christ does in the atonement he does under the umbrella of obedience. He is perfectly obedient in his work of propitiation, sacrifice, reconciliation, and redemption.

See: Isa. 52:13; 53:11; Matt. 3:15; Luke 12:50; John 4:34; 6:38; 10:17,18; Rom. 5:19; Phil. 2:7,8; Heb. 2:10-18; 5:8-10; 10:5-9.

He came as a servant and, as God's servant, he destroyed the power of the enemy and redeemed us (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; Phil. 2:5f).

There are two aspects of Christ's obedience: his active and passive obedience. Active and passive are the classic terms, but the terms preceptive and penal obedience are clearer terms.

Preceptive obedience means that Christ fully met all the righteous demands of the Law of God.

Penal obedience means that Christ bore the penalties of a law-breaker. While the focus of this is his work on the cross, it includes his whole life. His entire state of humiliation is part of this work. "He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3).

John Calvin wrote: "Now someone asks, how has Christ abolished sin, banished the separation between us and God, and acquired righteousness to render God favourable and kindly toward us? To this we can in general reply that he has achieved this for us by the whole course of his obedience" (*Institutes*, II, 16, 5).

John Murray presents the obedience of Christ under four categories: Inwardness, progressiveness, the climactic demand, and the dynamic of obedience (*The Collected Writings of John Murray*, Vol. 2, p. 151-157).

1. The inwardness.

Jesus obedience was not a mechanical obedience, but an obedience from the heart. He was externally obedient to the law of God and that external obedience was motivated by perfect internal obedience.

Murray writes: "To be an act of obedience, the whole dispositional complex of motive, direction, and purpose must be in conformity to the divine will" (*Ibid.*, p. 152).

See: Psa. 40:7-8; Heb. 10:5-10; John 4:34; 6:38; 10:17,18.

2. The progressiveness.

When we think of a progression in Christ's obedience, two thoughts are important to remember.

First, Christ's growth in obedience does not mean that he moved from disobedience to obedience. The idea is that he moved from one level of obedience to a greater level of obedience. Each level of obedience had greater and more extensive demands than the previous level.

Second, this growth in obedience is in regard to his human nature.

See Murray, *Collected Writings*, Vol. 2, p. 153.

See: Luke 2:52; Heb. 5:8.

3. The climactic demand.

Jesus' death upon the cross is his climactic act of obedience. Matt. 20:28 (Mark 10:45); Luke 24:26,46; John 3:14; 6:33; 10:11, 14,15, 17,18, 26; 12:23,24, 31-33; Phil. 2:6-8.

It is not simply a physical death on the cross, but all the dynamics of Christ being a propitiation, sacrifice, redemption, and reconciliation for us that are involved in this act of obedience.

As Jesus approached his work of salvation on the cross, he expressed great distress concerning the upcoming work. Murray suggests that as the event drew closer, Jesus, in his human nature, had an enlargement of knowledge concerning what was involved in being made a curse for us.

See: Mark 14:33-34; John 12:27.

Consider especially his prayers in Gethsemane: Matt. 26:39, 42, 44; John 18:11.

John Murray writes: "We must reckon with the enormity of his agony and the reality of his human nature. Here was the unrelieved, unmitigated judgment of God against sin. It filled him with horror and dread. The recoil evidenced in the prayer is the proof of the ordeal and of the necessary sensibilities and sensitivities of his human nature. . . . Any attempt to deny or tone down the reality of his recoil and the revulsion betrays our failure to appreciate the bitterness of the cup and the intensity of his commitment to the Father's will. It was

the cup of damnation voluntarily taken, vicariously borne, and finished in agony" (*Ibid.*, 155).

4. The dynamic.

Heb. 2:10; 5:8-9

Murray writes: "His obedience was forged in the furnace of trial, temptation, and suffering. By these ordeals throughout the whole course of humiliation, his heart, mind, and will were framed, so that in each situation as it emerged in the unfolding of the Father's design he was able to meet all the demands, and at the climatic point of his commission, freely and fully to drink the cup of damnation and pour out his soul in death" (*Ibid.*, 156).

Every aspect of Christ's work of salvation is accomplished because he is the obedient God-man.

III. The specific actions of the atonement.

A. As an obedient Son, he offers himself as a sacrifice.

Christ's work of sacrifice can be categorized as follows:

His work as High Priest - Heb. 7:24-27; 9:11-14.

Christ's cross work is depicted as the work of a high priest who offers himself as a sacrifice to God.

His work as the Lamb of God - John 1:29, 36; 1 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 5:8f. Christ is described as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. We are redeemed with the precious blood of the Lamb and have been purchased for God with his blood.

His work as a sacrifice - 1 Cor. 5:7; Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:23; 9:26; 10:10-14.

His work as an offering - Eph. 5:2; Heb. 7:27; 9:14, 28; 10:10-14

Four things are implied in the idea of sacrifice:

1. Perfection on his part is implied. Consider the unblemished lamb in the sacrifices of the ceremonial Law.
2. The imputation of sin is implied. If He is dying a death of sacrifice, then sin has been imputed to Him.

Three great acts of imputation in the Bible are 1) Adam's sin to the race (Rom. 5:12-19); 2) The imputation of sins of the elect to Christ (above Scriptures); 3) The imputation of Christ's righteousness to His elect (Rom. 3:21-28; 4:1-8; 5:14-19; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9).

3. Sacrifice implies substitution.

There are three great preposition in Greek concerning the work of Christ:

Peri - "For" - 1 Pet. 3:18; Rom. 8:3; Gal. 1:4.

Huper - "In behalf of" - Rom. 5:6-8; 8:32; Gal. 2:13,20; Eph. 5:2

Anti - "In stead of, in place of" - Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45.

Consider Isaiah 53 with the idea of substitution.

4. The necessary expiation or cancellation of sins. Gerrhardus Vos writes, "Wherever [in the sacrificial system] there is slaying and manipulation of blood there is expiation (*Biblical Theology*, p. 135).

B. As an obedient Son, He is a propitiation for sins.

John Murray writes, "Perhaps no tenet respecting the atonement has been more violently criticized than this one. It has been assailed as involving a mythological conception of God, as supposing internal conflict in the mind of God and between the persons of the Godhead. It has been charged that this doctrine represents the Son as winning over the incensed Father to clemency and love, a supposition wholly inconsistent with the fact that the love of God is the very fount from which the atonement springs. *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, 31.

Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10.

To propitiate means to appease or placate wrath. Propitiation focuses on the wrath of God against sin. The background to Romans 3:25 is Romans 1:18; 2:1-6.

Also, consider Romans 5:6-11 in terms of wrath being propitiated.

John Murray wrote: "Propitiation presupposes the wrath and displeasure of God, and the purpose of propitiation is the removal of this displeasure" (*Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, 30).

Robert Reymond writes that ". . . the idea of the wrath of God is 'stubbornly rooted in the Old Testament, where it is referred to 585 times' by no less than twenty different Hebrew words that underscore God's indignation against human sin and evil.

The matter is no different in the New Testament. The occurrences of the verb in Romans 3:25 and 1 John 2:2 will not tolerate Dodd's meaning [only expiation]. In the section leading up to Romans 3:25, namely Romans 1:18-3:20, Paul argues not only for the case of universal human sin but also directly refers to God's wrath in 1:18; 2:5, 8; and 3:5. Because divine wrath occupies such an important place in the argument leading up to the usage of this verb in Romans 3:25 on is justified in looking for some expression indicative of its cancellation in the process that accomplishes salvation. Reymond, *The Lamb of God* (Christian Focus Publications, 2006), 96. He cites Leon Morris, "Propitiation" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 888.

God's wrath against sin is linked with His holiness and justice. Because God is holy, He cannot ignore sin. He promises His divine vengeance against those who break His Law - Exodus 34:7; Deut. 32:34,35; Hab. 1:13; Ezek. 18:4; Heb. 10:26-31; 12:18-25.

John Murray writes: "The atonement is that which meets the exigencies of holiness and justice. The wrath of God is the inevitable reaction of the divine holiness against sin. Sin is the contradiction of the perfection of God and he cannot but recoil against that which is the contradiction of himself. Such recoil is holy indignation. 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness' (Rom. 1:18). The judgment of God upon sin is essentially his wrath. If we are to believe that the atonement is God's vicarious dealing with the judgment upon sin, it is absolutely necessary to hold that it is the vicarious endurance of that in which this judgment is epitomized. To deny propitiation is to undermine the nature of the atonement as the vicarious endurance of the penalty of sin. In a word, it is to deny substitutionary atonement" (*Redemption. . .* 32-33).

The love of God as well as his holiness and justice are demonstrated in Christ's work of propitiation. God's wrath

against sin is propitiated through the cross and that work flows out of God's mercy and love (1 John 4:10). This magnifies God's love because it sets forth clearly what his redemptive love demands and accomplished.

