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ART. I.—*A Discourse on the Moral Tendencies and Results of Human History*, delivered before the Society of Alumni in Yale College, on Wednesday, August 16, 1843. By Horace Bushnell. Published by request of the Society. New Haven, 1843.

It is proper to explain for what reason we make this speech the subject of a review, and with painful endeavour attempt to resuscitate and bring again into notice what, to judge by the usual fate of such productions, Time something like two years since should have put into his wallet as alms for Oblivion. Indignation perhaps may be kindled in some breast respectful for the dead, and surprise in others, that in the case of such an evident "relictum," such a ghost as a speech becomes when disembodied of speaker, audience, and elocution, we should seek

"To offer it the show of violence;
For that 'tis as the air, invulnerable."

It should indeed have been permitted to die where it fell,

"Troje sub mœnibus altis
. . . . ubi tot Simois correpta sub undis
Scuta virum galeasque et fortia corpora volvit."

But since it was taken up, we must believe by no friendly deities, and driven on a hostile shore, it is incumbent on us to say that for our own part we notice it, first, for the double cause of

change in form. The essential question remains the same. It is still a contention about the very nature of religion, and the method of salvation.

ART. IX.—*The Attraction of the Cross, Designed to Illustrate the leading Truths, Hopes, and Obligations of Christianity.* By Gardiner Spring, D.D., Pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church in the City of New York. Published by M. W. Dodd, Brick Church Chapel, Corner of Park Row and Spruce Street, opposite the City Hall. pp. 413, Svo.

It is a matter of regret that this important work did not come to hand, until the number of our periodical now in the press, was so near to its completion; which will prevent us from making as thorough and extended a review as under other circumstances we should be disposed to give it. But unwilling to let it lie over to the time of our next quarterly publication, we have determined to do the best in our power, in communicating to our readers the views which we entertain of the character and contents of this interesting volume.

Few events occur among us, which possess more real importance than the publication of a new book, which is likely to become a standard work for the instruction of mankind, not only in the present, but in future generations. And the importance of such an event is greatly increased when the book relates to the infinite concerns of the future world; the destiny of multitudes may depend on the publication of such a work. Authors, therefore, assume an awful responsibility, and seldom when writing, are aware of the momentous consequences which are suspended on their works. On this account, it is important that new productions, issued from the press, should be subjected to an impartial review. The reviewer, therefore, has his share of responsibility; and it is evidently for the public good, that he should perform his duty without fear or favour; and there seldom occurs an occasion, when the impartial exercise of this office is more important, than in the

present case, when an imposing volume comes forth, on the most vital parts of our holy religion, containing the matured thoughts of an author possessing great vigour of mind; and who has for nearly forty years had these subjects under careful consideration. The wide circulation of such a volume cannot be a matter of small moment; it must have an important effect on the minds of multitudes, for good or for evil, according as its contents shall be found to contain a clear, comprehensive, and practical exhibition of gospel truth, or the contrary. The only censorship of the press in our country, is the tribunal of criticism.

Before proceeding to particulars, we wish to make some general remarks on the work under review.

In our opinion, there was much felicity in the selection of the general subject. The cross, is undoubtedly the centre of the Christian system. It is like the sun in our planetary system; the source of light and life. It is like the heart in the human body, from which all vital action proceeds. It is true, the doctrines of the cross require, in order to be understood, the knowledge of other truths, on which they are founded; but these truths can be more clearly and fully exhibited in the light emanating from the cross, than in any other way. It is said, that the late Dr. Andrew Fuller—one of the clearest headed theologians of his age—had determined to write a system of theology, and that his plan was, to commence with the doctrines of the cross. And we have understood—though we do not remember on what authority—that Dr. Chalmers since he became a Professor of theology, was dissatisfied with the common systematic arrangement of the heads of doctrine, in our *common places* and bodies of divinity; and that he thought the proper method would be, to place the doctrines of the cross in the first place. Whether this would be the most judicious arrangement for a complete system of theology, we doubt; but for a series of discourses, whether published from the pulpit or the press, which have in view the clear exhibition of the vital parts of Christianity, practical as well as doctrinal, the selection of the cross as the centre of the whole, is entirely judicious.

