

Limited Atonement - Its Implications For Evangelism

by the late Pastor William Payne

It should be made clear at the outset that no attempt is being made here to prove or defend the doctrine of limited atonement. I begin by assuming that this doctrine is accepted as being biblical and therefore true by those who are reading this booklet; or at least that the reasons for upholding the position known as limited atonement are known and understood. Furthermore, it is not our purpose in this paper to discuss the merit or demerit of the expression *limited atonement*. The expressions *particular redemption* or *definite atonement* are probably preferred by most reading this paper, and indeed they are preferred by the author of the paper, but *limited atonement* has probably had a wider usage than these other two.

A. The Implications with respect to motivation.

1. It is a great encouragement for evangelism. It might be considered a strange thing by some people in the world of religion to suggest that the doctrine of limited atonement can in any way be said to be an encouragement to evangelism. One of the reasons why such people are so strongly opposed to the doctrine is because they consider that it must be a mortal enemy of evangelistic endeavor. However, it is an encouragement in a very real way.

One of the reasons why the expression *definite atonement* is often preferred to *limited atonement* is because the doctrine is seeking to emphasize the fact that Christ's atonement as presented in the Bible did indeed accomplish that which it was intended to accomplish. Proponents of this doctrine rightly emphasize that the atonement of the Bible is not an atonement which merely makes men redeemable but one which actually redeemed those for whom it was offered. The shedding of Christ's blood did not merely make men saveable but it actually and definitely saved those for whom it was shed. The atonement infallibly secured the salvation of all those for whom it was offered. This *definite* character of the atonement is brought out in verses such as Rom. 5:10: *we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son*; Gal. 3:13: *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*; and Heb. 9:12: *by His own blood He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us*.

The element of substitution, which is the very heart of the gospel, declares that there is a people, known to God, and chosen by Him, for whom Jesus Christ did stand as a surety. There are those for whose sins He has paid, and who by the very justice of God must be delivered from the guilt and bondage of sin. This truth of limited atonement, therefore, like the other aspects of truth which we refer to as *the doctrines of grace*, carries with it a note of certainty and confidence with respect to the conversion of sinners.

The redemption which has been planned by the Father and executed by the Son **MUST** be applied by the Spirit. Therefore the person who believes in limited atonement, believes in an atonement which has been efficacious, and which is part of a divine purpose which

must result in the conversion of sinners. He is therefore encouraged to evangelize by the fact that he is not engaged in an uncertain enterprise with no real assurance of success, but he is encouraged to believe that evangelistic labors will succeed just because they are founded on an atonement which has already succeeded.

This grand element of certainty, and its clear relationship to Christ's atonement is seen in the tenth chapter of John's gospel where we have the important teaching of Christ as the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep. In the sixteenth verse of the chapter, the Lord Jesus says *and other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I MUST bring, and they SHALL hear my voice ...* The vision which John received in the seventh chapter of Revelation reveals that the purchase of Christ's blood includes people of every kindred, tribe and nation, and is again an encouragement for an evangelism which is extensive, indeed worldwide, and sure of the blessing of God.

2. *It assures that the sufficiency of the message is preached.* A grasp of the truth of limited atonement enables the one evangelizing to feel that he has a complete gospel to proclaim, and an all-sufficient saviour to set before sinners. The difference between the concepts of universal atonement and limited atonement has been expressed in popular form by comparing them to bridges spanning a chasm. Universal atonement is like a bridge which stretches right along the length of the chasm; it is broad indeed, but the problem with it is that it doesn't take a person completely over to the other side; it stops half-way. Limited atonement, on the other hand, is narrower, but it goes right across to the other side.