Murray writes: "God is love. But the supreme object of that love is himself. And because he loves himself supremely he cannot suffer what belongs to the integrity of his character and glory to be compromised or curtailed. That is the reason for propitiation. God appeases his own holy wrath in the cross of Christ in order that the purpose of his love to lost men may be accomplished in accordance with and to the vindication of all the perfections that constitute his glory" (Ibid. p. 32).

Philip E. Hughes writes, "To present propitiation as meaning that the suffering of the Son has transformed the Father from a wrathful God into a well-disposed God is a perilous caricature of biblical truth. For one thing, it introduces an intolerable dichotomy between the Father and the Son, as through the Son by acting independently could somehow induce a change in the Father's attitude, whereas his coming and his saving work were, as we will be reminded later on (10:7-10), entirely in harmony with the will of the Father. There is but 'one' God, and we cannot divide him into two 'parts,' one for us and the other against us. For another thing, the wrath of God, which is the expression of his absolute holiness and righteousness, is his 'constant' attitude to sin. It is still manifested against sin. The ultimate day toward which the world is moving is the day of judgment, which is such because it is the day of God's wrath (Ps. 110:5; prov. 11:4; Zeph. 1:15; Rom. 2:5; Rev. 6:17) - indeed, it is strikingly significant that in this connection Revelation 6:16 even speaks of 'the wrath of the Lamb!'" *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 121.

Gordon Clark writes, "People who stress the goodness and love of God and fail to attend to God's righteousness and holiness cannot understand the death of Christ. These people so misunderstand love and goodness that they think God will not punish anybody, or at least not punish them much. God is too good to let anyone perish, they say. Why then did Christ, God's Son, have to suffer so? The explanation lies in God's perfect justice and righteousness. God defined sin by promulgating laws. He attached a terrible penalty to every infraction of the law. . . . The Gospel, . . . the good news we preach, is that Jesus Christ by his death expiates sin, propitiates his Father, and satisfies divine justice." *What Do Presbyterians Believe?*, 100.

C. As an obedient Son, He reconciles us to God.

Sacrifice addresses the needs associated with our guilt in sin and propitiation addresses the need that comes from God's wrath against sin. Reconciliation addresses the need that stems from our alienation from God. See: Isa. 59:2.

Murray writes: "Reconciliation presupposes disrupted relations between God and men. It implies enmity and alienation. This alienation is twofold, our alienation from God and God's alienation from us. The cause of the alienation is, of course, our sin, but the alienation consists not only in our unholy enmity against God but also in God's holy alienation from us" (*Ibid.*, 33).

The focus of Christ's work of reconciliation is the removal of God's holy alienation from us.

See: Rom. 5:6-11; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Eph. 2:14-17; Col. 1:19-22

1. Rom. 5:6-11

The reconciliation mentioned in this passage is the removal of God's alienation from us through the death of Christ. It is not speaking of the removal of our alienation from God.

a. Verse 8 - The death of Christ is set forth as the supreme demonstration of the love of God. This emphasizes the divine attitude in this historical event, not the subjective attitude of man toward God.

b. This passage states that we were reconciled to God through the death of Christ. The tense indicates that it is an accomplished work, completed once for all when Christ died.

c. The phrase, "reconciled to God through the death of his Son" (verse 10) parallels the phrase, "having now been justified by His blood" (verse 9). Justification is forensic and does not refer to an inner change in the disposition of man. The parallel phrase "reconciled to God" must be given the same judicial or forensic meaning.

d. Verse 11 states that we have received the reconciliation. This does not indicate a change in our disposition, but rather a change in the disposition of God. Verse 11 does not say, "we

have now received the removal of our enmity" (See: Murray, p. 40).

2. 2 Cor. 5:18-21

a. The reconciliation is presented as a work of God (verses 18, 19). Therefore, human action is not the focus of this work.

b. This reconciliation is a finished or accomplished work. The tenses in verses 18, 19, 21 clearly show this. It is a past work that is accomplished, not an ongoing work.

Robert Reymond writes, ". . . the verb form in the phrase "who reconciled us to himself through Christ" in 5:18 is in the aorist tense, again suggesting that the removal of alienation occurred *punctiliarly* with the death of Christ and is now an *accomplished* fact. But such a description of the effect of Christ's reconciliatory act can be true only with reference to God and only with reference to those for whom Christ died since most men continue to remain at enmity with God" (*ibid.*, 647).

Paul sets for the idea of reconciliation in 5:19 in terms of two complementary forensic acts, one negative and one positive. God was reconciling the world, by not imputing men's trespasses and also imputing them to Christ (5:21).

Therefore, Paul is setting forth the concept of reconciliation in terms of a past, objective, and forensic event, not as an ongoing, subjective operation in men's hearts.

c. Verse 21 states that it is Christ's vicarious sin-bearing that accomplishes this reconciliation. Christ's work of atonement has a Godward focus, not a focus of changing the disposition of man. Reconciliation contains the idea of the non-imputation of trespasses (verse 19).

d. This accomplished work of reconciliation is the message committed to us (verse 19).

John Murray writes: "It [reconciliation] constitutes the content of the message. But the message is that which is declared to be a fact. Conversion, it ought to be remembered, is not the gospel. It is the demand of the gospel message and the proper response to it. Any transformation which occurs in us is the effect in us of that which is proclaimed to have been accomplished by God. The change in our hearts and minds presupposes the reconciliation" (*Ibid.*, 41).

e. The exhortation, "be reconciled to God" (verse 20) must be interpreted in the context of the objective work of Christ of reconciliation. "It means: be no longer in a state of alienation from God but enter rather into the relation of favor and peace established by the reconciliatory work of Christ" (Murray, p. 42).

3. Ephesians 2:14-17

a. Eph. 2:16 is in the aorist tense indicating that the reconciliation was an accomplished fact through Christ's cross work.

b. The enmity in Eph. 2:14 describes the mutual hostility which existed between Jews and Gentiles. The work of Christ addressed that mutual hostility. The *hina* ("in order that") clause of Eph. 2:15 governs not only the verb of creating in 2:15, but also the verb of reconciling in 2:16. In other words, Christ's work not only created one new man out of Jews and Gentiles, but also reconciled both to God.

Charles Hodge comments: The *enmity* in this place. . . many understand to be the enmity between the Jews and Gentiles. . . . It is urged in favour of this interpretation that it is unnatural to make the word *enmity* in this verse and in verse 15 refer to different things. . . . It is [they say] the enmity between the Jews and Gentiles and their union of which the apostle is treating. But that idea had just before been expressed. It is perfectly pertinent to the apostle's object to show that the union between the Jews and Gentiles was affected by the reconciliation of both, by [Christ's] atoning death, to God. The former flows from the later. In this connection the words 'having slain the enmity on it,' serve to explain the declaration that the cross of Christ reconciled us to God. His death satisfied justice, it propitiated God, i.e. removed his wrath, or his enmity to sinners. . . . this view is sustained by the constantly recurring representations of Scripture" (*Commentary on Ephesians*, 139-140).

Again, Christ's work on the cross, in its reconciliatory character, is said to have removed God's, not man's, enmity toward the one new man created by Christ. The peace proclaimed is peace with God (Rom. 5:1).

4. Colossians 1:19-22

a. The verbs "to reconcile" and "he has reconciled" in Col. 1:20-21 are both in the aorist tense.

b. God accomplished the reconciliation through Christ "by making peace [also in aorist tense] through the blood of his cross (Col. 1:20) and "by the body of his flesh through death" (Col. 1:22). It is Christ's *death* that reconciled God to men, but Christ's death *per se* has not removed the unholy hostility of man toward God. This again emphasizes the Godward focus of this aspect of Christ's atonement.

In terms of the "all things" in Col. 1:20, it is best to think of it as referring to human beings, angels, and the whole of creation. That it refers to human beings is clear from Col. 1:21-23.

The reconciliation of angels is included because of the scope of the passage (Col. 1:16). However, this reconciliation is not salvation, but subjugation or pacification (cf. Col. 2:15).

The reconciliation of "all things" because verse 16 mentions all things "in heaven and on earth" and v. 20 describes "all things" reconciled as including things "whether on earth or in heaven." Therefore, Paul presents a chiasm: "in heaven and on earth" (v. 16), "on earth or in heaven" (v. 20).

Paul teaches that Christ accomplished a cosmic reconciliation. Five times in verses 16-17 and 20 Paul writes "all things" and each instance refers to the whole creation.

P. T. O'Brien writes, "The 'reconciliation of all things' ought to be understood, in our judgment, with Lohse to mean that the 'universe has been reconciled in that heaven and earth have been brought back into their divinely created and determined order. . . the universe is again under its head and . . . cosmic peace has returned" (*Colossians, Philemon*, 56).

