In the 1966 reprint edition we are following, there has been inserted a Preface, before Campbell's own, by James Torrance of Edinburgh. [More on JBT at the end note]. It clearly sets out the issues with which Campbell was dealing with, and provides some historical introduction. Where you see this symbol followed by a number it is the page 1.

1 James Torrance begins his introduction by showing as two distinct ways of thinking about God. On the one hand we may think of God as a Lawgiver, then we shall be led to consider what it is that we must do to be right in that Lawgiver’s sight. In this way we are led to think of a contract between God and us; and therefore to what conditions we must fulfil so as to be assured that things are OK between us and this God.

On the other hand, if we think of a loving Trinitarian God of grace; then we shall think of Father God, who has expressed his love towards us as a sharing in His life. Law will be seen then in a different light. It will be the spelling out of how we shall now live since we have been set right before God by His redeeming us. Law, in that sense, sets out the “obligations of grace. Seen from this perspective, the assurance that we have does not call us to focus on what we must do; but rather, in turning away from ourselves, to focus on God Himself, Father Son and Spirit, and see what they have done for us. In this way we are assured by knowing how God sees us – this is a reflection of his heart towards us. This leads to priorities: [1] grace over law, [2] sonship [a filial relationship] over judgement of performance, [3] God’s covenant faithfulness over contractual ways of relating. Campbell saw this really clearly as the Pastor of his parish.

2 Campbell was deposed from his ministry in the Church of Scotland in 1831. After some introduction to Campbell Torrance lists the charges against him.

They were
[1] “universal atonement” and

It was asserted by his opponents that these teachings were contrary to Scripture, to the Westminster Confession of faith, and also to the Assembly’s Act of 1720, where they had condemned a book called the “The Marrow of Modern Divinity”. The council thought that Campbell’s teaching had born a likeness to this aforementioned book.

Campbell asserted these two doctrines because:
[1] He was pastorally concerned for his people, their view of the Gospel was faulty.
[2] The federal Calvinism which dominated the Church of Scotland at that time had led them away from the NT.

3 Campbell’s people in Rhu were full of doubts about themselves as to be able to enjoy salvation. They thought that it was a matter of fulfilling conditions to be acceptable to God.

They felt that they were “not good enough”. In this way, Christ, rather than being for them the power to express who they already were in Him, was viewed as Someone they must satisfy and be good enough to merit his work for them.

Campbell’s pastoral strategy was to get them to look to Christ as the Person they trusted, and away from themselves. He taught them that repentance, faith and love are responses to grace given – they are a result of the work of Christ for us. This was the way to be assured before God that we were OK and secure.

4 There was another doctrine which tripped them up. It was what Torrance calls “the high Calvinist doctrine of election”. [He calls it this, as he has made mention of “scholastic Calvinism” in the first page, for Torrance thinks that the quarrel is not so much with Calvin, but with the form his teaching took in later hands.]

This “high Calvinism” contains, as an extension of its teaching, that Christ did not die for all humanity, but only for the elect. A doctrine sometimes called “limited atonement”.

Campbell’s people wondered if they were numbered among the elect. Did He die “for me”? This was their preoccupation.

Three situations thus came together to exacerbate their anxiety:
[1] a legal view of God
[2] limited atonement
[3] focus on their own subjective experience

Campbell saw the need to stress the extent of the atonement. Christ has died for all men and women. And he saw that the fundamental issue on which this may be grounded was the doctrine of God.

Was God a contract-god who must be conditioned to save us; or was He a dear Father, who loves us all, and has provided Christ as a gift to us; a Son who would bring us to sonship as He freely forgives us?

Campbell’s people also looked upon the sufferings of Christ as a purchase price for the elect; rather than trusting in the character of God Himself as He is revealed in the process of salvation.

5 Campbell was amazed at how his teaching was misrepresented:
some said he was teaching universalism. This is the doctrine that all people will be saved and that it doesn't matter what happens in the long run. He wasn't saying this. He was stating that Christ's atonement was for all; he was stating the extent, in the mind of God, of the atoning work. He was not teaching that everyone would be saved, but simply that there was no one to whom it was not on offer.

[b] Others said that he taught antinomianism – an understanding that the Law did not matter and that it could be swept aside as no longer needing to be done.

That such misunderstandings were easily fallen into showed Campbell that there was a general loss of Grace in the Church at large. So he came into conflict with Federal Calvinism.

Torrance tells us briefly what the issues are in this federal Calvinism, which dominated the Church of Scotland at that time.

[a] It distinguished between a Covenant of Nature [Works] and a Covenant of Grace.

[Torrance uses a Latin expression foedus naturale, sometimes expressed as foedus naturae. It means a natural covenant. It designates a covenant between man and God before the fall of man. So, assuming the unfallen wholeness of men and women, it assumes they have the capacity for obedience. In the 17th Century the Reformed churches speak of this a foedus operum [a covenant of works] whereas the Arminians, with their emphasis on the inborn capacity for obedience, tended to retain it.]

Torrance notes that the distinction between the covenant of works and that of grace was not the teaching of Calvin or the Reformers. The Old and New covenant are not two covenants, but two forms of the eternal covenant of grace.

