

The Death of Death in the Death of Christ

*A Treatise of the Redemption and Reconciliation
that Is in the Blood of Christ,
with the Merit thereof,
and Satisfaction Wrought thereby.*

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Christian Focus Publications

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THE END OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST

By the end of the death of Christ, we mean in general, both—first, that which his Father and himself intended in it; and, secondly, that which was effectually fulfilled and accomplished by it. Concerning either we may take a brief view of the expressions used by the Holy Ghost.

THE FATHER'S INTENTION

For the first. Will you know the *end* wherefore, and the intention wherewith, Christ came into the world? Let us ask himself (who knew his own mind, as also all the secrets of his Father's bosom), and he will tell us that the 'Son of man came to save that which was lost' (Matt. 18:11)—to recover and save poor lost sinners; that was his intent and design, as is again asserted (Luke 19:10). Ask also his apostles, who know his mind, and they will tell you the same. So Paul, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners' (1 Tim. 1:15). Now, if you will ask who these sinners are towards whom he has this gracious intent and purpose, himself tells you (Matt. 20:28),

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that he came to ‘give his life a ransom for *many*,’ in other places called *us*, believers, distinguished from the world: for he ‘gave himself for *our* sins, that he might deliver *us* from this present evil *world*, according to the will of God and our Father’ (Gal. 1:4). That was the will and intention of God, that he should give himself for us, that we might be saved, being separated from the world. They are his *church*: ‘He loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish’ (Eph. 5:25–7), which last words express also the very aim and end of Christ in giving himself for any, even that they may be made *fit* for God, and brought nigh to him—the like whereof is also asserted, ‘He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works’ (Tit. 2:14). Thus clear, then, and apparent, is the intention and design of Christ and his Father in this great work, even what it was, and towards whom—namely, to save us, to deliver us from the evil world, to purge and wash us, to make us holy, zealous, fruitful in good works, to render us acceptable, and to bring us to God; for through him ‘we have access into the grace wherein we stand’ (Rom. 5:2).

THE PRODUCT OF CHRIST’S DEATH

The effect, also, and actual product of the work itself, or what is accomplished and fulfilled by the death, blood-shedding, or oblation of Jesus Christ, is no less clearly manifested, but is as fully, and very often more distinctly, expressed as:

RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation with God, by removing and slaying the enmity that was between him and us; for ‘when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son’ (Rom. 5:10). ‘God was in him reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses

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to them' (2 Cor. 5:19); yea, he has 'reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ' (v. 18). And if you would know how this reconciliation was effected, the apostle will tell you that 'he abolished in his flesh the enmity, the law of commandments consisting in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby' (Eph. 2:15-16): so that 'he is our peace' (v. 14).

JUSTIFICATION

Secondly, justification, by taking away the guilt of sins, procuring remission and pardon of them, redeeming us from their power, with the curse and wrath due to us for them; for 'by his own blood he entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us' (Heb. 11:12). 'He redeemed us from the curse, being made a curse for us' (Gal. 3:13); 'his own self bearing our sins in his own body on the tree' (1 Pet. 2:24). We have 'all sinned, and come short of the glory of God;' but are 'justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins' (Rom. 3:23-5): for 'in him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins' (Col. 1:14).

SANCTIFICATION

Thirdly, sanctification, by the purging away of the uncleanness and pollution of our sins, renewing in us the image of God, and supplying us with the graces of the Spirit of holiness: for 'the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself to God, purges our consciences from dead works that we may serve the living God' (Heb. 9:14); yea, 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin' (1 John 1:7). 'By himself he purged our sins' (Heb. 1:3). To 'sanctify the people with his own blood, he suffered without the gate' (ch. 13:12). 'He gave himself for the church to sanctify and

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cleanse it, that it should be holy and without blemish' (Eph. 5:25–7). Peculiarly amongst the graces of the Spirit, 'it is given to us,' ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, 'for Christ's sake, to believe on him' (Phil. 1:29); God 'blessing us in him with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places' (Eph. 1:3).

ADOPTION

Fourthly, adoption, with that evangelical liberty and all those glorious privileges which appertain to the sons of God; for 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons' (Gal. 4:4–5).