We have no doubt but that the substance of this volume, was originally delivered in a series of Discourses from the pulpit; but they are now cast into a different form, which will be

more attractive to many readers. And here we would remark, that the plan of first publishing important views of evangelical truth from the pulpit, and then from the press, with such changes as may serve to render them more popular, is a wise economy of time ; and considering the incalculable power of the press, more of our learned and eloquent preachers, should avail themselves of this method of benefitting the public, by diffusing abroad the precious truths of the gospel. There is no valid objection to the multiplication of good books. Every age should have a literature of its own. The same truths require a different statement at different periods ; and many will read the writings of an author known and esteemed by them. Dr. Spring is, in our judgment, more distinguished by vigour of intellect, and the faculty of judicious discrimination than by any extraordinary liveliness of imagination. He therefore excels more in the clear, forcible presentation of truth, than in graphic description. As a writer, he is highly respectable, both as it relates to the logical character of his reasoning, and the extent of his literary resources. His style possesses strength, elevation, perspicuity, and point. Its defects perhaps, are, a want of ease, simplicity, and variety. No one can read this author's compositions without a feeling of high respect for his talents and learning ; but we have observed, that common readers are not so much attracted and interested by his style, as by that of some writers of inferior abilities. But no one man possesses every excellence as a writer ; and few in our country will bear a comparison with our respected author.

It is the truth, the precious fundamental truth, contained in this volume, which should especially recommend it ; and which we believe will make it a lasting blessing to the church. The author has been now thirty-five or six years the highly esteemed and faithful pastor of a flock, embodying, perhaps, as much intelligence and moral worth, as any in our country ; and his evangelical discourses, delivered with eloquence from Sabbath to Sabbath, must have produced an incalculable amount of good ; but we think it probable, that by this single publication, he will be the means of effecting more for the cause of Christ, than by all the sermons which he ever has delivered, or may hereafter deliver. When we consider how much good has been done by the published works of such

men as Baxter, Owen, Doddridge, Alleine, Boston, Edwards, &c. we wonder that men gifted with a talent for writing attractively and powerfully, do not devote more of their time to the preparation of good books. But although, in theory, we acknowledge the all-pervading power of the press; yet the importance of the subject is not practically felt, in all its momentous consequences. The man who is enabled to write a truly evangelical and useful book, or even a single tract of first rate excellence, may convey the saving truth of the gospel to a thousand times more persons, than the living preacher can ever instruct by his voice. And hundreds of years after the death of the writer, the production of his pen may be but just commencing its career of usefulness, only to be terminated with the end of the world. Those men, therefore, who are blessed with the ability of producing one work of evangelical excellence, may be considered among the most highly favoured of our race, and must enjoy a rich reward hereafter.

Omitting other matters discussed in these discourses, we shall examine the opinions of the author, in relation to the four following points: The necessity of the atonement—the nature of the atonement—the extent of the atonement—and the method of justification.

And first, as to the necessity of atonement. Most errors, we have observed, have their origin in some misconception respecting the divine attributes; and the error can never be effectually removed, until correct ideas are obtained on this subject. They who maintain that happiness is the only supreme and ultimate good to be sought by rational creatures, cannot but adopt an erroneous principle respecting the primary reason, why sin is punished. That reason, they do not derive from the intrinsic evil of sin itself, as being opposed to the holy nature of God; but from the tendency of sin to disturb the order and mar the happiness of the intelligent creation. No doubt this is one reason why sin should be punished, but it is not the primary reason; and this tendency arises from its intrinsic evil. The opinion that the whole evil of sin consists in its tendency to destroy happiness, is closely connected with an error respecting the attribute of divine justice. It is maintained, that vindictory or punitive justice is not essential to the divine perfection; but that God may omit the

punishment of sin consistently with the holiness of his nature, if it seem good unto him. This error may be properly termed *radical*, for it is the fruitful root of more erroneous opinions, than any other principle with which we are acquainted. On this ground, the truth of the gospel is assailed by Deists, Jews, Mohammedans, Socinians, and alas, by many who now claim the name of Calvinists. Let us then see on what ground our author stands in relation to this important point; and certainly it will be the fairest method to permit him to speak for himself.

“Human laws, in their best form, are professedly and always founded upon considerations of *expediency*, and never graduate the punishment of the offender by the ascertained and exact measure of his ill-desert. Justice, *simple justice*, calls for merited punishment; and in the divine government it is determined by the *ill-desert* of the transgressor. In men, it may be a flexible principle, and lead to a vascillating policy; but not in God. It is an essential perfection of the Divine Being. It is his nature. If there had been no creatures for him to govern, or no transgressors of his law to punish, he would still have been a Being of unchangeable, invincible justice. It belongs to his nature as truly as his spirituality, or his goodness, or his power. ‘Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil dwell with thee.’ It were just as impossible for him to forgive sin in the way of sovereignty, or by any arrangement of mere expediency and general benevolence, and without regard to the claims of equity and moral principle, as it were for him to be unjust. In pardoning the guilty, his prerogatives as the sovereign are merged in his obligations as the Lawgiver. Justice demands the punishment of the transgressor, and forever stands in the way of his exercising pardon as a mere sovereign. Nor is this a fancied difficulty, nor one which any strength or ardour of love may leap over, or break through. What he once views as sinful, he always views as sinful; what he once views as deserving punishment, he always views as deserving punishment; and what he is once disposed to punish, he is always disposed to punish. He has proclaimed this disposition in his law; nor is it a parade of authority, or an empty declaration, nor is it any the worse for being violated or executed. Nor is there any reason for waiving the execution of it, unless that reason be found in a satisfactory atonement. If there be good and solid reasons why the penalty should be inflicted where no atonement exists, there are the same reasons why an atonement is called for if the penalty be remitted. God was not bound to forgive; it was not necessary for him to forgive; but if he does gratify his love in acts of pardon, he owes to himself, and to that everlasting difference between right and wrong which he himself has established, to do it in a way that satisfies and supports his immutable justice.”