6 Torrance notes that what led Campbell to break with the scheme of scholastic, federal Calvinism were the following:
[1] the confusion between covenant [unconditional love] and contract [which is a legal binding based on mutual conditions].
[2] the fracture between the sphere of nature [natural law, with the concept of God as Judge; and people living under law] and the sphere of grace [the Gospel] in human life. This separation between nature and grace returns us to the medieval idea which the Reformers repudiated as they broke free from it.

7 [3] That Christ died only for the elect – limited atonement. The implications of this idea are:
[a] Christ's headship over the whole of creation is denied. His mediation and solidarity with the human race is no longer total as Head. Likewise the Incarnation is not given full weight. The emphasis falls now on the work of Christ as divorced from His person. And this work is seen as contractual, not arising from his identity with us.
[b] Practically speaking, for preaching, you cannot give anyone the understanding that Christ died for them.
[4] The focus is changed from what Christ has done for us to what we have to do. So the preaching was dominated by commands to do something. Rather than being a statement of what is already done by Christ and the importance of receiving it, trusting it and standing on it.
This same focus changes the understanding of the sacraments as well; baptism and the Lord's Supper are seen not as seals [tokens] of the Gospel but of our faith and repentance.

8 McLeod Campbell reasoned that he would need to preach more of the objective work of Christ and shy away from the imperatives [commands] of what we must do.

His critique of the system of doctrine they were labouring under was as follows:
1.Limited atonement destroyed the Gospel offer to all humanity, and it undermined the basis for being sure of our relation with God.
2.We are turned away from looking to the One we must trust, to consider what we ourselves are to be doing.

9 It was the doctrine of God that was foundational to the issue. In the federal scheme of things, it was the justice of God was uppermost, and the love of God was simply something added.
And so it teaches that the demands of justice must be met before God can be merciful to us.

McLeod Campbell saw that God was equally loving as He was just. His love is expressed in justice – this is His righteousness.

[Torrance makes reference to Sabellianism. Sabellius had thought of the Trinity as really only One person who expresses Himself is three modes, or appears behind three masks; sometimes as the Father, sometimes as the Son and sometimes as the Spirit. The early church rejected this idea of maintaining the unity of God by a modal change of manifestation. The Church held that if God has revealed Himself as three
persons, then He is.] The issue is that what God is to us; that is how He truly is in Himself both before and subsequently. Is God love in Himself?

4. The federal scheme turns upside down the Bible order of the relationship between atonement and forgiveness. Does God forgive us because there is an atonement [which satisfies justice] or does God, who is, and always was, forgiving by nature, find a way to bring that love to us by making an atonement?

5. The filial concerns [of a Father for his children] are pushed into the background by the federal scheme with its priority of justice over love. This is imposed on the Bible as it is read.

This changes the understanding of the Incarnation. Instead of seeing it as the necessary thing to happen so as to get to the atoning work of Christ on the cross; Campbell saw the atonement as completing the goal which the Incarnation states which is to get humanity to share the life of the God man.

We must not only consider the dealing with the sins of the past; but as the goal of the Incarnation and atonement which is to bring many sons to glory.

Campbell saw that the extent of the atonement is really bound up with understanding the nature of the atonement.

He used two categories to expound the atonement:

[1] The Father-Son relationship

[2] The vicarious humanity of Christ. This sees Christ as the One through Whom we come to know the Father. Not only did the Son reveal the Father to us, we also see Him as the Son who makes the responses to God as Man, for us. He truly obeys and so He lives for us what we could not do; but we get to share in His life [by the Spirit] and so obey through Him.

Both the deity and the humanity of Christ are involved in this matter. He represents God to man and represents man to God - He has a double ministry.

Christ deals with humanity on behalf of the Father. He makes the loving judgements of the Father known to mankind. He also deals with the Father on behalf of humanity. He submits to the loving judgements of God for us and lives a life of perfect obedience for us to the Father.

In speaking of Christ's vicarious humanity Campbell spoke of his Vicarious Penitence.

This was a doctrine of McLeod Campbell's which drew criticism. It was, as Torrance implies, much misunderstood. Torrance sets out to state it for us. He says we must see it against the background of:

[a] The High Priest confessing the sins on behalf of the people. This foreshadows Christ's work for us as a type.
[b] Calvin's distinction between legal repentance and evangelical [or Gospel] repentance.

Calvin, against the medieval idea of repentance being prior to forgiveness, made it clear that in the NT repentance is the response to grace, not the condition of grace. This was the issue that the Marrow men had noticed in their preaching of the seventeenth century. Scottish preaching had gone back to the old medieval way, at least in practice.

Torrance gives a relational analogy of what he means by an act of penitence – receiving forgiveness in such a way that the implied verdict of guilt is accepted.

Campbell saw that this was the necessary matter for his pastorate – it would release them to know this. He went further than the Marrowmen. He worked out forgiveness in the light of Christ's vicarious humanity.