The proponents of universal atonement must proclaim an atonement which leaves men short of being redeemed, and which, when all is said and done, is dependent on something in the sinner to make it efficacious. The proponent of limited atonement on the other hand, while recognizing the necessity of the sinner's repentance and faith is able to proclaim an atonement which has purchased the very grace which produces those blessed effects in the sinner's heart. He can tell the sinner who feels the hardness of his heart, and the terrible absence of those things which God demands from him, to look to a Christ who has purchased them all and who is able to give him all that he needs, seeing that He purchased them with His precious blood. Joseph Hart expresses it beautifully in a lovely hymn:

*Come ye needy, come and welcome
God's free bounty glorify;
True belief and true repentance,
every grace that brings you nigh,
without money, Come to Jesus Christ and buy.*

Limited atonement, rather than impoverishing the gospel, enhances it, and gives a man to feel that he has a great message to present to men; and this of course acts as a motivation, that he should seek to communicate this great gospel to others.

3. *The effect of the doctrine on the Christian witnessing or the evangelist preaching.* This might be considered a very subjective thing but I believe it is very relevant. In 2 Cor. 5:14 Paul speaks about the love of Christ constraining him. The apostle meant, not his own love for Christ, but his apprehension of Christ's love for him. The more he grasped and understood of Christ's love toward himself, the more constrained he was to serve Him and glorify His name. This presents an important principle to us; that the mainspring of Christian service (indeed it should be the mainspring of the entire Christian life) is love toward the Saviour. When a sinner grasps the love that Christ has had toward him, that sinner will gladly suffer for Jesus, and live out his life in his service. But what more stunning message of the love of Christ to us is there than the message of a *particular redemption*? To know that Jesus Christ died for ME; that His atonement was not just a vague general "something" done for everyone in general but none in particular, but that I was on His heart when He died; that is a shattering revelation; that brings the soul down low before the cross in wonder and in awe.

This is the sense of amazement which comes through in the words of Paul in Gal. 2:20: *the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.* Now I suggest that when a person has been gripped with that truth, it will be his desire to tell of this glorious Saviour to all he possibly can. This truth will fire the heart, and produce a great desire to glorify the Saviour, and knowing that the Saviour is glorified by obedience he will seek to obey him in the work of evangelism; and knowing that the Saviour is glorified when souls come to Him and acknowledge Him as Saviour and Lord, he cannot then fail to have a strong desire to see them come.

So much then for the implications of this doctrine in the area of motivation. Let us now consider:

B. Implications with respect to the substance of evangelistic preaching.

Some time ago I was speaking to a lady on the question of the salvation of the soul, and she said words to this effect: "I now understand that in order to be saved, I must not just believe that Christ died for sinners, but that He died for ME." She was echoing what has become common in evangelical Christianity: the idea that the essence of being saved was to believe that Christ died for me. If I can be persuaded that is true, and be persuaded to acknowledge and testify to it, I am saved. However this is not only not true, but it is also potentially dangerous to the soul. For a person might be persuaded that Christ died for him, and yet never actually be brought to the place of exercising hearty and penitent faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible does not call upon men to believe that Christ died for them in order that they might be saved, but rather to repent of their sin and to trust in the Lord Jesus, resting in the efficacy of His atoning blood to cleanse them from their sins. The two things are quite different.

If the doctrine of universal atonement is true, which would probably be claimed by those using the approach referred to above, then it is simply a matter of fact that Christ died for every single individual in the world without exception. It would be entirely possible therefore to persuade a person to believe that "truth," and therefore have them to

acknowledge "Yes, I believe that Christ died for ME," and yet for that to be a purely intellectual assent devoid of saving faith. He might be persuaded to believe that "truth" in just the same way that he might be persuaded to believe that the Bible taught that God exists in a Trinity of persons. The doctrine of limited atonement makes it apparent that a person cannot know whether Christ died for HIM or not, until he has actually come to Christ in repentance and faith.