Robert Peterson comments, "When Paul writes, 'For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself *all things*, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross' (Col. 1:19-20), 'all things' refers to saved human beings, subjugated demons, and the renewed heaven and earth" (*Salvation Accomplished by the Son*, 301).

See: Rom. 8:18-25.

The ESV Study Bible note on Col. 1:20 states, "As the 'Prince of Peace' (Isa. 9:6), Jesus will ultimately quell all rebellion against God and his purposes. For believers, this means present reconciliation to God as his friends. As for nonbelievers and the demonic powers, Christ's universal reign of peace will be enforced on them, for their rebellion will be decisively defeated by Christ as conquering king . . . so they can no longer do any harm in the universe. The basis for Christ's reign of peace is the blood of his cross. The cross truly is the pivotal point in human and cosmic history" (*ESV Study Bible*, 2295).

D. As an obedient Son, he redeems us.

The idea of redemption is the concept of purchase and the payment of a ransom.

Arminian theologians construe the concept of redemption purely in terms of deliverance by power *apart from price*. This is done primarily to escape the force the idea that Christ actually redeemed or purchased a people in his work on the cross. Just as in the other aspects of Christ's cross work, redemption is an accomplished action that takes place on the cross; it is never presented in Scripture in terms of a potential work.

B. B. Warfield, in his study of "The New Testament Terminology of Redemption" carefully demonstrated that the *lutro* word-group always retains its native sense of ransoming as the mode of deliverance throughout the whole history of secular Greek literature, the Septuagint, the New Testament material, and the early Patristic literature (*The Person and Work of Christ*, 429-475).

John Murray writes: "Ransom presupposes some kind of bondage or captivity, and redemption, therefore, implies that from which the ransom secures us. Just as sacrifice is directed to the need created by our guilt, propitiation to the need that arises from the wrath of God, and reconciliation to the need arising from our alienation from God, so redemption is directed to the bondage to which our sin has consigned us. This bondage is, of course, multiform. Consequently redemption as purchase or ransom receives a wide variety of reference and application. Redemption applies to every respect in which we are bound, and it releases us unto a liberty that is nothing less than the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (*Ibid.*, 43).

He also wrote: "Redemption, therefore, in our Lord's view consisted in substitutionary blood-shedding or blood-shedding in the room and stead of many with the end in view of thereby purchasing to himself the many on whose behalf he gave his life a ransom" (*Ibid.*, 47).

1. New Testament evidence that supports that redemption contains the concept of purchase.

Jesus:

Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45 - "a ransom for many (*lutron anti pollon*). Jesus viewed his death as a sacrificial death offered up as a ransom in the place of (*anti*) others.

Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:19, 20; John 10:11, 15.
Jesus applies the vicarious death of the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 to himself in Luke 22:37.

These passages emphasize the idea that Jesus is giving himself for them.

Peter:

1 Peter 1:18-19 - Christ's blood is contrasted with silver and gold, therefore, supporting the idea of a payment rendered for forgiveness.

John:

John uses the *agorazo* word-group (commercial terminology of the market place) to teach the same concept that redemptive deliverance requires a payment price.

Rev. 5:9-10; 14:3-4.

Hebrews:

Heb. 9:12, 15 - Christ's blood is contrasted with the blood of goats and calves and the price aspect is emphasized.

Paul:

Romans 3:24-27 - In this context, "redemption" is the governing context for the passage. Paul speaks of this redemption as "in Christ Jesus" (vs. 24) and "in his blood" (vs. 25) as a

propitiating redemption and as a redemption which purchased our justification through faith.

John Murray writes, "We may not artificially separate redemption as ransom from the other categories in which the work of Christ is to be interpreted. These categories are but aspects from which the work of Christ once for all accomplished must be viewed and therefore they may be said to *interpermeate* one another" (ibid., 48).

It is also important to note that justification by grace through faith is purchased by Christ on the cross. This has significance concerning the design of the atonement.

Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14 - We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins ("through his blood" is omitted in Colossians).

In four contexts, Paul speaks of our redemption eschatologically.

Rom. 8:23 - The redemption secured by Christ and applied to the soul for forgiveness is, in the final consummation, applied to the body.

Eph. 1:14; 4:30 - This refers to our final redemption from all evil which will occur on the "day of redemption." Paul brings out that Christ's redemption, which procured the Spirit's sealing for all those for whom he died, secures our final salvation. In the same way the word order of 1 Cor. 1:30 implies that redemption be construed as referring to our redemption in the eschatological consummation. This eschatological redemption is grounded in the redemption secured by Christ at Calvary (see the context of these passages: Eph. 1:7; 4:32; 5:2; 1 Cor. 1:18-25).

1 Cor. 6:19-20; 7:23; Gal. 3:13; 4:4-5 (All of these passages contain the *agorazo* word-group).

Acts 20:28; Titus 2:14

Robert Reymond writes: ". . . Christ's cross work is seen in the New Testament material as a *redemptive act*, and in every instance, either in the immediate or near context, the ransom price he paid (his blood or death), which is what made his work redemptive in nature, is indicated. And it is only theological perversity that leads men to deny this and to insist rather that

redemption and ransom simply speak of deliverance through power" (*A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, p. 656).

2. Redemption's Godward Reference.

In the early and medieval church many church fathers such as Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Basil, the two Gregories, Cyril of Alexandria, Jerome, Augustine, and even as late as Bernard and Luther, held that Christ's death as a ransom was paid to Satan who then released his hold upon God's elect. This view, because of lack of Scriptural support, gradually disappeared.

The question to whom Christ paid the ransom is, however, a legitimate one. The answer is that Christ's death as a ransom was paid to God whose holiness and justice had been offended by man's transgression of his law.

Anselm rightly stated, "As God owed nothing to the devil but punishment, so. . . whatever was demanded of man, he owed to God and not to the devil" (*Cur Deus Homo*, trans. Sidney Norton Deane, Book II, Chapt. 19, p. 285, 286).

3. Redemption's Manward References.

In every instance the aorist tense is used to describe Christ's redemptive work on the cross. Therefore, when Jesus died, his death actually redeemed, procured, or purchased everything essential to the deliverance or liberation of those for whom he died. However, unlike propitiation, sacrifice, and reconciliation, redemption also has a manward reference. Ransom and redemption presuppose our bondage and Christ's work of redemption is also directed toward the bondage to which our sin has consigned us.

In this regard, there are two main categories from which we are redeemed: Law and sin.

1. Law.

First of all, it is important to note that Scripture does not say that we are redeemed from the law itself. We are never released from the obligation to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength or our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:40; Rom. 13:10). The terms of Scripture are specific in regards to our redemption and the law of God.

a. The curse of the law - Gal. 3:10-13.

The curse of the law is its penal sanction against the law breaker. This is the curse or wrath of God that rests upon everyone who does not keep the law of God perfectly.

It is from this curse that Christ purchases his people in that he became a curse for them. Christ bore the full intensity and payment of that curse.

b. Christ delivered his people from any further need for the pedagogical bondage implicit in the ceremonialism of the Old Testament salvific economy.

Every aspect of the ceremonial law is fulfilled in Christ.

Gal. 3:23; 4:1-7; 5:1

The idea in this aspect of redemption is the release or redemption from the tutelary bondage of the Mosaic economy. The people of God in the Old Testament were children of God through the grace and mercy of God, but they were as children under age. The ceremonial law, with its foreshadowing characteristics served as a tutor and governor (Gal. 3:23-26).

John Murray writes: "The consideration particularly relevant to the price paid for this redemption is the fact that Christ was made under law. He was born under the Mosaic law; he was subjected to its conditions and he fulfilled its terms. In him the Mosaic law realized its purpose, and its meaning received in him its permanent validity and embodiment. Consequently he redeemed from the relative and privisional bondage of which the Mosaic economy was the instrument" (ibid., 45).

He also writes: "The grace of the New Testament [over against the grace of the Old Testament] appears in this: that by redemption accomplished and by faith in Christ (see Gal. 3:26) all without distinction (Gal. 3:28) are instated in the full blessing of sonship, without having to undergo the tutelary preparation corresponding to the pedagogical discipline of the Old Testament period. There is no recapitulation in the individual realm of what obtained in the history of progressive revelation and realization" ("Adoption," in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, 1:71).

Therefore, in the new covenant, neither Jews or Gentiles are required to undergo the tutelary aspects of the ceremonial law.

Christ fulfilled all the obligations and the foreshadowing qualities of the ceremonial law.

See also: Mark 7:19; 1 Tim. 4:3; Gal. 5:6

c. The law of works - Phil. 3:9; Rom. 3:21-4:8; 5:19.

