

## ANALYSIS

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**Books I.–II.** contain a survey of the biblical account of redemption through the death of Christ, arranged with a view to determining its intended and accomplished end. I.i, ii., are introductory; I.iii–II.v. form a single exposition and defence of biblical teaching on this subject.

1. *Introduction to the treatise* (I.i.):

- Scripture describes the end intended and accomplished by the Father and the Son through the Son's death as the full salvation (actual reconciliation, justification, sanctification, adoption and glorification) of the Church.
- The view that Christ's death was a "general ransom" for all implies *either* that the Father and the Son have failed in their saving purpose, *or* that all will be saved, *or* that the purpose of Christ's death was not to save any particular person absolutely.
- Since this third alternative, which the advocates of a "general ransom" embrace, is dishonouring to Christ and harmful to faith, Owen will oppose it.

2. *Preliminary definitions: "end" and "means" analyzed and related* (I.ii.).

3. *The biblical doctrine of redemption stated and defended* (I.iii.–II.v.).

(i) *The agent of it: the Triune God* (I.iii.–v.).

The Father

- (1) sent His Son into the world, by (a) appointing Him to His Mediatorial work; (b) giving Him all gifts and graces needed for His work; (c) entering into covenant with Him about His work;
- (2) laid on Him the punishment of sin. (I.iii).

The Son

- (1) took flesh;
- (2) offered Himself;
- (3) intercedes. (I.iv).

The Spirit concurred with Christ in His incarnation, oblation and intercession. (I.v).

(ii) *The means of it: the oblation and intercession of Christ (I.vi.–viii.).*

Note

- (a) both acts have the same *end* (bringing many sons to glory);
- (b) both acts respect the same *persons*;
- (c) *the second rests on the first*, securing the communication to these persons of what the first procured for them. (I.vi).

—Proof of this assertion:

- a. From the uniform conjunction of these two acts in Scripture.
- b. From their both being acts of the same priestly office.
- c. From the nature of Christ’s intercession.
- d. From the identity of what the oblation procured and the intercession bestows.
- e. From Christ’s own conjunction of the two acts in John 17.
- f. From the result of denying this conjunction—the destruction of all assurance drawn from the fact of Christ’s death for one. (I.vii).

—Answer to More’s arguments against this conjunction:

- a. As to Christ being a double Mediator, both general and special, alleged from 1 Tim. 2:5; 4:10; Heb. 9:15.
- b. As to Christ interceding for unbelieving sinners as well as believing saints, alleged from Isa. 53:12; Luke 23:34; John 17:21-23; Matt. 5:14-16; John 1:9.
- c. As to Christ being a priest for all in respect of one end, and for some only in respect of all ends, alleged from Heb. 2:9; 9:14, 15, 26; John 1:29; 1 John 2:2; Matt. 26:28. (I.viii).

(iii) *The end of it: the glory of God, through the saving of the elect (II.i.–v.).*

1. *Statement of the true view:*

the ultimate, supreme end of Christ’s death was to bring glory to God; the immediate, subordinate end of it was to bring us to God (which includes the bestowing of both grace and glory, faith and salvation). (II.1).

2. *Rejection of alternative views:*

the end of Christ’s death was not (a) His own good (His exaltation), nor (b) His Father’s good (the securing for God of a desire liberty to pardon human sin); for

- (1) the assumption, “God could not pardon sin unless . . . ,” is unproveable;

- (2) this view makes the cause of sending Christ a general wish rather than a specific will to save;
- (3) it makes Christ free by His death, not His people, but His Father;
- (4) such an end is compatible with none being saved at all; also, this view involves reducing the covenant of grace to a conditional promise of saving believers which Christ's death procured, whereas Scripture depicts it as an unconditional promise to save sinners, of which Christ's death and the gift of obedient faith form a chief part. (II.ii).

3. *Proof of the true view*, from three classes of Scriptures:

- (1) those showing that God's intention in Christ's death was actually to save some;
- (2) those showing that the effect of Christ's death was actually to save some;
- (3) those identifying the persons for whom Christ died as God's elect.

—More's objections to Owen's exegesis of this latter class of texts answered. (II.iii).