Our author is no less explicit and orthodox on the subject of the nature of the atonement. The old doctrine is, that the sacrifice of Christ is a real satisfaction to the law and justice of God for the sins of all for whom He died; and, therefore,

that his sufferings and death were strictly vicarious ; that is, endured in the room and stead of sinners for whom He laid down his life. The new theory is, that the death of Christ is not a satisfaction to divine justice, which can only be satisfied by the death of the sinner himself ; and that Christ did not endure the penalty of the law which could have no demands on Him, an innocent person ; but the death of Christ was a substitute for the execution of the penalty of the law on sinners ; a device of infinite wisdom, to manifest to the universe God's infinite hatred of sin, without which exhibition, it would not have been consistent with the divine government, for the Ruler of the universe to pardon sinners. According to this theory, the demands of justice are set aside, to give room for the exercise of mercy ; and the penalty of the law is not inflicted on either the saved sinner, or the Saviour, but is forever set aside or suspended, on account of the scheme of showing the evil of sin in another way. It is no part of our object, at present, to discuss this important point of difference between the old and new theories ; this has been repeatedly done in former numbers of this periodical. Our reason for distinctly stating the difference is, that our readers may see, on which side Dr. Spring stands. No doubt all his early opinions and predilections were in favour of the new theory ; but the following quotation will evince beyond all contradiction, that he is now firm, in maintaining the orthodox doctrine, in accordance with the standards of the Presbyterian Church. The importance of giving an impartial view of Dr. Spring's views on this important point, must be our apology for the length of our citations.

“ It is not, as some have supposed, an improper inquiry to be instituted, *How do the sufferings and death of the Cross constitute an effective propitiation for sin?* Atonement is an expiation, or an expiatory equivalent. It is that which makes amends for an offence, so that the offender may be pardoned. It is a reparation which is made by doing or suffering that which is received as a satisfaction for the injury committed. By the Christian atonement, I understand *that satisfaction to divine justice made by the sufferings and death of Christ, in the room and stead of sinners, in virtue of which pardoning mercy is secured to all who believe the Gospel.* It may be desirable to present a brief view of the different parts of this general position.

“ The propitiation of which we are speaking, consists in the *sufferings and death* of Christ. His instructions and his example do not form the matter of his atonement ; nor ought his prophetic and priestly offices

to be thus confounded. The pardon of sin is not procured except by his sufferings, by the influence of his death, and that simply by its expiatory power. To award him no other honour than that he came as a divine teacher, is to put him upon a level with his own apostles; to take the crown from his head; to have no part in the song, 'Unto him that redeemed us unto God by his blood.' Whoever undertakes to atone for the sins of men must *suffer*. His arrangement is with penalty. As the authority of the law lies in its penalty, so the emphasis of the atonement lies in the sufferings of the Mediator. And hence the prominence which the sacred writers give to *the Cross*. Hence it is, too, that the trembling conscience is always directed by the Spirit of God to the *blood* of the guiltless victim. The steady though slowly-burning flame that is lighted up in the bosom of the transgressor, is extinguished only by that fountain of sorrows. It is upon his sacerdotal office, upon the altar where he bled, upon the ignominy and woes of the last scene and the last sighs, that Christian hope rests all her expectations. A suffering Saviour is the glory of the Gospel, and involves truths which, if once subverted, the Christian structure is in ruins. Nor do I regard the thought as a trivial one, that the sufferings of Christ were truly and properly penal. They were penal and not disciplinary. Nor were they simply declaratory and instructive; for if this were their main design, I see not why they might not have been spared, nor why all the solemn lessons they read are not read from the fiery walls of the prison where men and angels suffer to show that God is holy, and sin is vile. It is doubtless true that the sufferer did not endure *the* penalty, nor was the sentence of the law to *the very letter* executed upon him. Yet were his sufferings penal, because they were inflicted by justice, and imposed in execution of a legal sentence. They were executed in the form of justice; and, though not the penalty the law incurred, were accepted in the place of it, and as a full equivalent."