Christ has redeemed us from the law as a covenant of works in that he has fulfilled all the demands of the law for us. Christ kept the law perfectly and his obedience is the righteousness credited to us in our justification.

Murray writes: "Christ has redeemed us from the necessity of keeping the law as the condition of our justification and acceptance with God. Without such redemption there could be no justification and no salvation. It is the obedience of Christ himself that has secured this release. For it is by his obedience that many will be constituted righteous (Rom. 5:19). In other words, it is the active and passive obedience of Christ that is the price of this redemption, active and passive obedience because he was made under law, fulfilled all the requirements of righteousness and met all the sanctions of justice" (ibid. 45).

Consider Rom. 2:5-13 in terms of the demand of the law of perfect obedience.

2. Sin.

Two aspects of sin are the focus of this work of redemption: the guilt of sin and the power of sin. The two effects that flow from this work of redemption are justification and forgiveness of sin and deliverance from the enslaving power of sin.

Redemption from the guilt of sin and the effect of justification is seen in the following passages: Rom. 3:24-25 (notice the interpenetration of the aspects of Christ's work in this passage); Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:15.

Redemption from the enslaving power of sin is seen in: Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18; 2:24; Rom. 6.

This is the foundation for definitive sanctification and progressive sanctification.

See: 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Acts 20:32; 26:18 -
 These verses speak of a sanctification that is just as
 puncticular as justification.

Romans 6 speaks of dying once and for all to sin and that dying
 being the basis of progressive growth in grace.
 1 Peter 2:24 contains the same idea.

Just as justification responds to the question of the sinner's
 relationship to the law of God in that it makes him righteous
 before the law, definitive sanctification is answering the
 question of the relationship of the Christian to the power and
 mastery of sin. When a person believes and repents, a radical
 cleavage occurs; the dominion and power of sin is removed from
 the believer. The believer is no longer under the tyranny of
 sin with no possibility of escape; he is no longer dead in sin
 and a slave to sin.

Just as the ground of justification is pardon of sin and the
 imputation of Christ's righteousness, the ground of cleavage
 from sin is the believer's union with Christ in his death and
 resurrection. In a positional sense, the break with sin is
 made.

See: Romans 6:1-11.

This is the basis of fighting against sin and growing in obedi-
 ence to God. It makes growth in obedience possible.

See: Romans 6:1-14, 20-22.

Also consider 1 John 3:9 and 1 John 5:16-18.

E. As an obedient Son, he destroys the satanic kingdom
 (handout)

IV. The perfection of the atonement.

A. The historic objectivity of the atonement. The atonement
 does not take place subjectively in you. It is not a subjective
 "I - thou" encounter. It is an accomplished event that takes
 place objectively. This is against any view that would suggest
 that the atonement is to be interpreted "in terms of the ethical
 effects it is calculated to produce in us" and against
 neoorthodoxy, which contends that the "atoning event" is always
 a direct theophany outside of ordinary history in "primal"
 history in which Christ becomes "contemporaneous" to the
 religious existent.

B. The finality of the atonement. The atonement is a once for all time event. It is never repeated (Heb. 7:27; 9:11,12, 23-28; 10:10-18; John 19:30). This opposes the Roman Catholic concept of an ongoing sacrifice. It also address the Roman Catholic concept that the faithful by their suffering either in this life or in purgatory must also make satisfaction for their sins. If Christ's work is finished, priests offering sacrifices are not needed.

C. The uniqueness of Christ is emphasized in the atonement. This opposes liberalism's view that Christ was simply an example. Only Christ could do the work of Christ.

D. The intrinsic efficacy of his work. The work of the atonement is effective to accomplish all that it was designed to accomplish. This opposes all forms of universal redemption. Christ truly accomplished an atonement and paid the price for the sins of those for whom the atonement was designed: the elect of God.

V. The design of the atonement.

Definite atonement is a term used to describe the intent or design of the atonement. In the classical five points of Calvinism this is called limited atonement. This term can be misleading because both Arminians and Calvinists limit the atonement, but they limit it in different ways. The Arminian limits it in term of its effectiveness; the Calvinist limits in terms of its scope.

The Calvinist argues that Christ died specifically for the elect and actually accomplished redemption for them. Later, the Holy Spirit applied that accomplished redemption to the elect.

The Arminian argues that Christ died for every individual ever born, but he only died potentially for those people and did not actually accomplish redemption for them. The accomplishment of redemption only occurs whenever an individual exercises his faith and, therefore, receives this potential atonement.

Charles Spurgeon, in defending the Calvinist position, said, "The Arminian builds a bridge as wide as the world itself, but it only goes half-way across the river. The Calvinist builds a narrower bridge, but it goes all the way across."

A. Support for the doctrine of definite atonement.

1. Scripture often qualifies those for whom Christ died.
 - a. He dies for his sheep - John 10:11,14,15 - compare to vs. 26.
 - b. He dies for his people to actually save them from their sins (not potentially) - Matt. 1:21
 - c. He dies specifically for the church - Acts 20:28; Eph.5:25-27.
 - d. He dies for the elect - Romans 8:32-35 (note the context).
 - e. He dies for many, not all - Matt. 20:28 (Mark 10:45); 26:28; Mark 14:24; Isa. 53:10-12; Heb. 9:28.
 - f. He dies for those given to him by the Father - John 6:37-40.
2. His atonement is never spoken of in potential terms; it is always presented as an accomplished work - Rev. 5:9,10; Rom. 3:25,26; 5:6-11; Gal. 3:13.

Robert Reymond writes: "The Scriptures make it clear that Christ died not a potentially but an actually *sacrificial* death on the cross (1 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 9:23, 26, 10:24), becoming there both sin (2 Cor. 5:21) and curse (Gal. 3:13) as the substitute *for* others (*peri* - Rom. 8:3; Gal. 1:4; 1 Pet. 3:18), as the substitute *in behalf of* others (*hyper* - Rom. 5:6-8; 8:32; 14:15; Gal. 2:13, 20; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:15; Heb. 2:9), as the substitute *for the sake of* others (*dia* - 1 Cor. 8:11), and as the substitute *in the stead or place of* others (*anti* - Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45), thereby paying the penalty, bearing the curse, and dying the death for all those for whom he died. Christ by his death work actually (1) *destroyed* the works of the devil in behalf of (1 John 3:8; Heb. 2:14-15; Col. 2:14-15), (2) *propitiated* God's wrath for (by satisfying the demands of divine justice) (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10), (3) *reconciled* God to (Rom. 5:10-11; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20-21), and (4) *redeemed* from the curse of the law and the guilt and power of sin (Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Tit. 2:14) all those for whom he died as a sacrifice. If he did his cross work for all mankind, then the sins of all mankind have been atoned for. But then all mankind would be saved, for what is it which keeps any single man from heaven but his sin? Unless, that is, God punishes sin twice - once in the person of Christ and again in the person of the unrepentant sinner. But the Scriptures will not permit us to espouse either the

universal salvation of all mankind or the enactment of double jeopardy by God. The only conclusion that one may fairly draw is that Christ did not do his cross work for all; he did it rather only for some, and for all the sins of those people" (ibid., 679-680).

3. Christ's priestly work and work of atonement are tied together. In Christ's priestly work, he does not pray for the world, but for the elect - John 17:2, 6, 9, 20, 24. If his intercession is limited to the elect (the people given to him by the Father), then the offering of himself is also limited.

4. Those for whom Christ died Paul says died with him and rose again with him. All men do not participate in his death and resurrection. All men do not live out the power of the resurrection. Therefore, this points toward the design of the atonement having a focus toward the elect of God. See: Rom. 6:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:14-15.

5. A definite atonement is consistent with the particular work of the Father in election and the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. The Father elects a group of people to salvation; the Son redeems those people; the Holy Spirit applies that salvation to those people. Since the Father's work is limited, so is the Son's work. The two works are in harmony with each other (See: Rom. 8:29-34; 9:1-25; Eph. 1:3-14; John 3:1-10).

6. The nature of the work of Christ demands a particular atonement. A universal atonement attacks the nature of the atonement (makes it potential only). Did Christ really satisfy divine justice? If he did universally, and God's justice is really satisfied for every individual, then why is anybody lost? The Arminian has Christ dying for no man savingly; he only makes salvation possible. In Arminian theology, Christ's work could have saved no one. The Father's hopes and plans are thwarted, the Son's work is to no avail, the Holy Spirit is resisted and man goes to hell as sovereign in God's universe. However, Scripture presents that the people given to the Son by the Father will be saved (John 6:37-45; John 17:2) and Christ will be satisfied in the accomplishment of his work (Isa. 53:10-12).

However, the Scriptural concept of the atonement is that Christ actually satisfied divine justice on the cross for his people and, therefore, secured the salvation of the elect.