[1] Jesus represents God to humanity:

Father has spoken his word of forgiveness [love and judgement in one word]. Christ, lived a life of oneness with the mind of the Father, making, throughout His life the Father's love and also his holy condemnation of sin known to the world. This led to Christ suffering, and in His suffering we see the Father's suffering.

[2] Jesus represents humanity to God:

In dealing with the Father on behalf of humanity, Jesus as our great High Priest and Intercessor, makes a perfect response on our behalf to the Father, and at the same time, makes a perfect submission to the Father's verdict of guilty.

In this way Christ absorbs the divine wrath, for that is what a perfect response does. The wrath of God is rightly met in Christ as the God Man, the holy One who alone can know the wrath of God.

This response of Christ does not eliminate our need to respond. There is our response of joyful gratitude and worship and praise. And at the same time, we are summoned to repentance and faith. This is our participation
in Christ’s life. Campbell has really stated Calvin’s idea of evangelical repentance; interpreting it in terms of Christ’s vicarious humanity and priesthood.

15 So the order is love, therefore atonement; and not atonement, and therefore love. The filial is prior to the judicial. Campbell was not rejecting substitutionary atonement. But he interpreted it in the light of the triune God of grace in the Person of His Son standing in for us to do what we could not do for ourselves. And then calling us to share the life as sons and daughters by the Spirit.

16 Torrance mentions the current trends of theology are:

[1] returning to Trinitarian issues.
He mentions Karl Barth (1886-1963) - who was a Swiss Reformed theologian
Karl Rahner (1904-1984), who was a German Jesuit priest and theologian
Jurgen Moltmann, (1926 - ) is a German Reformed theologian
Eberhard Jungel, (1934 - ) is a German Lutheran theologian
John Zizioulos, (1931 is an Eastern Orthodox theologian and
Colin Gunton (1941-2003) was a British theologian based at King’s College London

[2] centreing upon a clear critique developing in Roman Catholic and Protestant circles where the
[a] impact of Aristotle upon Western theology is discerned
[b] the ancient Greek Stoic concepts are noted to have infiltrated into our ideas, so that, our ideas are not so much based on the New Testament in relation to natural law, Western jurisprudence and thought since the Enlightenment.

He notes that Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), who was a German Lutheran pastor and theologian, had given priority to the “Who?” question rather than the questions of “what?” and of methods.
Campbell had anticipated these trends way back when he spoke up - standing as he did for the unconditional freeness of the gospel.

Endnote: James B. Torrance 23rd Feb 1923 - 15 Nov 2003] was Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Aberdeen. He was the younger brother of Thomas F. Torrance and the father of Alan Torrance.

His major works were:
• ‘The Contribution of McLeod Campbell to Scottish Theology’, SJT 26: 295-311 (1973)
• ‘The Doctrine of the Trinity in our Contemporary Situation’ in The Forgotten Trinity, Volume 3 (British Council of Churches, 1991)
• ‘Introduction’ to The Nature of the Atonement by J. McLeod Campbell (Handsel Press, 1996)
• Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace. The 1994 Didsbury Lectures (Paternoster, 1996)

Reading 2: Introduction: pages 17-34

Introduction to 1867 2nd Edition by John McLeod Campbell [1800-1872]

Jock Stein [page x] who informs us that the current book we are reading is virtually a reprint of the 1867 edition, also tells us that Campbell wrote this Introduction for the 2nd Edition of 1867. Campbell hoped that the Introduction would “add to the value of the volume.” In the actual Introduction, JMC makes reference to the need for added help for the readers. Help that he did not notice when he first write the book - he is still thinking of the sheep as a true pastor!!

1 - On giving answers to questioning minds:

17 Reflecting on 2 Peter 3.16 about the requirement to give an answer for our faith and hope JMC states how the freedom of thought current at the time has made it difficult, for there are so many open questions to deal with - many more than when the Christian world-view was assumed. However, the field in which we are required to answer is narrowed by the subject “the hope within you”.

Understanding that it is in God's light that we see light we can see no reason, on the one hand, for people suspending faith in the universal doubting around him, nor on the other hand, can he see the value of an unreasoning and blind faith.

While creeds may be held - believed, given credence - without trusting the God of which they speak, there is a living faith that allows for honest questioning within its orbit. Indeed, the freedom to question is often traceable to something which is held firmly as true. A godly faith may ask, “Is this righteous?” provided it does not already know that it is.

To ask whether “God is love?” may come from minds that have not experienced love. On the other hands, many things are received on blind authority. In the current time for JMC, their was a general skepticism and a levity about matters of God which made it difficult to give answers.

db - JMC has written at greater length about how the light we have from God is self authenticating, and that it becomes the confident basis of knowing what we know - without arrogance. See “thoughts on Revelation”

18 Two matters:

[a] When we deal with the unbelief of others, we need to guard against measuring them by our own light. And we must not be drawn into the place where we seem to agree with them that God has left Himself without witness, which is not the case; nor agree that unbelief is more reasonable position than faith.

[b] In ourselves, we must not be drawn, as we identify with their doubts, to such a degree that we imply they may be complacent about their doubting of God. It could cement them in a self-righteousness that their place is valid and even superior to faith.