And in regard to the strictly vicarious nature of Christ's sufferings; we have the author's opinion, distinctly expressed in the part of the discourse immediately consecutive to what has been quoted. We are aware, indeed, that some who hold the new divinity use the words *vicarious*, and *substitution*; but in a sense totally different from that attached to the words by the author. It will be seen, however, by the following citation, that our author employs the words in the old and usual sense.

"In order to constitute the sufferings of Christ an effective propitiation for sin, they were endured *in the room and stead of those who themselves deserve the curse*. They were truly and properly vicarious. This is a truth not free from difficulties; and had there been no revelation from heaven, we should be slow in believing it. But since God has revealed it, we receive it with adoring thankfulness, and can only express our lasting admiration of the unsearchable riches of his wisdom and mercy it discloses. If we look back to the covenant with Adam, we find 'the figure,' the nucleus, the germ of this truth, in the fact that he was the representative and substitute of his race. 'By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.' The great doc-

trine of substitution was thus early revealed, which is perfected in the sufferings of the 'Word made flesh.' If man fell in the person of his representative, why may not a representative, in carrying into effect that same economy of grace, suffer for him? Both these divine arrangements stand or fall together. We do not mean, by substitution, a transfer of the moral character of the transgressor to the representative; for this is impossible. The sins of men did not and could not make Christ a sinner. Nor is there any thing in this substitution that removes personal criminality from the transgressor; for no substitution, no personal punishment even, can ever make the guilty innocent. A vicarious sacrifice does not diminish or palliate the criminality of sin, much less take it away. It assumes the sinner's obligation to punishment. The substitution of Christ imports that the sins of the transgressor are set down to his account, and so imputed to him that he endures the punishment of them in the transgressor's place. He stands in law just where the sinner stands, and takes upon himself its curse. The penal debt of the believer is thus cancelled, and his account with the law settled by the sufferings of his surety."

Here we have the sound Calvinistic doctrine of substitution, and vicarious atonement, as clearly and fully expressed, as the most rigidly orthodox could wish. We rejoice in seeing this frank and public testimony to a doctrine which we have always believed to be essential to the Christian system. And we admire this candid avowal of the truth, because we believe it to be the triumph of truth over former prepossessions, in a comprehensive mind, governed, we fully believe, by a sincere and impartial love of truth.

We come now to consider the extent of the atonement; or what Dr. Spring calls "the purpose of the cross." Since the days of Augustine, this has been a subject of dispute; and since the era of the reformation has often been discussed by the ablest pens. It has not only been a subject of controversy between the orthodox and Pelagians and Arminians; but all the reformed have not been of one mind in regard to it. Various have been the theories by which it has been attempted to remove the difficulties which belong to this question. The general opinion of Calvinists has been in favour of "particular redemption," admitting at the same time, an infinite merit in the atonement; so that if it had been the purpose of God to save a greater number than will be saved, there would be no need of any other or greater sacrifice. Indeed, if the merit of the death of Christ, on account of the dignity of his person is infinite, considered in itself, it must be adequate to satisfy for the sins of all to whom it may be applied, however great

their number. This is more evidently true, when it is considered that Christ's merits are not diminished by a participation of them, but like a perennial fountain which continues full however many may drink of its waters; or like the sun, the light of which is not lessened by the multitude who see by means of it. It would require a sun to make the world a comfortable habitation for a single man, and it is equally fitted to afford light and heat to a thousand millions of inhabitants; so, in our view, all that Christ has done and suffered to satisfy the law and justice of God, would have been necessary if the purpose had been to save only a single soul; and that sacrifice which was needed for one is sufficient for all. And as all men are in the same state of wrath and condemnation, the remedy which is suited to one, is equally suitable for all others. And as the commands, exhortations and invitations of God, are not regulated by his secret purposes, but by the relations in which his creatures stand to him and one another. He always addresses himself to man as a reasonable creature, and an accountable moral agent, and demands of him that obedience which from his circumstances, it is his duty to render. And as the offer of salvation through Christ is made to every creature to whom the gospel comes, it is the duty and the interest of all to embrace the gracious offer; and it may truly be affirmed that the connexion between faith and salvation is certain, so that if we make the supposition, that any sinner of Adam's race should truly believe, the word of God is pledged for his salvation, and there would be no lack of sufficiency or suitableness in the atonement. Some, indeed, have maintained that the sufferings of Christ were exactly proportioned to the sins of the elect, so that if it had been the purpose of God to save another soul, he must have suffered just so much more as the sins of that individual deserved. But this view of the nature of the atonement has been embraced by very few; and is liable to unanswerable objections. Indeed, upon this commercial theory, we think it might be shown, that it would have been necessary for Christ to die separately for every individual saved, as death was incurred by every one. And as the universal offer of the gospel furnishes the most plausible argument against particular redemption, some learned and able theologians, in defending the doctrine, have thought it neces-