In evangelistic preaching therefore, it is not for the evangelist to tell unbelieving sinners (whether it be one or a thousand) that they must believe that Christ died for them, for that is something which neither the evangelist nor his audience can infallibly know. What he can tell them, and ought to tell them, is that Christ's atonement is gloriously sufficient to blot out the sins of any and every sinner who *comes to Him in repentance and faith*; that God has promised that *every coming one* shall be cleansed in that precious blood and that therefore their great need and immediate duty is that they should come in repentance and faith to the Saviour who has promised to receive and save everyone without exception who does so come. Knowing that Christ died for ME is in fact a matter relating to assurance rather than being saved. Let us listen to Spurgeon on this subject in an excerpt taken from one of his sermons:

I have sometimes thought when I have heard addresses from some revival brethren who kept on saying "believe, believe, believe," that I should like to have known for myself what it were to believe in order to our salvation. There is I fear a great deal of vagueness and crudeness about this matter. I have heard it often asserted that if you believe that Jesus Christ died for you then you will be saved. My dear hearer, do not be deluded by such an idea. You may believe that Jesus Christ died for you, and may believe what is not true; you may believe that which will bring you no sort of good whatsoever. That is not saving faith. The man who has saving faith afterward attains to the conviction that Christ died for him, but it is not of the essence of saving faith. Do not get that into your head or it will ruin you. Do not say, "I believe that Jesus Christ died for me," and because of that feel you are saved. I pray you to remember that the genuine faith that saves the soul has for its main element trust, absolute rest of the whole soul on the Lord Jesus Christ to save me, whether He died in particular or in special to save me or not, and relying, as I am, wholly and alone on Him, I am saved. Afterward I come to perceive that I have a special interest in the Saviour's blood; but if I think I have perceived that before I have believed in Christ, then I have inverted the Scriptural order of things, and I have taken as a fruit of my faith that which is only to be obtained by rights, by the man who absolutely trusts in Christ and Christ alone to save.

In evangelism then, whether corporate or personal, the evangelist is not called upon to tell people that Christ died for them, and that they must believe that in order to be saved; but he is to tell them that the blood of Jesus Christ is sufficient to purge the sins of everyone who will trust Him; and that they must trust themselves to Him, the crucified and risen Lord, and to no one else, in order that they might be saved.

In order that we might underline the relevance of our grasping this aspect of things let me quote the testimony of a modern-day English Baptist minister who was having difficulty

grappling with the question of how he could make a "free" or indiscriminate offer of the gospel while be believed in a "limited atonement." The minister said:

This seemed inconsistent with limited atonement because it seemed to suppose that the God of Truth was asking hypothetically non-elect men and women to believe that Christ died for them—for whom He did not die. I later found the solution to this when the Puritans reminded me that justifying faith in relation to the atonement does not consist in believing that Christ died for ME (which is assurance), but in believing that salvation is only found through His work on the cross and in applying for an interest and share in it.

While we certainly would not desire to see those who believe in limited atonement become slaves to words and phrases, and getting into bondage over terminology, yet I believe that a knowledge of that truth will cause a man to be careful in what he says in the process of evangelism. Surely we are to be careful in proclaiming God's truth, and our words may have a very profound effect upon the one who listens to us. If the truth and the implications of limited atonement have come across to us we will be delivered from the tragic "doubletalk" which Arminian brethren are so often forced to use. A sad example of this appeared some years ago in a popular Sunday School publication, an adult "take home" paper. The article was entitled "What Is Christianity," and in the midst of his presentation the author said:

He voluntarily let men murder Him in a bloody death. He said two things about that death. First, He was substituting for us humans in death row—that if we were willing to let Him substitute (that is the righteous for the unrighteous) then in God's record book Christ's death would be substituted for ours.

Because the author insisted on universal redemption and yet wanted to hold on to the concept of substitution, he has effectively emptied the word substitution of all meaning, and become involved in a pathetic "doubletalk." Either the Lord Jesus was our substitute those 1900 years ago or He was not. He cannot have actually been our substitute on the cross, and then only be our substitute "if we will let Him!" Such talk cheapens the atonement and empties great words of their true significance. Limited atonement must cause us to be careful that we do not misrepresent the gospel, and that we speak clearly and carefully what God has said.