2 - Campbell addressing the Scottish people's mindset at the time

18 Campbell admits that he has generally written for the Christian about what they believe, so that they may be affirmed in their faith. But he insists that this is not to forget the the unbeliever or the doubter. Because the exposition/explanation of any christian doctrine is to present Christianity for what it is; and what it is states the highest evidence for believing it.

19 Campbell also states that he has in mind the setting in which he lived. His exposition of the atonement was directly concerned with the systems of theology that were uppermost in the minds of the Scottish people at the time. He has not gone back further than the Reformation in his treatment.

He notes [a] the diverse views/theories about the atonement before the Reformation and after it; and [b] when contemporary writers [eg Oxenham] wrote they were looking to the German theologians of the time to provide answers for them, rather than looking to what the Church had always believed and rested upon - which is where Campbell wants to look and take his stand.

3 - The atonement presupposes the faith of the incarnation.

Campbell sees the question that people have debated about is the relation between the Incarnation and the Atonement; how shall we think of that relation? [i] Was the Atonement the absolutely necessary thing, and so the Incarnation was required to set that Atonement up - this would see the Atonement as primary and the Incarnation secondary. OR [ii] was Incarnation the great revelation of God to man of which the Atonement was the crowning goal? - This would see the Incarnation as primary and the Atonement secondary.

Campbell stands under [ii] above; he wants to illustrate the atonement by bringing it to the light of the Incarnation. Finding in the Incarnation that Jesus is the full exposition/revelation of the mind of God - stated as Sonship towards God - and also that Jesus is the incarnation of the perfect Brother towards men and women, Campbell sees the incarnation naturally leading towards the atonement. In this way, he draws us to consider these two facets of the revelation made in Christ as necessary things to know and consider because they throw light on telling us what the atonement is in itself.

4 - Seeing the atonement in the light of the Incarnation

19 Campbell harks back to Anselm [1033-1109] of Canterbury's question, Cur Deus Homo? [Why a Godman?]. Rather than try and answer the question as Anselm attempted - through philosopherical and metaphysical
enquiry - which Campbell notes are considerations brought to the question from outside the incarnation itself, Campbell wants to look at the Incarnation - the thing itself - and attempt to bring the light of what the thing itself shows to the question what is it?

5 - Incarnate Christ the basis for seeking an intelligent understanding without preoccupation

Thus, keeping his enquiry about the Incarnation and the Atonement within the limits of what he calls "self-evidencing light" Campbell allows us to check that what he brings forth from the life of Christ is there to be seen. In this way he recognises that this approach to the atonement might seem foreign to those who have not looked at the life of Christ for such enlightenment. To those who do not believe in the atonement at all, nevertheless the facts that he brings forth, if their connection to the atonement may not be seen, that they are facts of the matter will be recognised.

The incarnation itself, whereby the Word of God takes flesh as the person of Jesus of Nazareth - who is truly God and truly man - means that we are not presumptuous to attempt to see by its light. Rather we have great hope in doing so. Because Christ is the light of life to us, and that his faith is human, as ours is. So we use our intelligence in a faithful way in our effort to understand.

To have an intelligent understanding of our faith, particularly as it is informed through the help of the Holy Spirit, is not to bring the atonement down to simply a human understanding; rather it is to raise it to be aligned with those things we feel within ourselves which the Spirit gives us to know.

As we see the atonement to be a developing out of the incarnation, not only do we see their connection as indissoluble, we also see the connection with our sharing/participation in the divine life of Christ as well. There is a unity and a simplicity in moving from the life of Christ to the atonement and our sharing in that life, as well as the fruits of that death. Campbell is mindful of those thoughtful people who see no need for an atonement, even though they see the incarnation as fundamental to all the gracious offerings of God to man.

6 - Can't simply stop short with the Incarnation.

As soon as the incarnation is understood as a revelation of God's condescending love towards us, and accepted as the light which we bring to the atonement, then all understandings of the atonement will be rejected that are not in accord with the love of the Father of our spirits for us. This should not bother us because, if true conceptions come to the fore, they will, of course, replace the errors. Anyway, if the atonement is the development of the incarnation, how then could we simply stop short with the incarnation, so as to ignore the atonement which is its fulfillment? This could only be so because we saw the great wealth contained in the incarnation and thought it, of itself, to be enough to meet man's need.

Our sense of "need" is not the issue - what is important is how God sees our need. We need to learn the meaning of the incarnation as we see God unfolds its meaning for us as being consistent with the goal that His divine love contemplated for us in sending his Son.

We could not have inferred that God would have taken the course of the incarnation simply by looking at human history - rather, we are able to trace it back to the love of God for us, because we see where the incarnation went in atonement and also how we were, in the goal of God, to share his nature. Once we are children of the light and day, in possession of the light of revelation, we do not halt at some divine given fact of revelation and then substitute our own ideas about it.

7 - Some have faith in the Incarnation but not the Atonement.