sary to deny that there was any general and promiscuous offer of the gospel; and have maintained that all the invitations of the gospel are addressed to penitents, to seekers, to souls thirsting after salvation and such like. But this requires a force to be put on so many plain passages of scripture, and so cramps and circumscribes the preacher of the gospel in delivering his message, that the theory cannot be admitted; beside, it is, in our view, not at all necessary; for the relation in which the sinner stands to God as an accountable creature, fully justifies the command to believe and repent, and the sufficiency of the atonement will justify every offer of pardon and life made to every class of sinners.

Others to avoid the difficulties which beset the subject on both sides, have endeavoured to strike out a middle course; and have held that the atonement was particularly made for the elect, but that it was so made for all men, that others might be saved by it; not only that legal obstructions were removed, but that actually there was a possibility of others repenting and embracing the gospel besides the elect. And as no one could repent and believe without grace, they were under the necessity of maintaining the doctrine of universal grace; and hence were denominated *Universalists*. Thus, in regard to the elect, they were strictly Calvinistic, holding that they received an effectual call, while in regard to the non-elect, they agreed fully with the Arminians, that sufficient grace was afforded to all, which they might improve to their salvation or not. This was the scheme introduced in the school of Saumur, in France, by Carnero, and ably defended by Amyraut and Daille; and which, in substance, was embraced by Richard Baxter, Bishop Davenant, and many of the English divines.

The Hopkinsians, of this country, maintain the universality of the atonement, but reject the Baxterian doctrine of universal grace. As, however, the strict vicarious nature of the atonement seemed to be incompatible with the idea of a general atonement, they were led to invent another view of the *nature* of the atonement, according to which, Christ's sufferings are not considered as having any immediate relation to the satisfaction of retributive justice, and are by no means an endurance of the penalty of the law, but a scheme by which all

the ends to be accomplished by the execution of the law, are more fully answered; and the way is now equally opened for the salvation of all men. This doctrine has had a wide prevalence in our own country, and is strenuously maintained and ingeniously defended by many. Our respected author's views on this subject, after long and impartial examination, are expressed in the following words.

"This actual purpose of mercy by the Cross lay in the Divine mind, in all its parts and relations, and in all the means by which it is accomplished, before the foundation of the world. It was a covenant arrangement between the three sacred Persons of the ever-blessed and adorable Trinity. So far as the Cross is concerned, it was a covenant between the Father and Son. Hence the blood of the Cross is spoken of as the 'blood of the covenant,' and 'the blood of the everlasting covenant.' There was an agreement between the Father and the Son, as the representative of his people, in which the Father promised, upon condition of the Son's mediatorial satisfaction and obedience, that he should be rewarded by the sanctification and salvation of his people. This covenant Christ accepted; and having fulfilled the terms of it, became entitled to his reward."—"Such is the power and depth of human apostasy, that every avenue is closed against the calls of divine mercy, and not one of all the race is found, who, if left to himself, will fall in with the gracious overture. If the Cross, therefore, merely throws open the door of mercy—if it is merely accessible to all, and announces to all repentance and remission of sins—Christ is dead in vain; the mercy revealed to save, actually saves none; there has been a waste of atoning blood; the heavens have bowed; the eternal Son has expired, not merely for a doubtful, but a desperate enterprise. The covenant of redemption was designed to forestall this evil, and give effect to the great propitiation in the hearts of men, and thus make the actual purpose of salvation inseparable from the Cross itself. It is in reference to this purpose that the Saviour says, 'I lay down my life for the *sheep*;' 'All that the Father *giveth me* shall come to me;' that the Apostle speaks of the '*church of God* purchased by his own blood;' and the prophet declares, 'For the transgression of *my people* was he stricken.' There is sovereignty in the Cross. 'He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.' 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight!' It is no proof that the counsels of Heaven's mercy are not good, because they are unfathomable by mortals. Of one thing we may be satisfied, from what we know of the divine goodness and the all-sufficiency of the atonement, that the purpose of saving mercy is thus definite, not through want of love in God or merit in the death of his Son; but for reasons, which however unknown to us, no atonement could reach, and no substituted sufferer could answer."