Before we leave this point concerning the substance of preaching, let me make two further observations which come under the title of "implications." First, I would emphasize that the fact that an evangelist has no real right to tell unbelievers "Christ died for you" does not deprive him of anything really worthwhile. There are many statements which can be made indiscriminately which are both arresting and scriptural. He may state that Christ died for sinners; Christ died for the ungodly; Christ died for the sins of His people; Christ died to take away sin, etc. It is also the preacher's privilege to expound the meaning of the cross, and to open up such tremendous words as "propitiation," "reconciliation," "surety," "substitute," "satisfaction," "blood," "died for," etc.

The other observation is this, that our discussion in the area of the substance of preaching thus far, has surely brought to the surface the fact that when one holds to limited atonement one is not only not deprived of being able to preach to unconverted people about the cross, but that this doctrine will also cause the evangelist to emphasize and make much of the sinner's responsibility in repenting and believing. This I believe is essential, especially in our day when many unbiblical phrases are used in evangelistic preaching (make a decision for Christ; open your heart to Jesus; make a commitment to Christ; etc.) which may all be used and yet still leave a sinner ignorant of what repentance and faith really are, and the necessity of him exercising these graces.

C. Implications with respect to the universal offer of the gospel

As has been intimated already, there have been some who have had difficulty reconciling the doctrine of limited atonement with the duty and necessity of preaching the gospel to "every creature," or with the "universal offer of the gospel," as it has sometimes been called. In seeking to provide a brief historical background it would be interesting to note that those who are considered by all to be "standard reference" with respect to "Calvinism," and who would be charged (though quite erroneously) by some with being "hyperCalvinists" not interested in evangelism, have nevertheless firmly maintained both limited atonement and the necessity of a universal offer of the gospel. For instance the participants in the Synod of Dort stated:

It is the promise of the gospel that whosoever believeth in the gospel should not perish but have everlasting life: which promise, together with the injunction of repentance and faith, ought promiscuously, and without distinction, to be declared and published to all men and people.

Again the Westminster Confession of Faith declared:

He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him that they might be saved.

John Calvin wrote:

The mercy of God is offered equally to those who believe and to those who believe not.

John Owen stated:

The general publishing of the gospel unto "all nations" with the right that it hath to be preached to "every creature", Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15; because the way of salvation it declares is wide enough for all to walk in. There is enough in the remedy it brings to light to heal all their diseases, to deliver them from all their evils. If there were a thousand worlds, the gospel of Christ might, upon this ground, be preached to them all, if so be they will derive virtue from Him by touching Him in faith; the only way to draw refreshment from this fountain of salvation. It is then altogether in vain which some object, that the preaching of the gospel to all is altogether needless and useless if Christ

died not for all, yea that it is to make God call upon men to believe that which is not true—namely that Christ died for them; for first, beside that amongst those nations whither the gospel is sent there are some to be saved (*I have much people*) which they cannot be, in the way that God hath appointed to do it, unless the gospel be preached to others as well as themselves; and besides secondly, that in the economy and dispensation of the new covenant, by which all external differences and privileges of people, tongue and nations being abolished, and taken away, the word of grace was to be preached without distinction, and all men called everywhere to repent; and thirdly, that when God calleth upon men to believe, He doth not, in the first place call upon them to believe that Christ died for them, but that there is no name under heaven whereby they must be saved, but only of Jesus Christ, through whom salvation is preached;—I say besides these certain truths, fully taking off that objection, this one thing of which we speak is a sufficient basis and ground for all those general precepts of preaching the gospel unto all men, even that sufficiency which we have described.

Many other witnesses might be summoned, but surely these words, coming as they do from those who were the leading proponents of limited atonement, indicate that this doctrine did not in any way cause them to withdraw from the necessity of the universal offer.