People in former times, believing in the incarnation and the atonement, speculated what would have been the case if man had not sinned. Campbell is reminded of these speculations as he considers those around him who have faith in the incarnation but not the atonement. Apart from the fact that this is to ignore part of God's revelation, this imbalance leaves out the part of the truth of the gospel which links the love of God with the need of men and women. It is this which shows that the gospel is a remedy for those who are "lost" to God. To understand that God is our Father, and to trace the need for redemption to that
love of the Father for us, and then to leave no room for the redemption found in the atonement, is to live without apprehension of the grace of God.

8 - The idea of philosophic progress.

In JMC’s time people thought of the humanity as progressing to something higher. This leads to a tendency to consider sin as just a stage in the lower situations - so sin is simply regarded as ignorance. So, as knowledge advances we see conscience reduced to a matter of growth in reason.

23 People then come to have little use for the atonement and with the idea of progress philosophically; then the conscience is not seen as something registering basic truth and morality, but simply a matter which may be resolved rationally as we grow. So no need for the atonement, but still, an acceptance of the incarnation.

9 - The idea of matters being simply a rational law of nature.

In JMC’s time people also thought that the reign of law and the law of nature were amalgamated. They were seen as simply rationally connected - a matter of the mind - rather than accepting that there was any underpinning of nature and natural law by the creative work of God. So this view worked against faith in God. JMC understands that the more we think the design of the Designer is pressed upon us. To stop short with just rational explanations robs us of the instinctive awareness of God’s work on creation.

24 Our own experience is not sufficient light to make as aware of God’s own thinking [reign of thought] and designing that gives the "laws" their existence.

- We should always be aware that scientific “laws” are descriptive of what is there. They begin with the given realities that they describe. But they are not prescriptive. The mountain is first “there” before the map is made. The making of the map does not bring into existence the mountain that is drawn on it.

So, the capacity of natural phenomena to show design which we can recognise, in no way means that we have plumbed the divine wisdom that gave rise to them. Rather, the very beauty of the universe manifests to us the design, and then our faith leads us to see the eternal power and Godhead of God as manifest in them [Romans 1.18]. So, we shall not lose our appreciation of God in the reign of law.

With the physical laws of the universe, we think of them as a result of the act of God’s will, He decided to set them there; but of the moral laws of the universe, we think them as embedded in nature of things because they reflect, not so much God’s will, but his Being - his goodness.

- In a similar way, when we think of creation, we think of God acting, not as He does within the inner relations of the Godhead - which reflect who He is, his Being - but as being a “work” which is ad extra [directed towards the outside], not of his inner relations. In this way we see that such a work is an act of his will - a decision - that something should come into being as his creature. But it is not something that is an extension of his own being or essence - that would be Pantheism.

10 - Theism contrasted with the Kingdom of God but not contradictory

25 To infer God’s “eternal power and Godhead” from the manifest creation is essentially Theism. It is a belief that it is God who made the world. This is a higher light of truth than simply science.

But when we move to what JMC calls “religion” we are ascending to a place where we know God as our Father, we have a special place as His offspring. We are entering into privileges and responsibilities, communion and shared life, with joys and shadows, griefs and light.

So we see two regions of divine self-manifestation, one in the reign of law, seen in the light of Theism, and another which is the kingdom of God proclamed in the Gospel and seen in the light of the Son as He reveals the Father. We must not make this “Theism” perspective and the “Gospel” perspective to be contradictory.

26 To know these two areas is to understand that the practical wisdom of the reign of God, known in a Thesitic sense, can be without faith. The kingdom of God cannot be so. There is a distinction in knowing the will of God in fixing the forms of the natural world, and knowing his love towards us and having Him, at the same time, making it clear what He wants us to be. This we learn from knowing Him to be the Father of our spirits and the obedience and love expected of us in a Spirit of Sonship. He authorises us to seek for his strength in prayerful trust.

27 In this way we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved. God is the hearer and answerer of our prayers. So whenever people reject Christianity we see that they deny the kingdom of God not necessarily the reign of natural law.

There is a circle of people who rise from Science to Theism yet do not advance to Religion. They are comfortable with what they know and are to some extent grateful, but to rise to prayer they will not. They pull back - as many philosophic minds do.

11 - We stand within the faith that Father has given us his Son

28 But to us, God making Himself known as the Father of our spirits draws us to seek after Him. And we...
see in the revelation of God in Christ that there is a reality here, and that the testimony of the Father to the Son is to be believed and trusted. The highest claim on our faith is that God has given us eternal life and it is in his Son.

On this claim turns our reading of the New Testament, and the responsible reading of Christian history

29 There are corruptions that veil Christian history since the beginning of the Church. But these do not make the burden on philosophic thought that heathenism does.

12 We should expect to present Gospel matters to men.

The responsibility to respond to God in faith is great and is a high calling. We must not plead with other men on lower grounds than we stand ourselves. This is where our Lord stood, when, coming to men in the Father’s name and He complained when not received by them, because He assumed there would be a response in their spirits. And that the footing on which He stood of the Father’s love He assumed would find a place in their conscience. Jesus emphasised that men where God’s offspring, He expected a welcome of the Father’s voice which is the germ of the life of Sonship.