"This all-sufficient redemption is limited by the terms of it; and be they who they may, all those who do not repent and believe the Gospel, have no lot and no part in this matter. The Cross was never designed to give eternal life to the impenitent and unbelieving—to men who would not acknowledge their offence and thankfully accept its mercy on the terms on which it is offered. Christ has died, and through his death God can now 'be just and the justifier of *him that believeth*.' This is the sum and substance of the atonement: it is not greater than this, and knows

no other mercy. There cannot in the nature of the case be an effective propitiation for *incorrigible* impenitence and unbelief. A man may be a great sinner: he may put off his repentance to the bed of sickness and the agonies of the dying hour; but if at the eleventh hour of human life he truly repents and believes the Gospel, he shall find that all his sins are atoned for by the blood of the Lamb. But if his impenitence and unbelief continue until his day of grace and space for repentance are expired; if even the approaching scenes of death and eternity fail to awaken him to a view of his lost condition and lead him to the Saviour; if he dies as he has lived, the enemy of God, and his Christ; is there any cover for his offences, any satisfaction for his crimes, any atonement for his final impenitence? An affirmative answer to this question would present to my mind the most palpable absurdity. Is there any ransom for such a man; or has he any accepted surety for him; or any satisfaction, any equivalent for his debt to the divine justice which that surety has rendered? Has the burden of that man's guilt ever rested upon another, or does it forever rest on his own soul? Was Jesus Christ delivered for his offences, or has he in any way wrought out a deliverance for him from the place of torment? I suggest these thoughts the more freely, because, however familiar they may have been to others, it is not until within a few years they have been presented to my own mind."

"The actual purpose of the Cross, therefore, is one which is limited to a part of mankind. God spared not the angels, but stooped to men; and the same sovereignty which led him to pass by angels, has led him to include in his purpose of mercy but a portion of the fallen race of Adam. This is a purpose altogether irrespective of worth or worthiness in its objects, formed before the foundation of the world, and carried into effect notwithstanding their ill-desert; a purpose of mere grace, itself securing the faith which is the revealed condition of salvation, in compliance with the ancient grant to his Son of a seed to serve him for having poured out his soul unto death and been numbered with the transgressors."

But although thus far Dr. Spring seems to agree entirely with the views of old Calvinists; yet it would be injustice to him to stop here, and not to exhibit the counterpart of his theory, in which he gives his views of the relation of the Cross to that part of mankind who were not chosen in Christ. His sentiments on this subject are found in the sixth chapter of the work entitled, "THE CROSS ACCESSIBLE."

We again permit the author to give his views, in his own language.

"The Scriptures do not confine the influence of the Cross to the salvation of a peculiar people. This is its great object, its saving purpose, but this is not all it accomplishes. In one view, and that no unimportant one, the aspect of the Redeemer's mediation is universal. It relates to the moral government of God and the sinful condition of men. It is the fruit of that divine compassion, that infinite benevolence, that looks with equal favour upon all mankind. It is a provision for the ungodly. It is the medium of universal access to the Father, and whosoever will may come unto God by Jesus Christ. While he became

surety to the Father that he would rescue a chosen people from the pollution and condemnation of sin, and present them all without spot before the presence of his glory at the last day, he does by this very act introduce the reign of mercy over our entire world. Besides being a personal satisfaction for the sins of all who believe on him, his death was a great moral expedient, which lays the basis for all those equitable dispensations of mercy by which the threatened stroke of justice is averted and the door of hope is opened to the race. It introduces a new era in the moral government of God; so that it is no longer a government of pure law and justice, but a government of mercy lodged in the hands of the Mediator. The object of this gracious government is to arrest the attention of men as sinners; to arrest it to the affecting fact of their fallen and guilty condition, and to the divine method for their recovery; to justify God in these proclamations of pardon, and to hold out the strongest considerations to induce men everywhere to comply with the offers and claims of the Gospel.

“Nothing justifies such a dispensation of mercy but the all-sufficient propitiation of the Son, and the infinite merits of that great sacrifice. The sole basis on which such a government rests is the obedience unto death of the great Mediator, furnishing, as it does, not only a perfect satisfaction to divine justice for the sins of all those who were given to Christ as his own purchased reward, but a public declaration of the righteousness of God in the forgiveness of sins to every possible extent, if men will but repent and believe the Gospel. The Cross is now accessible to all. No man now perishes because there is not forgiveness with God; no man now perishes because his fate was involved in the issue of the first apostacy; for under this new constitution he is put on trial for himself, and must decide for himself whether he will or will not have the gracious Mediator to rule over him.”