Tetelestai illustration.

See: *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* by John Owen
p. 302-303.

7. The particularity of the gift of faith, a purchased blessing through Christ's cross work.

The Bible teaches that faith in Jesus Christ is an absolute necessity for salvation. However, saving faith is not present in the fallen heart. John Gerstner said, "Alongside getting faith out of a heart that is utterly hostile and unbelieving, making a silk purse out of a sow's ear or getting blood from a turnip is child's play" (*The Atonement and the Purpose of God*, p. 109). Therefore, faith is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8,9; Phil. 1:29; Acts 13:48; 16:14; 18:27). Moreover, Scripture makes it clear that "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms" that men receive, they receive by virtue of the "in Christ" relation and Christ's procuring work at the cross (Eph. 1:3-7; Rom. 8:32; 1 Cor. 4:7; Gal. 3:10-13). Therefore, saving faith in Christ is one of the saving spiritual graces which Christ's death procured for all for whom he died. Since "not everyone has faith" (2 Thess. 3:2) nor will everyone finally have faith (Matt. 7:21-23; 25:46), and since it is impossible to conceive that God would not grant every spiritual blessing to those for whom Christ died and procured those blessings, we must conclude that Christ did not die savingly for all men.

This same argument also applies to the gift of repentance which was purchased for a particular people, but not for all (Acts 5:31; 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25).

The elect, however, have received a "righteousness that is by faith" (Rom. 11:6-7 - in this context referring to elect Jews, but the same principle extends to elect Gentiles [see: Rom. 9:30, 31]).

8. The number of people, by divine arrangement, who actually hear the gospel.

It is difficult to hold to the position that God intended Christ's death for every individual when he has not arranged for every individual to hear the gospel.

For example, in the Old Testament, God related to Israel differently than he did to other nations. He revealed himself to Abraham and his descendants, made covenants with them, gave

them his law and oracles. He did not do this with the Gentile nations.

See: Eph. 2:12; Acts 14:16; 17:30 - "overlooked their ignorance" in the sense that he did nothing directly to overcome it.

Rom. 3:1-2; Psa. 147:19,20.

God only adopted Israel as his son (Rom. 9:4,5; Amos 3:2).
Matt. 11:25-27

Paul was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia - Acts 16:6-8). As a result the gospel spread westward into Europe and not eastward toward Asia, and many Asians died never having heard of Christ.

Reymond writes: "Clearly, the matter of who hears the gospel is under the providential governance of the sovereign God, and he has so arranged gospel history that many people will never hear about Christ. It is unthinkable to suppose then that God sent his Son to save people who, by the ordering of his own providence, never hear the gospel in order that they may believe and be saved" (ibid., p. 676).

9. God's redemptive love does not include fallen angels.

The fact that God does not redeem fallen angels means that at least on category of fallen beings is not an object of redemptive love and mercy (Heb. 2:16). The Bible mentions "elect angels" (1 Tim. 5:21). These angels are elected on supralapsarian grounds since they were not redeemed from a mass of fallen angels. In regards to the fallen angels, Scripture teaches that no divine efforts at redemption have been or will be expended for them (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 20:10; Matt. 25:41), although they are creatures as much in need of redemption as are fallen human beings.

While it is freely granted that the fallen angels belong to a different creation order from human beings and that God has sovereignly determined to deal with at least some fallen people differently from fallen angels, the non-redemptive manner of God's dealing with fallen angels raises the possibility that God's redemptive love for fallen humanity may not be universal and unlimited either.

10. The irreversible condition of lost men already in hell when Christ died.

Robert Reymond writes, "Unless one is prepared to say that Christ gave all the dead a second chance to repent (some would say 'first chance'), it is impossible to suppose that Christ died with the intention of saving those whose eternal destiny had *already* been sealed in death, who were at the time of his death *already* in hell. He clearly did not die with the intention of saving them.

Through erroneous exegesis of Ephesians 4:8-10 and 1 Peter 3:19, some expositors urge that all these dead were given a chance to repent after Christ died, but the author of Hebrews disputes this by the unqualified teaching: 'it is appointed unto men once to die and after this [that is, after death] comes the judgment' (Heb. 9:27). Jesus teaching in his parable of the rich man and Lazarus also strongly suggests that one's destiny after death is *irreversibly* final: a 'great chasm *has been fixed* [*esteriktai*, the perfect passive of *sterizo*, means 'has been firmly fixed and stands permanently so'], in order that . . . none may cross over from there to us' (Luke 16:26). Clearly, the weight of Scripture testimony is against the 'second - [or 'first-'] chance' doctrine. Accordingly, Christ did not die for everyone" (Ibid., p. 675).

Concluding thoughts:

Robert Reymond writes, "If, on the other hand, Christ did his cross work, whatever it is (and those who advocate an atonement of universal extension must make clear precisely what Christ did do at the cross if he did not actually propitiate, reconcile, and redeem and then must square their view with Scripture), with a view to the salvation of every person without exception, and if he did not do for any one particular person anything which he did not do for every person distributively (which is what we mean when we speak of an atonement of universal extension), we must conclude (1) that Christ died neither savingly nor substitutionally for anyone, since he did not do for those who are saved anything that he did not do for those who are lost, and the one thing he did not do for the lost is save them, and (2) that Christ's death actually procured nothing that guarantees the salvation of anyone, but only made everyone in some inexplicable way salvable (which, according to Luke 16:26 and Heb. 9:27, is in actuality manifestly impossible in the case of those who were already in hell), whose actual salvation must of necessity be rooted ultimately in soil other than Christ's cross work - namely, in the soil of the individual's own will

and work. But it should be plain to all that this construction eviscerates Christ's cross work of its intrinsic infinite saving worth, is Pelagianism and makes salvation ultimately turn on human merit" Ibid., 682).

B. B. Warfield states: "The things that we have to choose between, are an atonement of high value, or an atonement of wide extension. The two cannot go together. And this is the real objection of Calvinism to [the universalizing] scheme which presents itself as an improvement on its system: it universalizes the atonement at the cost of its intrinsic value, and Calvinism demands a really substitutive atonement which actually saves" (*The Plan of Salvation*, p. 95-96).

It is sometimes urged by Arminian Christians that particularistic salvation is cold and heartless. J. Gresham Machen, however, in his sermon on 2 Cor. 5:14,15 observed: "People say that Calvinism is a dour, hard creed. How broad and comforting, they say, is the doctrine of universal atonement, the doctrine that Christ died equally for all men there upon the cross! How narrow and harsh, they say, is this Calvinistic doctrine - one of the 'five points' of Calvinism - this doctrine of the 'limited atonement,' this doctrine that Christ died for the elect of God in a sense in which he did not die for the unsaved!

But do you know, my friends, it is surprising that men say that. It is surprising that they regard the doctrine of a universal atonement as being a comforting doctrine. In reality it is a very gloomy doctrine indeed. Ah, if it were only a doctrine of a universal salvation, instead of a doctrine of a universal atonement, then it would no doubt be a very comforting doctrine; the no doubt it would conform wonderfully well to what we in our puny wisdom might have thought the course of the world should have been. But a universal atonement without a universal salvation is a cold, gloomy doctrine indeed. To say that Christ died for all men alike and that then not all men are saved, to say that Christ died for humanity simply in the mass, and that the choice of those who out of that mass are saved depends upon the greater receptivity of some as compared with others - that is a doctrine that takes from the gospel much of its sweetness and much of its joy. From the cold universalism of that Arminian creed we turn ever again with a new thankfulness to the warm and tender individualism of our Reformed Faith, which we believe to be in accord with God's holy Word. Thank God we can say every one, as we contemplate Christ upon the cross, not just: 'He died for the mass of humanity, and how glad I am that I am amid that mass,' but: 'He loved me and gave Himself for

me; my name was written from all eternity upon His heart, and when He hung and suffered there on the Cross He thought of Me, even me, as one for whom in His grace He was willing to die'" (*God Transcendent and Other Sermons*, ed. by Ned B. Stonehouse, p. 136).

B. Exposition of the allegedly universalistic passages.

In objection to the above points, Arminian theology usually asks the question, "What about those verses in Scripture which relate the saving work of Christ or the saving will of God to "all" men.

Three categories in regard to this objection are found:

1. Scriptures which speak of Christ's work or God's saving will with regard to "all" men: John 12:32; Rom. 3:22-24; 5:18; 8:32; 11:32; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Tim. 2:4, 6; 4:10 Titus 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 2 Pet. 3:9.
2. Scriptures which declare that what Christ savingly did, he did for the "world:" John 3:16; 1 John 2:2; 2 Cor. 5:19.
3. Scriptures that suggest that those for whom Christ died may perish: Romans 14:15b; 1 Cor. 8:11; 2 Peter 2:1.