30 We need to occupy the Lord’s ground here and expect similarly. Our demands are reasonable, the Father is with us. Men ought to trust in the Father. We do need to meet their minds as much as we can, with proper evidence drawn from the Subject, not trying to meet rationalistic minds that set their own questions. We should ask of scientific men that they first deal with the claim of the kingdom of God. We look to make others become partakers in the light.

31 People try to reason from the self-executing laws of the universe to the self-executing Governorship of God. This fails to recognise what we saw before [24 #3 above].

13 The question of miracles

In all our discussions we place no limitation on our freedom to deal directly with God nor Him with us. The issue of miracles JMC sees them as an expansion beyond the horizon of the natural world.

There are two aspects to the reign of law: [a] realizing what God thinks and showing his purposes; ie God uses means to ends and [b] deriving their existence from God; ie giving existence to means.

32 This implies God acts immediately not mediately - as is the case with miracles. Remembering that superhuman matters are not necessarily divine. The miracle and the teaching provided with it are a unity and make a claim on our faith. [Hebrews 12.1].

33 Our Lord lived by prayer and trust in the Father. His performance of miracles was by faith - which is what gives us light when we see an act of the Son revealing the Father. It is not that miracles are to be treated as something we extract from the Gospel narrative and try to consider them from the scientific position. Rather, we too, approach them in the light of the Lord’s way of approach - in trust to the Father.

34 How are miracles to be regarded? and approached? What we don’t do is try to drive behind the prayer and its answer to see the decisions that God is making as we ask. We simply trust Him. We are not looking into the ways and means of the matter. This is our Lord’s example.

db - When we try to understand a matter by describing its method we are making an assumption.
GThat if we know the way a matter is done - if we can see the means - then we know the meaning of it. Ity is not necessarily so.

We need to fix on the fact that the Lord came to men in the Father’s name. This is the central teaching of the consideration of miracle with in the text. There is no higher faith than that He gives the Holy Spirit to those that ask.

It is as children of the Father that we approach the atonement. The reign of law offers no place for an atonement as it also does not offer a place for prayer.

Sometimes the Incarnation has been thought of not as a further revealing of the Father by the Son, but as a higher region of the reign of law. "He that has seen me has seen the Father" does not refer to simply being visible, but to the revelation of the Father through the Son of which the whole incarnation is taken into view - including the atonement. And we are not seeing an identity of will/purpose between the Father and the Son. They do not simply have a unity in their agenda and purpose - but we are seeing the whole relation of their life together.
1 - Three aspects of the Atonement:

35#1 Three aspects of the Atonement:
[a] its extent - its reference, For whom was it made?
[b] its object - What was it intended to accomplish?
[c] its nature - What has it been in itself?

2 These three questions are inter-related; clarity, or confusion, on any one enlightens, or darkens, the understanding of the others.

3 The Reformers and Rome dealt mainly with [b] in their interaction over justification by faith.

The subsequent discussions which divided the Reformers among themselves turned mainly on [a]: was it for all men or the elect. In recent times [c], the nature of the atonement, has occupied people's minds, because it came to be seen that the sections [a] and [b] above could not be discussed adequately until there was some understanding of the nature of the atonement; what it is in itself. This is particularly felt by those who wish to argue that the atonement is universal in its work. Their contention would be that those who argue for a limited atonement have an advantage in argument which, if the nature of the atonement was properly understood, would be removed from the discussion.

2 - The third Aspect is what this book is about

4 The third aspect now considered [with no special attention to [a] above.

It is to be considered in the light of [b], i.e. what it has accomplished in relation to forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Campbell firmly believes that the atonement was for sin, that it had reference to all men and women; he thinks this is clearly revealed. It is also shown by what the atonement is in itself. He writes to illustrate this; for he thinks it necessary given the prevailing state of mind of those around him.

36#1 There is both a desire for a solution to the prevailing controversy, as well as an attempt have a harmonious theological understanding. These are the main drives for the consideration of the atonement at the time of writing.

3 - Reasonable to ask for light in this subject

Intellectual requirements of thought systems are related to the spiritual demands of the living man. [An exigency is something you must do in order to deal with an urgent or difficult situation. It is a demand which life make upon us which must be met.]

Everyone desires internal evidence of Christianity. Some folks require internal evidence at every step [intellectual arrogance]; they need to realize how much more they believe than it is that they understand. Others think of internal evidence as something over and above what is necessary to faith; in their case they just don't realize how much their faith does rest on what they understand.

The faith we have at first, early in our Christian experience, does not always rest on a clear understanding, but it is not for that reason unwarranted and unreal. It has elements which are true and abiding, although mingled with much darkness. And, early on, our low or undeveloped conscience doesn't cause us much pain or unease. But even if it is undeveloped our first faith never deceives the heart.

There is, in the Christian life, a growing capacity for judging what are the conditions for peace with God in full harmony with his name and character. And further, we come to understand that these conditions are in the atonement. Both these things go on together quite happily. But if, in growing, we to come to see more of the glory of God; that is not to assume that our hope was vain when we saw less. Indeed as God acknowledged us then, so we desire to see more now, as much as He will give to see.