ETERNAL INHERITANCE

Fifthly, neither do the effects of the death of Christ rest here; they leave us not until we are settled in heaven, in glory and immortality for ever. Our inheritance is a 'purchased possession' (Eph. 1:14): 'And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance' (Heb. 9:15). The sum of all is—the death and bloodshedding of Jesus Christ has wrought, and effectually procures, for all those that are concerned in it, eternal redemption, consisting in grace here and glory hereafter.

A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

Thus full, clear, and evident are the expressions in the Scripture concerning the ends and effects of the death of Christ, that a man would think every one might run and read. But we must stay: among all things in Christian religion, there is scarce any thing more questioned than this, which seems to be a most fundamental principle. A spreading persuasion there is of a general ransom to be paid by Christ for all; that he died to redeem all and every one,

not only for many, his church, the elect of God, but for every one also of the posterity of Adam. Now, the masters of this opinion do see full well and easily, that if that be the end of the death of Christ which we have from the Scripture asserted, if those before recounted be the immediate fruits and products thereof, then one of these two things will necessarily follow:

- that either, first, God and Christ failed of their end proposed, and did not accomplish that which they intended, the death of Christ being not a fitly-proportioned means for the attaining of that end (for any cause of failing cannot be assigned); which to assert seems to us blasphemously injurious to the wisdom, power, and perfection of God, as likewise derogatory to the worth and value of the death of Christ;
- or else, that all men, all the posterity of Adam, must be saved, purged, sanctified, and glorified; which surely they will not maintain, at least the Scripture and the woeful experience of millions will not allow.

Wherefore, to cast a tolerable colour upon their persuasion, they must and do deny that God or his Son had any such absolute aim or end in the death or blood-shedding of Jesus Christ, or that any such thing was immediately procured and purchased by it, as we before recounted; but that God intended nothing, neither was any thing effected by Christ—that no benefit arises to any immediately by his death but what is common to all and every soul, though never so cursedly unbelieving here and eternally damned hereafter, until an act of some, not procured for them by Christ (for if it were, why have they it not all alike?) to wit, faith, do distinguish them from others. Now, this seeming to me to enervate the virtue, value, fruits and effects of the satisfaction and death of Christ—serving, besides, for a basis and foundation to a dangerous, uncomfortable, erroneous persuasion—I shall, by the Lord's assistance, declare what the Scripture holds out in both these things, both that assertion which is intended to be proved, and that which is brought for the proof thereof; desiring the Lord by his Spirit to lead us into

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all truth, to give us understanding in all things, and if any one be otherwise minded, to reveal that also to him.

THE NATURE OF AN END

The end of any thing is that which the agent intends to accomplish in and by the operation which is proper to its nature, and which it applies itself to—that which any one aims at, and designs in himself to attain, as a thing good and desirable to him in the state and condition wherein he is. So the end which Noah proposed to himself in the building of the ark was the preservation of himself and others. According to the will of God, he made an ark to preserve himself and his family from the flood: ‘According to all that God commanded him, so did he’ (Gen. 6:22). That which the agent does, or whereto he applies himself, for the compassing his proposed end, is called the means; which two do complete the whole reason of working in free intellectual agents, for I speak only of such as work according to choice or election. So Absalom intending a revolt from his father, to procure the crown and kingdom for himself, ‘he prepared him horses and chariots, and fifty men to run before him’ (2 Sam. 15:1); and farther, by fair words, and glossing compliances, ‘he stole the hearts of the men of Israel’ (v. 6); then pretends a sacrifice at Hebron, where he makes

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a strong conspiracy (v. 12)—all which were the means he used for the attaining of his fore-proposed end.

ENDS AND MEANS

Between both these, end and means, there is this relation, that (though in sundry kinds) they are mutually causes one of another. The end is the first, principal, moving cause of the whole. It is that for whose sake the whole work is. No agent applies itself to action but for an end; and were it not by that determined to some certain effect, thing, way, or manner of working, it would no more do one thing than another. The inhabitants of the old world desiring and intending unity and cohabitation, with perhaps some reserves to provide for their safety against a second storm, they cry, ‘Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach to heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth’ (Gen. 11:4). First, they lay down their aim and design, and then let out the means in their apprehension conducing thereto. And manifest, then, it is, that the whole reason and method of affairs that a wise worker or agent, according to the counsel, proposes to himself is taken from the end which he aims at; that is, in intention and contrivance, the beginning of all that order which is in working. Now, the means are all those things which are used for the attaining of the end proposed—as meat for the preservation of life, sailing in a ship for him that would pass the sea, laws for the quiet continuance of human society; and they are the procuring cause of the end, in one kind or another. Their existence is for the ends sake, and the end has its rise out of them, following them either morally as their desert, or naturally as their fruit and product. First, in a moral sense. When the action and the end are to be measured or considered in reference to a moral rule, or law prescribed to the agent, then the means are the deserving or meritorious cause of the end; as, if Adam had continued in his innocency, and done all things according to the law given to him, the end procured thereby had been a blessed life to eternity; as now the end of any sinful act is death, the curse of the law. Secondly,