As to category 1: The "all" passages.

These passages are characterized by some form of the Greek word, *pas* - "all" or "every." It is said that these passages demand a universal atonement or a universal saving will on the part of God. It should be noted that the phrase "all men" is not a self-defining expression; it must always be interpreted within the universe of discourse in which it occurs. And while it can refer to every individual in some contexts (Rom. 3:23; 5:18a - however, 5:18b is an exception), often it is apparent that "all" cannot refer to every individual. A survey of a few verses not critical to the study of the atonement illustrates that the word "all" *always* needs to be interpreted sensitively within its context and in light of the analogy of faith (*analogia Scripturae*) principle.

Matt. 10:22 - Here "all" does not mean every individual on the face of the earth, but rather some non-Christians in all the social strata of life would hate them. Many would not even know them to hate them and many people who would become Christians would love them.

Acts 26:4 - Paul obviously did not intend to convey that every Jew on the face of the earth knew his life's story. He meant those religious leaders in Israel who had experienced social and formal associations with him.

1 Cor. 15:27 - Paul quotes Psa. 8:6 and then qualifies that the "everything" (*panta*) has an exception - God, the Father. The "everything" mentioned in Psa. 8:6 and quoted in 1 Cor. 15:27 means everything in the universe. Reymond comments, ". . . Here we see Paul doing the very thing - restricting the meaning of an "all" to something less than "all without exception" - that Arminians insist that Calvinists must not do" (Ibid., p. 686).

Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17 - Even Arminian theologians do not teach that the "all flesh" in these passages means that someday God will pour out his Spirit on all men without exception. Peter applied the "all flesh" most immediately to those in "the whole house where they were sitting" who had just been filled with the Spirit, in distinction from all the others in Jerusalem area, many of whom would never receive the Spirit.

The context in Joel and Acts makes it clear that God was promising, in the reference to "all flesh," that he would pour out his Spirit on all kinds of people who would make up a community of the redeemed ("son and daughters," old men and young men, "my servants, both men and women").

1 Tim. 6:10 - No interpreter would take the phrase "all the evil" to mean that the love of money is a root of every possible evil that has ever been planned and perpetrated since creation. The love of money had nothing to do with Satan's downfall, nor does it have anything to do with many of the sins people commit. Paul was writing in general nontechnical terms communicating that the love of money is the root of many kinds of evil. Many translations reflect this meaning (NIV, NASB) and translate "all kinds of evil." Here is another example where "all" does not mean "all without exception."

"All" passages that specifically address salvation issues:

John 12:32 - The Arminian argues that Jesus was teaching a universal (every individual) drawing to himself. However, it should be obvious that Jesus was not teaching that every individual without exception would come to him. Elsewhere Jesus states explicitly that at the final judgment there will be an ultimate division in mankind (Matt. 25:31-45; John 5:28,29;

6:70,71; 17:12). Actual history bears out that not every individual has come to Christ.

This comment of Jesus comes right after certain Greeks had requested to see him (John 12:20-23). Inspired by their request, Jesus made this statement, obviously thinking in nationalistic terms. His meaning is that Gentiles as well as Jews would come to him. Compare this statement to Rev. 5:9,10.

Romans 3:22-24 - In this passage the "all" of verse 23 is universal (excepting God, Christ, unfallen angels). Because it has the appearance of being the antecedent of the present passive participle (*dikaioumenoi*, "being justified") which is at the head of verse 24, the "all" is said to teach that God's soteric provision in Christ is universal as the sin of verse 23 is universal. The argument is usually framed like this: the redemption and propitiation referred to in 3:24, 25 (aspects of Christ's cross work) serve as the ground for God's act of justification referred to in 3:24, 26. But because God's justifying activity modifies the "all sinned" of 3:23, it would follow that Christ's cross work is as extensive in its intended provision as man's sinful condition.

The force of this argument rests on the assumption that the participle "being justified" in verse 24 is to be related directly back to the "all sinned" of verse 23. However, the syntax of this passage is not that simple. Robert Reymond writes: "I doubt that any Greek scholar will disagree with John Murray's observation that the participle in verse 24 "does not appear to stand in relation to what precedes in a way that is easily intelligible." Not only does the sense of the passage support Murray's statement but the *actual* soteric universalism that ensues by implication from such a syntactical connection also makes this connection tenuous at best.

I would urge, therefore, another syntactical possibility, namely that a period should be placed at the end of verse 23 and that the participle of 3:24, having been rendered by Paul in the nominative plural due to the attraction of the several plurals in the immediately preceding context and intended by him causally, should commence the protasis of a new sentence. That is to say, it should be translated, "Because we are being justified. . . ." The apodosis of the sentence would then commence at 3:27: ". . ., where then is boasting?" The sentence would then read as follows:

3:24: Because we are being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus [from verse 25 - "through his blood"],

[3:25-26: A short excursus elaborating upon God's purpose for Christ's redemptive work now ensues - "whom God 'set forth' as a propitiating sacrifice. . . in order to 'evidence' his justice" when he forgave Old Testament saints and 'to evidence' his justice in the present age, with a view to him being both just and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus"],

3:27: where then is boasting. . . ."

This arrangement makes perfect sense, removes the syntactical difficulty mentioned earlier, and eliminates both the implied universalism and the universal atonement that the Arminian sees here" (ibid. 688-689).

Romans 5:18B - The context shows that Paul intended the first "all men" (vs. 18a) to refer within its theological universe (the "one sin of Adam") to all those "in Adam" who were represented by him. In the same way, the "all men" of verse 18b refers not to every individual, but to those who are in Christ and are represented by him. The same is true of the second use of "the many in Rom. 5:19 and his statement, "in Christ shall all be made alive," in 1 Cor. 15:22. In 1 Cor. 15:22, Paul clearly means "all men [who are] in Christ" shall be made alive.

The only alternative is to hold that in these verses Paul is teaching a soteric universalism (see: *The Death of Death*, p. 240-243).

Romans 8:32 - The "us all" is restricted by the context. See: Romans 8:30, 33, 34, 35-39. The "all" of verse 32 are the elect of God (see: *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, p. 65-69).

Romans 11:32 - Arminian theology argues that the second half of this verse should be understood to teach that the reach of mercy is as expansive and all-encompassing as the disobedience of men is said to be in the first part of the verse. Therefore, God wills his salvific mercy for all men without exception.

First, it is amazing that Arminian theology uses this verse to teach universalism while at the same time holding that human freedom is the decisive factor in men's salvation because, in doing so, Arminianism must completely ignore this verse's primary lesson, that it is God who is the sovereign subject of both verbs. God is the one who is first said to shut up all to disobedience in order that he might show mercy to all. In this statement, there is no room for the concept of human freedom as

the decisive factor in salvation (See the close context of Rom. 9:11-16).

Second, as everywhere else, the double "all" must be interpreted by the context. The context of Romans 11 deals with nationalistic-universalistic concepts in terms of Jews and Gentiles. The second all deals with elect Jews and Gentiles (see the "just as. . . so also" comparison of 11:30-31). See the usage of the term "world" in Romans 11:11, 15. In this passage the term world means all the Gentiles and not the Jews.

Commenting on Romans 11:32, B. B. Warfield wrote: "On the face of it there could not readily be framed a more explicit assertion of the Divine control and the Divine initiative than this; it is only another declaration that he has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and after the manner and in the order that he will. And it certainly is not possible to read it as a declaration of universal salvation, and thus reduce the whole preceding exposition to a mere tracing of the varying pathways along which the common Father leads each individual of the race severally to the common goal. Needless to point out that thus the whole argument would be stultified, and the apostle convicted of gross exaggeration in tone and language where otherwise we find only impressive solemnity, arising at times into natural anguish. It is enough to observe that the verse cannot bear this sense in its context. Nothing is clearer than that its purpose is not to minimize but to magnify the sense of absolute dependence on the Divine mercy, and to quicken apprehension of the mystery of God's righteously loving ways; and nothing is clearer than the reference of the double 'all' is exhausted by the two classes discussed in the immediate context, - so that they are not to be taken individualistically but, so to speak, racially" ("Predestination," in *Biblical and Theological Studies*, p. 314-315). See also: Calvin's *Institutes*, 3,24,16.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 - The "all" in this passage is governed by the idea of everyone who, by virtue of their union with Christ, "no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them." Not every individual dies to sin and lives for Christ - only those who are in union with Christ both in his death and resurrection. See similar language in Romans 6:1-11. This passage, in fact, teaches particular redemption. Since every person for whom Christ died ultimately dies to sin and does not live for himself, and in the final judgment, not every person has died to sin and lives for God, then Christ did not die for every individual.