4 - Two aspects of the grace of God in the Gospel

37#1 Two aspects of the grace of God in the Gospel
[a] retrospective [looking backwards, from where we have come] - which refers to the evil from which grace brings deliverance. It speaks of the condition of evil from which it is the purpose of God to save us.
[b] prospective [looking forwards, to where God is taking us] - which refers to the good which it bestows; it is the place to which God wants to raise us.

2 We were so far from seeing the evil of our own evil state as God saw it. And we were so far from measuring our own capacity for good, we couldn't have anticipated how God would accomplish the desire of his love for us except that God had made it known to us.

3 Unless the clear things of the gospel are registered in our conscience then they would be no light to us. The gift of eternal life, revealed to our faith, will teach us to distinguish between what God has made us and what we have become through sin.

In the same way, the atonement, when we know how it deals with our past, and to what it calls us to live now, will commend itself to our faith – we shall see by it all that God intended for us. Such a commending to our conscience is especially true of the atonement, it being the highest region of all the teaching of our conscience by
5 - Importance of the internal evidence of the Atonement

- 38 If Paul insists [2 Corinthians 4.2, 5.11] that both his message and life manifests the truth of the cross; and so should commend itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. This should mean that the internal evidence of the atonement ought to be the securest stronghold of Christianity.

Strangely, there are those who rest so strongly upon it receive it as a mystery and yet make little attempt to understand it. Others see in the atonement a strong objection to revelation of the Gospel itself. Could such a central matter for the apostle find this contradictory reaction within the consciences of men? A rebellious spirit may reject revelation where it has most claim to be received - whereas a meek spirit may be expected to receive and understand it.

6 - Conscience testifies to the need for an Atonement.

- 2 But we cannot seek it in the historical fact of the universal acceptance for the need of sacrifice. Need to search for it in Scripture, which records an historical fact of an atonement made. Nor can we seek for understanding in the spirit of self sacrifice we find portrayed in the heroic stories of the world. Leastways we can infer nothing about the transaction of the atonement for the deities involved. But if we think that the virtue of an atonement is connected with the spirit of self-sacrifice in the victim, thus constituting its virtue; then this is indeed a ray of light worth pursuing.

- 39 If religion is the place to look for conscientous testimony then we need to look at the history of Christianity. We cannot put aside the testimony of someone's conscience for that coincides with his faith. And we need to consider the atonement specifically, for that is where the highest knowledge of God, and the closest communion with him, will be maintained in the cross. For it is there we find pardon for sin and eternal life.

No one is called to constrain his conscience to adopt the testimony of another man's. But if we understand how imperfect is the development of conscience, then we can see how much the more matured Christian mind of one man may, without dictating, aid the faith of another man - then it is not without significance that the cross of Christ is the place to take such folks.

- 2 Yet the question is not to be decided by authority. Sometimes what people have been taught shapes their religious experience. Nevertheless, doctrine must commend itself to each person's conscience – we cannot live on what others find settling to their consciences. It must commend itself to our own.

7 – Yet not just the need but also the nature of it must be seen, or the salvation is not valued.

- 40 Yet Paul obviously thinks that the conscience should be satisfied, not by understanding simply the need for the atonement, but also that, seen by its own light, it does achieve the high purposes for which God ordained it. We must not only know our need of it; but we need to understand it so as to value its power to accomplish such an excellent salvation as it does.

8 - When sin is revealed for what it is, doubt about forgiveness grows.

- 1 Men readily enough agree that they are sinners and that they need forgiveness. But this doesn't mean that they understand the charge of guilt the Scriptures contain. [2] When a person listens to the charge weighed, and the testimony of conscience felt we see that the fact of sin is a discovery to the awakened sinner. [3] Now, in the light of the gravity of the sin exposed, he shrinks from his easy admission made before revelation. And he begins to doubt that he, himself, can be the subject of the sin shown in Scripture.

Now it appears that [1] above was a light thing. It consisted in an admission that we are in an imperfect state, we are a mixture of good and evil. And how much needs forgiveness and how much needs mercy who can say. But in that sense a person can easily admit that he is a sinner, but that he is trusting in God's mercy. But once the first commandment [love God] dawns, and the second, [love your neighbour] then it becomes clear that the requirement is great, towards God and neighbour. In the face of such things which disclose to us what does need to be forgiven, our faith can waver.

- 41 Indeed, we would be in a worse state if such a terrible awareness did not move us to self-loathing and fear.

We also find it difficult, just when we are coming to see that we need it, to believe in a forgiveness as just and true; a forgiveness which is purely and simply the forgiving of a debt to one who has nothing to pay.

9 - Conscience has a response to the evidence in Scripture as to the evil of sin; and so a retrospectively understood atonement

- 2 If people excuse sin by referring to extenuating circumstances, or to the ignorant and undeveloped nature of some men, then they won't find the next step easy to take. For in excusing some then
forgiveness is not forgiveness as the Scripture sets forth. But if the full weight of the Scriptural understanding of sin is given, then there is a corresponding response in the conscience when the atonement is understood for what it is in itself.

42#1 The last part of the Seventh of Romans is an example of awakened persons in a state to hear the conscience concerning the law of sin and death. And in this state persons are in the position to hear and welcome the atonement.