However the history of the church reveals that there were those in later years, who, departing from the position of these great men whom we have just quoted, did get to the place where they declared that the free offer of the Gospel to sinners indiscriminately was wrong. However it would be correct to say that the opposition of such men to the universal offer of the gospel was not so much based upon their understanding of limited atonement, but on their understanding of the doctrine of total depravity. However, be that as it may, there did arise amongst the ranks of Reformed bodies those who were opposed to the universal offer of the gospel, and hyper-Calvinism. did obtain a grip on many.

This fact may be seen from the famous Marrow controversy in the Church of Scotland in the early part of the 18th century. The controversy takes its name from a book called *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* which was written (or more correctly compiled) by a man named Edward Fisher. The book was a compilation of the "marrowy passages of the acknowledged masters of divinity," and set forth the scriptural balance between truths relating to sovereign grace and the universal offer of the gospel, as it was held by the Puritan worthies. The book was first published in 1646; a copy providentially came into the hands of the great Scottish preacher Thomas Boston in 1700, and a new edition was published in Scotland in 1718. The fact that HyperCalvinism had gripped much of the Church of Scotland at that point is attested to by the fact that the republishing of the *Marrow* caused a great stir, and that it was condemned by the general assembly of the Church of Scotland. Three great names in Church history are associated with the defense of the book and the position it espoused: Thomas Boston, Ralph Erskine and Ebenezer Erskine.

In his biographical introduction of Boston's great book *Human Nature in Its Fourfold State* Rev. George H. Morrison states:

It would be an interesting, though by no means an easy task, to trace the influence of the *Marrow*, and of the *Marrow* controversy, upon religious Scotland. Weighted with the authority of saintly names, and rich in the added interest of church debate, the book was read by multitudes, and proved to many "a light struck *up* in darkness." It was interpreted in some of Boston's most familiar writings. Men caught the echoes of it in the preaching of George Whitfield. It was a silent witness against the dry morality of countless pulpits. And if the nation was at all in readiness for the evangelical revival of the succeeding century, directly and indirectly the *Marrow* had played its part in that.

The problem of holding the balance between the Reformed faith, the doctrine of limited atonement being a part of that, and the universal offer was also seen in England. This may be seen in the history of Andrew Fuller, one of the great names forever identified with William Carey in the work of missions. Fuller, who was born in 1754, had been brought up under a ministry influenced by the type of preaching which did not believe in the universal offer. It was, as one expressed it "preaching of the Gill type." Fuller was called to the pastorate at the age of 21, and early in his ministry he received help from the writings of Bunyan and Gill. However he soon realized that there was a great difference between the two men. Whilst they both adhered firmly to Calvinistic theology, limited atonement included, Bunyan obviously felt no hesitancy in inviting all sinners everywhere to come to Christ, whereas Gill would never do such a thing. After much prayer and study Fuller came to the conclusion that Bunyan was scriptural in this, and that Gill was not. Fuller's convictions eventually led to his writing the famous book called *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, and it was a direct result of this book that Carey went with the gospel to India. T. E. Watson stated:

It is no exaggeration to say that Carey's going to India was the logical outcome of Fuller's emancipation from hyper-Calvinism. Fuller maintained that the gospel was worthy of ALL acceptance, from which Carey deduced that its acceptance ought to be pressed on ALL mankind.

Sad to say it is true today, at least in England, that there are those who would still deny the necessity and duty of extending the offer of the gospel to all men everywhere, but as we have sought to demonstrate this is in contrast to those who have been the greatest luminaries in the Christian church, and in the Reformed faith. We would add this note in leaving this brief historical sketch, that in departing from the hyperCalvinistic position where there was no free offer of the gospel men such as Boston and Fuller did not become Arminians! Fuller for instance in a letter to Dr. Ryland said:

If my present connection (the particular Baptists) were to disown me, I should rather choose to go through the world alone than *be* connected with them (the Arminian Baptists).