These views, it must be confessed, do not appear to be in exact accordance with the old system of orthodoxy. At any rate, the mode of presenting the subject is different from that pursued by all the old writers, deemed orthodox; and different from the opinions of all those who have heretofore maintained the doctrine of a general or universal atonement. And yet as it does not mar the plan of a definite and effective atonement as it regards the elect of God, and does not assume the principle that any are actually saved, except those whom God purposed to save through the vicarious sufferings of the cross, we do not feel much disposed to quarrel with it. We are inclined to think, after all, that it amounts to nothing more than what is admitted and held by all true Calvinists; namely, the infinite sufficiency of the atonement, intrinsically considered, and the promiscuous or general offer of the gospel, founded on Christ's infinite merit. Whether the views contained in the fifth and sixth chapters of the work can be fully reconciled, seems to us very doubtful; but when theologians admit, as our author most

explicitly does, the definite purpose to save the elect, and that strictly speaking, an expiation is made for none else, we do not feel solicitous about other ends which it is supposed the death of Christ may answer. It was doubtless a glorious as well as an awful transaction; and while it is effectual to the salvation of God's people, it illustrates the divine attributes in a most glorious manner. We are not able, therefore, to enter into all the views of the writer, respecting the great importance of the atonement, in its bearing on the non-elect; and if we understand some of the assertions here made, we cannot acquiesce in their correctness; nor can we see that they are consistent with what the author has said in other parts of the work. That the present state of the human race is different from what it would have been, if no Mediator had interposed, we suppose will be admitted by all. The stroke of vindictory justice is suspended, in its full severity, in regard to the non-elect as well as the elect; but all this, it appears to us, has relation to the salvation of God's chosen people; whom alone Christ covenanted to redeem. And forbearance, for a while, to execute the full penalty of the law, is calculated to show the patience of God, while it derogates nothing from his justice, which will still have its full demands. When a criminal among men is condemned to suffer capitally, by the laws of his country, it is not necessary that the penalty be instantly inflicted. Dr. Spring says, "nor are the infinite merit of the cross merely *incidental*." Certainly not, in the sense of not being deliberately intended. We believe that every circumstance which exists, in relation to this or any thing else, was a part of the divine plan; which is in all respects infinitely wise. But in relation to the non-elect, the sufficiency of the atonement was *incidental*, inasmuch as its effect on them was not the main object of the cross; and inasmuch as it is certain this sacrifice would never have been made had it not been necessary for the salvation of God's chosen people. Neither is it any "refinement in theology" to maintain that an atonement made for a part of the human race, must intrinsically, be sufficient for the whole; because Christ's merits are not divided and distributed in portions, but every believer receives a *whole* Christ, and is clothed with his complete righteousness; and when millions have been justified by this righteousness, its merit is not in the least diminished; it is

just as sufficient to justify millions more, as it was when imputed to the first believer. Dr. Spring speaks, several times, of the change which the cross has made in the relation of sinners to the law of God; and as "introducing a new era in the moral government of God; so that it is no longer a government of pure law and justice, but a government of mercy lodged in the hands of a Mediator." The author's meaning may be correct, but the language used is not suited to convey with precision the true state of the case. Men may be said truly to be now under a dispensation of mercy, because in consequence of the sacrifice on the cross, free and full salvation is offered to all who hear the gospel: but the relations of no man to the law are in the least changed, until he accepts the offered mercy; then, by justification his relation to the law is changed. And in regard to those who never believe, they remain under the sentence of the law already incurred, with the addition of the sin of rejecting a Saviour; which sin is, as well as every other, a transgression of the law. We agree with Dr. Spring in believing, that neither election nor redemption alters the legal relations of any man; the law binds him fast under its penalty, until he has possession of a righteousness which is commensurate with its demands.

We find one sentence in this chapter which seems to us to bear the aspect of a different system of theology from Dr. Spring's. It is this, "*No man now perishes because there is not forgiveness with God: no man now perishes because his fate was involved in the issue of the first apostacy; for under this new constitution he is put on trial for himself, and must decide for himself whether he will have the gracious Redeemer to rule over him.*" Here we would respectfully ask, how can this be said of the hundreds of millions who never heard the gospel? Or how can this be reconciled with what the author has taught respecting the relation of the heathen nations to the cross in the preceding chapter. pp. 33.

In regard to the texts, cited by the author, as seeming to favour the doctrine of general atonement, we have two remarks to make: the first is, that all these scriptures admit of an interpretation perfectly consistent with the doctrine of particular redemption, and this meaning is more accordant with the true scope of the context, and more consistent with the *usus lo-*

quendi of the writers of the New Testament, than any other.

Our second remark is, that several of the texts cited, taken in the most unlimited sense of the terms, are as irreconcilable with the author's own theory, as given in this volume, as with any other whatever.