when the means are considered only in their natural relation, then they are the instrumentally efficient cause of the end. So Joab intending the death of Abner, ‘he smote him with his spear under the fifth rib, that he died’ (2 Sam. 3:27). And when Benaiah, by the command of Solomon, fell upon Shimei the wounds he gave him were the efficient of his death (1 Kgs 2:46). In which regard there is no difference between the murdering of an innocent man and the executing of an offender; but as they are under a moral consideration, their ends follow their deservings, in respect of conformity to the rule, and so there is *χάσμα μέγα* between them.

ACTIONS AND INTENTIONS

The former consideration, by reason of the defect and perverseness of some agents (for otherwise these things are coincident), holds out a twofold end of things—first, of the work, and, secondly, of the workman; of the act and the agent: for when the means assigned for the attaining of any end are not proportioned to it, nor, fitted for it, according to that rule which the agent is to work by, then it cannot be but that he must aim at one thing and another follow, in respect of the morality of the work. So Adam is enticed into a desire to be like God; this now he makes his aim, which to effect he eats the forbidden fruit, and that contracts a guilt which he aimed not at. But when the agent acts aright, and as it should do, when it aims at an end that is proper to it, belonging to its proper perfection and condition, and works by such means as are fit and suitable to the end proposed—the end of the work and the workman are one and the same; as when Abel intended the worship of the Lord, he offered a sacrifice through faith, acceptable to him; or as a man, desiring salvation through Christ, applies himself to get an interest in him. Now, the sole reason of this diversity is, that secondary agents, such as men are, have an end set and appointed to their actions by Him which gives them an external rule or law to work by, which shall always attend them in their working, whether they will or no. God only, whose will and good pleasure is the sole rule of all those works which outwardly are of him, can

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never deviate in his actions, nor have any end attend or follow his acts not precisely by him intended.

WHICH AND WHOSE

Again; the end of every free agent is either that which he effects, or that for whose sake he effects it. When a man builds a house to let to hire, that which he effects is the building of a house; that which moves him to do it is love of gain. The physician cures the patient, and is moved to it by his reward. The end which Judas aimed at in his going to the priests, bargaining with them, conducting the soldiers to the garden, kissing Christ, was the betraying of his Master; but the end for whose sake the whole undertaking was set on foot was the obtaining of the thirty pieces of silver: 'What will you give me, and I will do it?' The end which God effected by the death of Christ was the satisfaction of his justice: the end for whose sake he did it was either supreme, or his own glory; or subordinate, ours with him.

TWO SORTS OF MEANS

Moreover, the *means* are of two sorts: First, such as have a true goodness in themselves without reference to any farther kind; though not so considered as we use them for means. No means, as a means is considered as good in itself, but only as conducive to a farther end; it is repugnant to the nature of means, as such, to be considered as good in themselves. Study is in itself the most noble employment of the soul; but, aiming at wisdom or knowledge, we consider it as good only inasmuch as it conducts to that end, otherwise as 'a weariness of the flesh' (Eccles. 12:12). Secondly, Such as have no good at all in any kind, as in themselves considered, but merely as conducive to that end which they are fit to attain. They receive all their goodness (which is but relative) from that whereto they are appointed, in themselves no way desirable; as the cutting off a leg or an arm for the preservation of life, taking a bitter potion for health's sake, throwing corn and lading into the

sea to prevent shipwreck. Of which nature is the death of Christ, as we shall afterward declare.

These things being thus proposed in general, our next task must be to accommodate them to the present business in hand; which we shall do in order, by laying down the *agent* working, the *means* wrought and the *end* effected, in the great work of our redemption; for these three must be orderly considered and distinctly, that we may have a right apprehension of the whole: into the first whereof, σὺν θεῷ, we make an entrance in [the next chapter].