4. *Disproof of the alternative view* (that of the Arminians, the Amyraldeans, and More), which gives the *impetration* of salvation a wider scope than its *application*:

(a) *Definition of "impetration" and "application."*

N.B.

- 1. The distinction between them has no place in the saving will of Christ, only in the order of His saving acts;
- 2. Though there are conditions involved in God's method of bestowing salvation, there are none in His will to bestow it;
- 3. Not all the blessings obtained for us by Christ are bestowed conditionally (e.g., faith);
- 4. Both impetration and application in this case have in view the same persons. Scripture asserts this by conjoining them, and the alternative is incredible.

(b) *Statement of their relation, and of the plan of salvation, as understood by Owen's opponents.* These all deny that Christ's death procures faith, but differ as to whether faith is God's gift or man's independent contribution.

(c) *Statement of their relation as understood by Owen:* God in love sent His Son to secure redemption for the elect in order that He might apply it to them, and so bring them to God, for the praise of God's glory.

(d) *Refutation of the idea of a conditional purchase of salvation.* (II.v)

N.B.

1. God sent his Son *out of love to the elect only*.
2. Christ's death was *of infinite worth*, sufficient to redeem an infinite number.
3. Christ's death was intended by God to *compass the actual salvation of the elect*.
4. Christ's death secured *a complete salvation*. (II.iv).

**Book III.** contains sixteen arguments against the "general ransom" idea. All except the third have a directly exegetical basis, and aim to show that this idea is inconsistent with the biblical witness to Christ's work. Between them, they deal with every significant category and concept which the Bible employs to define that work.

Arguments:

1. From the fact that the new covenant, which Christ's death ratified, is not made with all men.
  2. From the fact that the gospel, which reveals faith in Christ to be the only way of salvation, is not published to all men. (III.i).
  3. From the dilemmas involved in asserting that the divine intention in Christ's death was to redeem every man.
  4. From the fact that Christ is said to die for one of the two classes (elect and reprobate) into which God divided men, and not for the other.
  5. From the fact that Scripture nowhere asserts that Christ dies for all men, as such. ((III.ii).
  6. From the fact that Christ died as sponsor (surety) for those for whom He died.
  7. From the fact that Christ is a Mediator, and as such a priest, for those for whom He died. (III.iii).
  8. From the fact that Christ's death cleanses and sanctifies those for whom He died, whereas not all men and sanctified.
  9. From the fact that faith (which is necessary for salvation) was procured by the death of Christ, whereas not all men have faith.
  10. From the fact that the deliverance of Israel from Egypt is a type of Christ's saving work. (III.iv).
- (The next five arguments form a group on their own. They have a common form, and are all taken from the biblical terms in which Christ's work is described.)
11. (i). From the fact that Christ's death wrought *redemption* (deliverance by payment (III.v).
  12. (ii). From the fact that Christ's death effected *reconciliation* between God and men. (III.vi.)
  13. (iii). From the fact that Christ's death made *satisfaction* for sins. (III.vii-ix.)
  14. (iv). From the fact that Christ's death *merited* salvation for men.
  15. (v). From the fact that Christ *died for* men. (III.x).

16. From particular texts: Gen. 3:15; Matt. 7:33; 11:25; John 10:11ff.; Rom 8:32-34; Eph. 1:7; 2 Cor. 5:21; John 17:9; Eph. 5:25. (III.ix.)

**Book IV** contains a refutation of all the exegetical and theological arguments for universal redemption that Owen has met, and a full study of all texts alleged to teach it. The discussion of arguments from specific biblical statements occupies chapters i.–vi.; chapters vi.. deals with more general theological arguments.

A. *Refutation of exegetical arguments for universal redemption (i.–vi.).*

(a) The three classes of disputed texts:

- those describing the intended and accomplished end of Christ's death in general and indefinite terms;
- those seeming to suggest its ineffectiveness for some for whom Christ died;
- those making general offers of Christ, and promises of salvation through Him, to all who will believe, including some who in the event do not.