But where there is a perfect agreement in points of magnitude, it is wrong to make much of minor differences. We agree fully with Dr. Spring, therefore, when he says, "The views we have expressed, are equally opposed, on the one hand, to those latitudinarian notions which deny the penal sufferings of Christ, and teach that the great design of his death is simply declaratory, and a measure of expediency, rather than one demanded by justice; and on the other hand, to those who assign to his sufferings, a value measured by the ill-desert of a part of mankind. When these errors are renounced, and there is a concurrence of views in regard to the nature and all-sufficiency of the Redeemer's sacrifice, the dispute in regard to its extent is *logomachy*—a dispute about words." pp. 98.

We come now to consider the fourth point of doctrine which our author discusses as involved in the cross; and that is the fundamental doctrine of the method of a sinner's justification in the sight of God. He who errs in regard to this point must have an erroneous system of theology; and on the other hand, that man who entertains correct views on this subject, cannot be in material error on other points. All heretics, and dangerous errorists deny the true scriptural doctrine of justification. As this point in theology has of late years been kept out of view by many preachers, and greatly perverted by others, we felt more anxious to find Dr. Spring on the true ground of orthodoxy here, than any where else; and we have not been disappointed.

The author in the seventh chapter of his work, gives a noble testimony to this precious truth, and exhibits the doctrine in a luminous, and forcible manner. We would gladly present our readers with a specimen from this very rich discourse; but we have not room for any more extracts; and if we had, we should be at a loss to make a selection that would give a just idea of the whole. And we hope our readers will not content themselves with the view which we are able, in a few pages,

to give of this volume, but will obtain it, and peruse it for themselves.

Having made the foregoing remarks on particular points of doctrine, involved in the discussion of our author, we would not have our readers to infer, that the principal parts of the volume are occupied only with these. There are in the work, twenty-two chapters, in each of which a distinct view is taken of some great practical truth, connected with the cross. In our opinion, the execution in all is not equally able; but in some of his discussions, our author is not only eloquent, but exceedingly rich in the treasures of divine truth, which he pours forth. Among those by which we have been delighted and instructed, we would mention particularly the chapter entitled, "THE RELIGION OF THE CROSS." The chapter also, entitled, "THE WORLD CRUCIFIED BY THE CROSS" is one of the most delightful discourses, we have at any time read. We will not call it eloquent and beautiful, though it is both; but we choose to characterise it, as spiritual, animating, and consolatory. It will, we think, furnish a delicious feast to every pious heart.

We will now mention some of the general characteristics of this important work, and indicate some of the peculiar benefits, which, in our opinion, will accrue from its publication and wide circulation. It embodies a vast compass of evangelical truth; so that no one can read it with care and impartiality, without acquiring much important information of the true character of the Christian religion; and it may be considered an advantage of no small importance, that the truth is not exhibited under the cold technicalities, in which it is commonly presented in bodies of divinity. Neither has the author been trammelled with the usual rules of sermonizing; for though we find much of the solemnity of address, and pungency of appeal, which properly belong to this species of composition; yet a method has been adopted which leaves the author more at liberty in treating his subject, than would fairly be allowable in a regularly constructed sermon.

The truths of the gospel are presented in these discourses, in their connexion with Christian experience and practice. We have no fine spun theories, or refined speculations on points of little practical importance, but a bold, straightforward exhibition of what man is under obligations to believe and to

perform, with a powerful application to the conscience and to the heart, of those reasons and motives, which should influence us to engage instantly and earnestly in the performance of our duty.

We are of opinion that the mode of presenting truth, and obviating objections here pursued, will have a tendency to remove the misconceptions and prejudices of many serious Christians to the doctrines of grace. They will see, from the statements here made, that the representations of these doctrines, frequently heard from the pulpit, and sometimes issued from the press, are mere caricatures; calculated to bring the truth into discredit. They will learn that Calvinists reject the odious consequences pretended to be derived from their doctrines, with as much abhorrence as any others can do.

We are induced to believe, that this work will be perused by many who are not much in the habit of reading religious books, on account of the eloquent and animated style in which it is written. Men of cultivated minds, who are not religious, will be arrested by the clear, forcible, and beautiful exhibitions of important truth, contained in this volume. There is in the whole work nothing of cant, nothing of mere common place statement; no affectation of uncommon elegance, or ambition of saying striking and original things; but in the most eloquent and powerful passages, the author seems so much absorbed with the importance of his subject, that the manner of communication, but little engages his thoughts.

We congratulate the Christian community on the present of such a work at the commencement of our new year; and we, for ourselves, feel thankful to the learned and venerable author for the pleasure and, we hope, profit, derived from its perusal. And although we do not agree with all that is said on some minor points, we are so much delighted with the performance as a whole, that we can cheerfully and cordially recommend it to all classes of readers.