1 Timothy 2:5-6 - This statement should be interpreted in harmony with Paul's earlier statement in 1 Tim. 2:3,4. Verse 4 cannot mean that God decretally wills the salvation of all men without exception not only because that would mean that all men without exception will be saved, which is denied by such passages as Matt. 7:21-23; Matt. 25:46, but also because this interpretation would contradict what Paul and other apostolic writers clearly teach as well as Jesus teach elsewhere concerning God's election of some to salvation (Eph. 1:3-14; Rom. 8:28-30; 9:11-23; 11:6-7; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 2:8-10; 2 Pet. 1:10; Matt. 11:25-27; 13:13-15; John 12:37-41).

The statement in verse 4 is best understood to mean that God will to save some from all categories of men, but not all men without exception. This interpretation receives support from 1 Tim. 6:10, "all kinds of evil." It is also supported by the immediate context in verse 1. Prayers for all men without exception would violate Scriptural principles because "all men without exception" would include prayer for the dead and for the one who has committed the "sin unto death" which John discourages (1 John 5:16). Paul's listing of categories of people in 1 Tim. 2:2 indicates that he was thinking in terms of categories. Therefore, Paul urges that prayers be offered in behalf of all classes of men because God has willed that people out of all classes of mankind be saved. The statement in 1 Tim. 2:6 should, therefore, be interpreted within its theological context to mean that Christ died for particular people in all classes or categories whom God wills to be saved. See: *The Death of Death*, p. 231-235.

Titus 2:11 - Scripture, history, and Christian experience teach that the grace of Jesus Christ has not saved all men without exception nor even appeared to all men without exception. Most likely, Paul, in this passage, is thinking in terms of categories of men. Categories are addressed in the immediate context (2:2,3,4,6,9). Note the connecting *gar* (for) at the beginning of 2:11. It is also significant that the emphasis moves from the "all" of verse 11 to the redeemed community in verse 12,13. The "all men" of verse 11 is defined in terms of the redeemed community in the following verses.

Hebrews 2:9 - The "everyone" of verse 9 is described as "many sons" God intended to bring to glory (2:10), the "sanctified" who with the Sanctifier are of the same family (2:11), Christ's "brethren" in whose likeness he was made in the incarnation (2:11,12,17), Christ's "children" whom God had given him (2:13), and "Abraham's seed" whom he came to help (2:16). Nothing in

the context would support the concept of universal atonement. To the contrary, the entire context suggests that it is Christ's own or the elect of God who are referred to in the "everyone" of verse 9. See: *The Death of Death*, p. 237-238.

2 Peter 3:9 - Again, the context is crucial concerning this verse. See: 2 Pet. 1:1, 10; 3:1, 8. The "you" of verse 9 is the Christians to whom he is writing and the "any" is the Christian elect to whom he has been writing and the "all" refers to the elect of God in their entirety. The whole passage teaches that Christ is not coming yet so that the whole elect of God will come to repentance (see: 2 Pet. 3:3-8, 10-13).

As to category 2: The "world" passages.

Those who argue for a universal and indefinite atonement use primarily three verses that contain the word "world" (*Kosmos*). The three passages used are John 3:16; 1 John 2:2; 2 Cor. 5:19. The argument depends on the term "world" referring to all individuals without exception.

However, just as it was observed with the term "all," the word "world" is not a self-defining term but can have a variety of meanings. For example, while it is true that in some contexts it refers to all men (see: Rom. 3:19 - although even here Christ is one exception). In Romans 1:8 and Colossians 1:6, "world" has reference to the Roman Empire. Romans 11:12 uses the term "world" to refer to the Gentile world in contrast to Israel. In this passage "world" clearly does not refer to every individual since all Jews are excluded from the term. A similar uses is found in 1 John 5:19 where the term "world" refers to those outside of Christ in contrast to the redeemed. In John 17:9, "world" refers to other people over against Christ's disciples; the disciples are not included in Jesus' use of the term "world." In 1 John 2:15, "world" is used in an ethical sense and refers to the evil system that stands against God and is hostile to all that God approves (See: *The Death of Death* by John Owen, p. 192-193).

John 3:16 - Most likely the usage of "world" in this passage is similar to John's usage in 1 John 2:15. B. B. Warfield argued that the term "world" cannot meaningfully refer to all men without bringing disrepute on the love of God which receives emphasis in the verse. Warfield rejects the quantitative idea of world and argues for a qualitative idea. In one sermon, B. B. Warfield, in speaking of God's love states: "It is not that it is so great that it is able to extend over the whole of

a big world: it is so great that it is able to prevail over the Holy God's hatred and abhorrence of sin" (*The Savior of the World*, 120).

In another exposition, B. B. Warfield makes the following observation of the term world in John 3:16: [The term "world"] is not here a term of extension so much as a term of intensity. Its primary connotation is ethical, and the point of its employment is not to suggest that the world is so big that it takes a great deal of love to embrace it all, but that the world is so bad that it takes a great kind of love to love it at all, and much more to love it as God has loved it when he gave his son for it. . . . The passage was not intended to teach, and certainly does not teach, that God loves all men alike and visits each and every one alike with the same manifestations of his love: and as little was it intended to teach or does teach that his love is confined to a few especially chosen individuals selected out of the world. What it is intended to do is to arouse in our hearts a wondering sense of the marvel and mystery of the love of God for the sinful world - conceived here, not quantitatively but qualitatively as, in its very distinguishing characteristic, sinful ("God's Immeasurable Love" in *Biblical and Theological Studies*, 516).

1 John 2:2 - The context of this passage speaks against the idea of a universal atonement. First, John was emphasizing that the scope of Jesus' atonement was not limited to the immediate group of disciples who had actually seen, heard, and touched him during his earthly ministry (1 John 1:1-3). Second, John is speaking against Jewish particularism; Christ died for Gentiles as well as Jews (see: Rev. 5:9-10). John is stressing the ethnic universalism of the gospel.

John is also stressing the exclusiveness of Jesus as the propitiation. If the world has a propitiation at all, Jesus is it. 1 John 4:14 and John 4:42 should also be taken in this sense. If Jesus is not the Savior, then there is not Savior.

Also observe in 1 John 2:1 that Jesus is an Advocate with the Father for those for whom he died. Jesus is no an Advocate for every individual, only those in spiritual union with him. This concept explains the concept of "world" in verse 2.

See: *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* by John Murray, p. 73, 74.

2 Corinthians 5:19 - In this context, it is clear that Paul was not using the term "world" to describe every individual because he immediately states that God was not imputing their sins to them. This is not true of all men distributively in a universal sense.

Also, the term "world" of 2 Cor. 5:19 is synonymous with the "us" of 2 Cor. 5:18 and about those who, in verse 21, are said that Christ was made sin for them that they might become the righteousness of God in Christ. Again, this is not descriptive of every individual (See: *The Death of Death*, p. 227-228).

As to Category 3: The "Christians Can Perish" passages.

Lutheran and Arminian theologians allege that Romans 14:15b, 1 Cor. 8:11, and 2 Peter 2:1 teach that people for whom Christ died can still perish. From this position, they then infer that Christ's death must have been universal, potential only and, therefore, not intrinsically salvific.

This position touches on the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. This is an extensive study in itself, but there are many Scriptures that affirm the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints (John 6:37-39, 44,45; 10:26-30; Romans 5:9,10; 8:30, 38-39; 11:29; 1 Cor. 1:8,9; 3:15; Philippians 1:6; 2 Tim. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; Heb. 7:25; Jer. 32:40; 1 John 2:19 - see paper on Perseverance of the Saints).

Romans 14:15B; 1 Corinthians 8:11 - Both of these passages are dealing with the same issue of questions of conscience. Paul speaks of "stronger" and "weaker" brothers. In Romans 14, he urges the stronger brother not become a cause of stumbling to the weaker brother (Rom. 14:15). A similar statement is made in 1 Cor. 8:11. In both cases, Paul uses a form of *apollymi* (*apollue* in Rom. 14:15B; *apollytai* in 1 Cor. 8:11). Arminians argue that by the use of the word, *apollymi*, in these verses, Paul is stating that those for whom Christ died may finally lose their salvation and perish eternally. It is true that in some contexts *apollymi* does teach the concept of perdition (Matt. 10:28; 1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 4:3). However, the context and general teaching of Romans 14 and 1 Cor. 8 make the idea of eternal perdition an unlikely meaning of *apollymi* in these passages.

In Romans 14:4, Paul states: ". . . To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand." See also: Romans 14:8. In Romans 14:15A, just before

Paul issues this admonition to the stronger brother, he says, "For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to Christian love."

Similarly, in 1 Cor. 8:12 right after he speaks of "ruining" the weaker brother, Paul speaks of the stronger brother's eating as "wounding their conscience."