As Erroll Hulse said "he was well and truly fixed in the saddle of Puritan theology without any danger of falling off front, back, or sides."

We may clearly say that there is no inconsistency in a man holding to the doctrine of limited atonement and seeking in evangelism to bid all men receive mercy and pardon from God's hand. This is so first of all because the call of the evangelist summoning men to turn to Christ is not based (as we have before stated) on a knowledge that Christ died for them, anymore than it is based on the knowledge that the Father has elected them. The evangelist does not know who those are for whom Christ has died; but he does know that God has called on all men everywhere to repent, and to look to Him. By the same token a man is not bidden to come to Christ because he knows that Christ has died for him, but he is bidden to come to Christ because God commands and invites him to do so, and there is salvation in none other but the Lord Jesus. Who those are for whom Christ has died is one of those secret things which belong unto the Lord our God; His invitations to all men everywhere to look to Him are among those things revealed unto us and unto our children. The command and invitation of God to all men everywhere to repent and believe the gospel is seen in such verses as:

Now (God) commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Acts 17:30

Ho, everyone that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye buy and eat; yea come buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Isa. 55:1

Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else. Isa. 45:22

All the warrant that a man needs to maintain a free offer of the gospel to all creatures, is the command and promise of God. And all the warrant a sinner needs for coming to God through Jesus Christ is the same divine command and promise.

However we might also add that the grounds for the offer of salvation to all men rests not only on the command and promise of God, but on the fact of the sufficiency of the atonement to cleanse any and all who entrust themselves to it. The limit in the atonement is not in any way related to its power, and there never has been and never will be a sinner who ever sought sincerely to wash in the blood of the lamb who found that there was not cleansing there for him. Men are to be exhorted to come without delay and without fear to an atonement which is sufficient for everyone who comes; and those who come will truly be cleansed from sin.

I would like to close by giving two quotations from two outstanding servants of God of the past. Whilst the quotes are rather lengthy, they nevertheless express beautifully that which we are seeking to express in this last point, and they make an excellent conclusion to the paper. The first is from the great work of John Owen *The Death of Death in the Death Of Christ*.

We must exactly distinguish between man's duty and God's purpose, there being no connection between them. The purpose and decree of God is not the rule of our duty; neither is the performance of our duty in doing what we are commanded any declaration of what is God's purpose to do, or His decree that it should be done. Especially is this to

be seen and considered in the duty of the ministers of the Gospel, in the dispensing of the word, in exhortations, invitations, precepts and threatenings, committed unto them; all of which are perpetual declaratives of our duty, and do manifest the approbation of the thing exhorted and invited to, with the truth of the connection between one thing and another, but not of the counsel and purpose of God, in respect of individual persons, in the ministry of the word. A minister is not to make inquiry after, nor to trouble himself about, those secrets of the eternal mind of God, namely—whom He purposeth to save, and whom He hath sent Christ to die for in particular. It is enough for them to search His revealed will, and thence take their directions, from whence they have their commission. Wherefore there is no sequel between the universal precepts from the word concerning the things, unto God's purpose in himself concerning the persons. They command and invite all to repent and believe; but they know not in particular on whom God will bestow repentance unto salvation, nor in whom He will effect the work of faith with power. And *when they* make proffers and tenders in the name of God to all, they do not say to all "it is the purpose and intention of God that ye should believe" (who gave them any such power), but that it is His command, which makes it their duty to do what is required of them; and they do not declare His mind, what Himself in particular will do. The external offer is one from which every man may conclude his own duty; none, God's purpose which yet may be known upon performance of his duty. Their objection then is vain, who affirm that God hath given Christ for all to whom he offers Christ in the preaching of the gospel; for his offer in the preaching of the gospel is not declarative to any in particular, neither of what God hath done, nor of what he will do in reference to him, but of what he ought to do if he would be approved of God and obtain the good things promised. When it will follow:

First, that God always intends to save some among them to whom he sends the gospel in its power. And the ministers of it being first, unacquainted with his particular purpose; secondly, bound to seek the good of all and everyone, as much as in them lies; thirdly, to hope and judge well of all, even as it is meet for them—they may make a proffer of Jesus Christ, with life and salvation in Him, notwithstanding that the Lord hath given his Son only to His elect.

