

fact that his debts being paid he is no longer a debtor. Thus this notion would make the salvation of all for whom Christ died a matter of justice, and would subvert the grace of the gospel. But we know, from the unerring word, that though Christ has died for sinners, it is necessary that there be faith in the propitiation, so that the blessings of salvation may be bestowed by God and enjoyed by man; and when they are thus given and received, they flow from the inexhaustible fountain of divine grace, even as Christ himself, who made the atonement, is the gift of the free love and mercy of the God of salvation.

But it may be said, are sins not represented as debts in the Bible? Yes they are. But when they are, metaphorical language is used, and it becomes us to ascertain what is the analogy between sins and debts, which is the basis of that metaphor. It is clear that sins and debts are not alike in every respect. Debts are what we owe to those to whom we are indebted; but we do not owe sins to God. On the contrary we owe obedience to him. Sins are violations of his just and good and holy law. Our sins are represented as debts, because, as the debtor is in the power of the creditor and may be visited with certain penalties, in case of non-payment; so are sinners in the power of God, and exposed to the infliction of the penalty due to sin. But though it is the case that sins are, in the Bible, metaphorically represented as debts, the atonement for sin is nowhere in that volume represented as the payment of a debt. It was not for sin in its aspect of debt that atonement was required by the Supreme Ruler, and wrought out by the Propitiator. Sins are crimes committed against the law of the Sovereign Magistrate of the universe; and for sin, *in its aspect of crime*, atonement was needed and provided.

Again, it may be said, is not the atonement represented as a price—a ransom? Yes it is, we answer; Jesus gave himself a ransom for all. Those are said to have been bought by the Lord, who deny him and bring on themselves swift destruction. But surely there is a difference between a price or ransom, and the payment of a debt. The loving Divine Father himself, provided the ransom from his exhaustless resources, it was paid to himself as the Moral Governor of the universe. When the atonement is represented as a price, the term 'price' is to be taken in an analogical sense. The ransom-price was the consideration on which the conqueror judged it consistent with honour to liberate a captive. The atonement is the meritorious ground on which it pleases God to pardon sinners.