The context of these verses are wounding and hurting a weaker brother's conscience. That is a serious matter, but these verbs suggest a condition that falls short of perdition. Moreover, in more remote contexts of Romans and 1 Corinthians, Paul teaches the security of the believer in his salvation (Rom. 5:9,10; 8:30, 38, 39; 11:29; 1 Cor. 1:8,9; 3:15).

Robert Reymond writes, "Plainly, Paul regards the strong brother's flaunting his 'liberty' in Christ (1 Cor. 8:9) before the weaker brother as a serious sin - he even uses the strong verb *apollymi*, to underscore the effect that his actions will have on the weaker brother, and just as plainly, he regards the injurious effect of the stronger brother's actions upon the weaker brother as a grave matter. But if the issue of eternal destinies was really before Paul here, and if Paul really believed that a Christian for whom Christ died could *finally* perish, one may rightly wonder why he dealt in these contexts only with the potential perdition of the weaker brother, and why did not warn the stronger brother whose offense could be so influential as to result in the perdition of another brother - making his sin by virtue of his spiritual maturity by far the more heinous - that in comparison he faced an even more horrible end. It is truer to the near and distant contexts to conclude that Paul, acutely aware that all sin is 'ruinous' in that it exacts a terrible toll on the Christian man's spiritual growth and testimony if left unchecked, is concerned with the serious problems for the weaker brother's conscience which an insensitive stronger brother could create by an insensitive use of his liberty in Christ. And he appeals to the stronger brother, on the ground that Christ had died for his weaker brother too, to be concerned for the weaker brother's spiritual needs. But here is no warrant to conclude that Paul envisioned the outcome of such an exhibition of insensitivity toward the weaker brother for whom Christ died to be the weaker brother's apostasy from the faith and eventual perdition. Rather, he characterizes the outcome or 'ruin' to the weaker brother in both contexts in terms of 'stumbling' (*proskomma*, *skandalon* - Rom. 14:13; *proskomma* - 1 Cor. 8:9, *skandalizei* - 8:13), terms which suggest that the weak brother is weakened in his walk with

Christ, thereby inhibiting his growth in grace and rendering him ineffectual in his walk before the world. These results are serious enough to warrant Paul's use of *apollymi*, and his appeal to the death of Christ in the weaker brother's behalf, without alleging the dire end for the weaker brother which Arminian Christians do (*A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 699-700).

2 Peter 2:1 - Arminian theologians argue that since Peter says that these false teachers "deny the Lord who bought them," then this passage teaches that those who have been redeemed by Christ can finally perish. The implication of this is that Christ's death does not intrinsic salvific value and, therefore, does not guarantee the salvation of those for whom he died.

However, Gary D. Long observes concerning the verb root of the participle, *agorasanta*:

". . . of its thirty occurrences in the New Testament, *agorazo* is never used in a soteriological context (unless II Peter 2:1 is the exception) without the technical term "price" (*times* - a technical term for the blood of Christ) or its equivalent being stated or made explicit in the context (see 1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; Rev. 5:9; 14:3,4). . . . When it is translated with a meaning "to buy," whether in a soteriological or non-soteriological context, a payment price is always stated or made explicit by the context. . . in contexts where no payment price is stated or implied, *agorazo* may often be better translated as 'acquire' or 'obtain' (*Definite Atonement* by Gary D. Long, p. 72).

Long concludes from an extensive analysis of the usage of the two Greek words in the LXX and the New Testament is that what Peter is saying (alluding to Deut. 32:6; 2 Pet. 2:13 alludes to Deut. 32:5) is that:

". . . Christ, the sovereign Lord, acquired [or 'obtained'] the false teachers (spots and blemishes, II Pet. 2:13) in order to make them a part of the covenant nation of God in the flesh because he had created them, within the mystery of his providence, for the purpose of bringing glory to himself through their foreordination unto condemnation (see II Pet. 2:12; Jude 4)" (*ibid.*, p. 76-77 - Long also refers to Rom. 9:20-24 in this regard).

See also: 1 Pet. 2:8-9.

Robert Reymond comments concerning Long's work, "If Long is right, then what Arminian Christians allege to be a statement

with grave soteriological implications for the particularist turns out in the end not to be a soteriological statement at all! Instead of portraying Christ in his role as Savior, Peter, referring to Christ in his role as their Sovereign Creator, states that these false teachers were denying that Christ was their Creator and Sovereign who owned them.

Concluding thoughts:

John Murray, in *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* (p. 75) concludes his treatment of the extent of the atonement in stating:

"We can readily see. . . that although universal terms are sometimes used in connection with the atonement these terms cannot be appealed to as establishing the doctrine of universal atonement. In some cases. . . it can be shown that all-inclusive universalism is excluded by the considerations of the immediate context. In other cases there are adequate reasons why universal terms should be used without the implication of distributively universal extent. Hence no conclusive support for the doctrine of universal atonement can be derived from universalistic expressions. The question must be determined on the basis of other evidence. . . . It is easy for the proponents of universal atonement to make offhand appeal to a few texts. But this method is not worthy of the serious student of Scripture. It is necessary for us to discover what redemption or atonement really means. And when we examine the Scripture we find that the glory of the cross of Christ is bound up with the effectiveness of its accomplishment. Christ redeemed us to God by his blood, he gave himself a ransom that he might deliver us from all iniquity. The atonement is efficacious substitution."

B. B. Warfield writes: "The things that we have to choose between, are an atonement of high value, or an atonement of wide extension. The two cannot go together. And this is the real objection of Calvinism to this compromise scheme which presents itself as an improvement on its system: it universalizes the atonement at the cost of its intrinsic value, and Calvinism demands a really substitutive atonement which actually saves. And as a really substitutive which actually saves cannot be universal because obviously all men are not saved, in the interests of the integrity of the atonement it insists that particularism has entered into the saving process prior, in the order of thought, to the atonement" (*The Plan of Salvation*, 95-96).

He also writes, "What particularism stands for in the Calvinistic system is the immediate dealing of God with the individual soul; what it sets itself against is the notion that in his saving processes God never comes directly into contact with the individual - is never to be contemplated as *his* God who saves

him - but does all that he does looking to salvation only for and to men in the mass. Whether in dealing with the individual souls of men, he visits with his saving grace few or many, so many that in our imagination they may readily pass into all, does not lie in the question. . . . The point of insistence in Calvinistic particularism is not that God saves out of the sinful mass of men only one here and there, a few brands snatched from the burning, but that God's method of saving men is to set upon them in his almighty grace, to purchase them to himself by the precious blood of his Son, to visit them in the inmost core of their being by the creative operations of his Spirit, and himself, the Lord God Almighty, to save them" (ibid., 97-98).

Robert Reymond, at the end of his section on the design of the atonement states: "This entire discussion has demonstrated that there are really only two alternatives. The reader must choose between two mutually exclusive views of the atonement; he cannot consistently hold to both. Either he will espouse, with consistent Reformed Christians, that behind the cross work of Christ was the divine purpose to effect a particular and definite atonement or infinite intrinsic value capable of reversing, and which does in fact reverse, the effects of the infinite disvalue of the sins of the elect, or he will espouse, with Amyraldian, Lutheran, and Arminian Christians, a universal atonement which, though expansive and all-encompassing in its design, is ineffectual in its accomplishments in that in and by itself it procures the salvation of no one and, in fact, fails to save multitudes for whom it was intended.

It may have come as a shock to the Arminian who espouses the doctrine of universal atonement to have had it suggested to him as I did earlier that his view of the accomplishments of Christ's atoning work is no better than the view of the liberal theologian, but it is a sober fact nonetheless. The liberal theologian, finding the entire idea of substitutionary atonement repulsive, insists that Christ *died for no man*. Accordingly, he contends that a Christian is one who, challenged by the beauty of Christ's pure life and ethical teachings, determines by an act of will that he will follow in Christ's steps. The Arminian who espouses the doctrine of universal atonement, on the other

hand, insists that Christ "*died for all men.*" Accordingly, the Arminian Christian contends that a Christian is one who, convicted of his sin, determines by an act of will that he will both accept Christ as his Savior and abide in him. But in the view of neither does Christ's death *per se* pay the penalty of anyone's sin! (Some Arminians, inconsistently, espouse a substitutionary atonement that pays sin's penalty.) And in the theological systems of both it is ultimately people themselves who determine whether they will become Christian or not by an act of will on their parts! This is tragic, for Christ's atoning death is emptied of its intrinsic worth by both systems and the Pelagian principle looms large in both - in the Arminian system only slightly less than in the liberal system - in spite of the fact that the former seeks to be self-consciously supernaturalistic in its soteriology while the latter seeks to be self-consciously antisupernaturalistic (*A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 701-702).