Secondly, that this offer is neither vain nor fruitless, being declarative of their duty, and of what is acceptable to God if it be performed as it ought to be, even as it is required. And if any ask, what it is of the mind and will of God that is declared and made known when men are commanded to believe for whom Christ did not die? I answer first, what they ought to do, if they will do that which is acceptable with God; secondly, the sufficiency of salvation that is in Jesus Christ to all that believe on Him; thirdly, the certain infallible, inviolable connection that is between faith and salvation, so that whosoever performs the one shall surely enjoy the other, for whoever comes to Christ *He* will in no *wise* cast out.

Our second and concluding quotation is from a sermon by John Bonar, the cousin of Andrew Bonar:

But still an objector may say, you offer what is not there; there is nothing in your system except an offer; there is nothing behind it; there is no reality. But where is it, we ask, that there is nothing? Is it in the original design and eternal purpose of God? And is there more in that original design and eternal purpose of God in any system but that of universal salvation? Or is it in the work of Christ that there is nothing? There is glorious sufficiency in it. The atonement is complete; nothing needs to be, nothing can be, added to it. His work is perfect—the righteousness is perfect—the intercession is all prevailing to the very uttermost, Or, finally is it in the offer that there is nothing? There is the most blessed certainty—the largest, the fullest extent in it—and what could there be more of in any offer?

But still proud man, after all, returns and asks, how can you sincerely offer what you say it may not be God's design actually to bestow? And, growing more bold, he says, How can God offer that to all which is not meant for all? This, instead of an offer of mercy is but a mocking, a deceiving of man. This is fearful language for a man to use, but there is no foundation for it. No! God neither mocks nor deceives anyone. Where there is no confidence placed, there can be no deceit experienced. Where there is confidence placed, there the blessing is received. There is no deceit, and from this God shall stand for ever infinitely clear. No man surely would have God to fulfill His word of promise to those who do not believe it, and do not claim its fulfillment. And whoever believes it, and claims the fulfillment, to him shall it be made fully and gloriously good, and good forever.

Putting down then all such contendings against God, and escaping from the unwholesome atmosphere whence they spring, let us return to rejoice in the full warrant which every minister has to offer Christ to all—and the full warrant which each has to receive Christ for himself Christ is set forth to us not only as a priest offering a sacrifice for sin, but as a prophet and a priest and a king; and as such is made known to us to be received and rested on. The benefits of justification, adoption and sanctification are freely offered in Him. This offer is to be made to every creature under heaven on the authority of God. They only who refuse this offered grace perish in their sins; they who believe it and receive it, live and rejoice—joy in God through Jesus Christ, by whom they have received the atonement.

Thus without seeking to scan the unrevealed mysteries of the book of God's decree—without defacing the works of Christ—without blotting out the word of God and all that is said of God's sovereign grace and electing love—without destroying the object of faith, in order to make it acceptable to those who love not God—without reducing the blessed word to a few portions of it, and wishing to forget all the rest without such things as these, there is a full and blessed warrant to come to each sinner, wherever he is, and say *unto you the voice of Christ comes, turn and live; look unto me and be ye saved*. It is the command of God to offer Christ—*Go ye and preach to all nations*. It is the command of God to receive Him—*this is the work of God that ye should believe on Him whom He hath sent*. It is the invitation of God to come to Him; and it is the promise of God, that whosoever cometh shall in no wise be cast out. *The Spirit says come, and the bride saith come; and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely*.