(b) *Biblical principles accounting for these modes of speech:*

1. *Christ's blood is of infinite worth, sufficient to save all. This fact is the ground of the universal preaching of the gospel, and of the general promise that all who believe will be saved.*
2. *The barrier between Jew and Gentile is broken down, and the restriction of grace ended, under the new covenant. Many of the general expressions in Scripture intend only to stress this fact.*
3. *Man's duty and God's purpose are distinct things: so that God's command in the gospel, that all should repent and believe, cannot be held to imply His intention that all should do so.*
4. *The Jews supposed that salvation was restrained to themselves. Phrases like "the world," "all men," "all nations," "every creature," are often used emphatically to contradict this mistake.*
5. *General terms like "world" and "all" are complete and equivocal in meaning, and must be interpreted where they occur in the light of the context.*
6. *Scripture speaks sometimes according to the appearance and human estimate of things, and may ascribe to the members of a professing Christian community things that are peculiar to God's children when some of them are really hypocrites, and reprobate.*
7. *Judgments of charity, which it is our duty (as it was the apostles') to make about the spiritual state of persons professing faith, may not be true.*
8. *The offers and promises of the gospel are intended to teach the infallible connection that there is between faith and salvation; not the divine intention that all should repent and believe.*
9. *The mixed distribution of elect and reprobate throughout the world and the church makes it necessary that the gospel promises should be unrestricted in form, and should be preached to many whom God does not intend to save.*

10. *The faith which the gospel requires involves a number of acts in a specific order: first, believing that we cannot save ourselves, but that God has provided a Savior, Jesus Christ, then, resting on Christ for salvation, according to the gospel invitation and promise; finally, inferring from the fact that God has enabled us to do this that Christ died for us individually. (IV.i.)*

(c) *Exegesis of the disputed texts:*

1. Those containing the word “world”: John 3:16 (IV.ii.); 1 John 2:1-2; John 6:51; 2 Cor. 5:19; John 1:9, 29; 3:17; 4:42; 1 John 4:14. (IV.iii.)
2. Those containing the word “all”: 1 Tim. 2:4-6; 2 Pet. 3:9; Heb. 2:9; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5:18. (IV.iv.)
3. Those apparently envisaging the perishing of those for whom Christ died: Rom. 14:15; 1 Cor. 8:11; 2 Pet. 22:1; Heb. 10:29. (IV.v.)

(d) *Discussion of the arguments of Thomas More (a detailed reply to the twentieth chapter of More’s book). (IV.vi.)*

Answer to arguments

1. from the necessity of taking Scripture in its plain sense;
2. from the unlimitedness of Scripture phrases;
3. from the exalting of Christ to be Lord and Judge of all mankind;
4. from the preaching of salvation through Christ to the world;
5. from the confession of Christ as Lord that all must make;
6. from various Scripture assertions concerning
  - i. God’s saving love for the world (1 John 4:15; John 1:4, 7; 1 Tim. 1:15, etc.)
  - ii. Christ’s purpose to save the world;
  - iii. An alleged universal call to repentance;
  - iv. The guilt of unbelief (John 16:7-11, etc.);
  - v. God’s alleged desire that none should perish (Ezek. 18:23, 32, etc.)
  - vi. The universal reference of Christ’s death;
  - vii. The privileges of believers;
  - viii. The parallel between Christ and Adam;
  - ix. The command to preach the gospel everywhere;
  - x. The alleged duty of praying that every individual man may be saved;
  - xi. Christ’s promise to be with His people;
  - xii. God’s showing mercy to all sorts;
  - xiii. The revelation of God’s love by the Cross;
  - xiv. The nature of unbelief, as a turning from grace actually given;
  - xv. The terms of God’s appeals to those who perish;
  - xvi. The unbelief of apostates;
  - xvii. The coming judgment of Christ;
  - xviii. The duty of contending for the faith.

B. *Refutation of theological arguments for universal redemption (IV.vii.).*

Reply to arguments

1. from the alleged duty of every man to believe that Christ died for him (answer: there is no such duty as the Arminians assert);
2. from the alleged obstacle to faith which the doctrine of particular redemption sets up (answer: it sets up none);
3. that the doctrine of universal redemption exalts Christ's merit (answer: in fact, it depreciates it);
4. that the doctrine of particular redemption mars gospel consolation and assurance (answer: the doctrine of universal redemption does this, but the doctrine of particular redemption is "the true solid foundation of all durable consolation": see Rom. 8:32-34).