It is a condition, described there, of the human spirit which:

[a] can say “I delight in the law of God after my inner man” and yet by the same light he
[b] judges what his own flesh is, and what its power over him makes him to be that he finds there is a law within him making war against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin in his members. He cries out in his heart, “who will separate me from this “body of death”.

A man in this state sees:

[1] the contrariness between sin and the law of God
[2] the position of guilt it places the sinner in
[3] the inward contradiction with the law over his own well being.

When he sees this he is in the position to consider the atonement retrospectively in relation to the evil condition from which it is our deliverance.

10 - Conscience, shows, prospectively, [b] a capacity of understanding and apprehending the excellence of eternal life.

#2 To appreciate and know the prospective matter of the eternal life which God has given us, it is necessary to have the perception of guilt, and spiritual death already established. And about this eternal life we are stirred up to know its kind, its excellence and that we could participate in it.

#4 By eternal life we mean the life which was with the Father before the world was made and which is manifested in the Son. [1 John 1.1-4]; not of some unknown future blessedness in some future state of being. Conscience can know nothing of that. But of a life which is in itself, one and the same here and hereafter - however it may be developed in us hereafter beyond its development here.

Of this life conscience can be aware, and can understand and consider. It can compare new power with the old, other perishing life of which a man has experience. And in the light of that now known comparison, can decide on the excellence of the eternal life, and the grace of God in bestowing it and of the perfect salvation a man shares in when he receives it. [See how much people spend on looking at the unknown future happiness instead of meditating on the present gift of eternal life.]

43#1 This prospective aspect is the second preparation for understanding the atonement. We are directed, not only to know what we have been saved from [that the atonement has a retrospective focus to bring forth]; but also what we are saved to; the wonderful gift of eternal life. If we would see how the atonement is suitable adapted to both these ends, we must consider its nature – what it is in itself.

11 - The difficulty of habitually realizing these two opposite states

#3 So we are contemplating two extremes, two opposites, in the highest and most solemn area of things.

[a] Spiritual darkness and death, sin and guilt, the righteous condemnation and wrath of God, inward disorder and strife between man and law of his own well being.
[b] God’s light filling human life, eternal life shared, righteousness and holiness, acceptance and favour of God, inward harmony experienced in the fulfillment in man of what was in the mind of God from the beginning

#4 But we find it difficult to come from this wonderful contemplation of the atonement and the life that God has for us, when we come to consider the mixture and mess in others and in ourselves. Our faith cannot always maintain the flight of what we have seen in the face of these things.

12 - In studying the atonement we have come to identify good and evil with accuracy and precision – yet in the world we see mixture.

44#2 It is hard to hold this because:

[a] the world in which we live is also a mixture of good and evil. That is, it presents the mixture, and not the unmixed evil of which the Scripture speaks and to which the conscience testifies. Neither does it present the unmixed good, which the Scriptures reveal, and which in the light of conscience we recognize as eternal life.
[b] Further, we are in a world visited by the grace of God. We are surrounded by the very fruits of the atonement we are called to believe in.

#4 Arguments used by objectors of the atonement, actually are traced to the atonement itself as provided by its fruits. On the other hand, those who partake of the fruits of the atonement by faith, are not seen to be perfect,
for none are simply and absolutely what the atonement would make them. The light shining in the darkness modifies the darkness, even if the darkness does not comprehend it. And even where believers comprehend it, the darkness is not yet seen as altogether destroyed by it. We need to set our minds on the things which the revelation through the Bible has made clear; and not to allow the partial effects of the atonement in people's lives, to become arguments for doubting its necessity and reality.

13 - Belief that there is forgiveness with God; the first demand of the Gospel

45#1 [a] awakened conscience finds this belief difficult
(b) only the Atonement meets this difficulty

In God there is forgiveness: = love to an enemy, surviving his hatred, and notwithstanding his hatred, can act towards him for his good. We need to believe this is in God towards us before we can believe in the atonement.

#2 If we could make an atonement ourselves for our sins as the heathen think they do in sacrifice then the logic is that atonement precedes the forgiveness, and is the cause of it.
#3 But if God provides atonement, then forgiveness must precede atonement, and the atonement must be the form of the manifestation of the forgiving love of God, not its cause. That there is forgiveness in God is the “first tone” which catches the heart in hearing the Gospel. God has not left Himself without witness [Daniel 9.4-9], Matthew 5.45. Those who don't think of the atonement as a result, but as a cause, are repelled from it as an unworthy view of God.

#4 God has always presented Himself to us as a merciful God. His general care of the just and unjust shows that He is capable of acting in love towards His enemies.

14 - Doctrine of the Atonement finds difficulties of another kind

46#1 That there is forgiveness with God, and that the conscience answers to this however, is not the question about the atonement which was uppermost in Campbell's day. There was a view of the atonement, which Campbell thinks to be false, which dominated the minds of the Christian people. It did not assume that God was merciful, but that He needed to be propitiated so that He would become gracious.

Campbell points out that such a view reverses the matters of which we have been considering. The love of God does not come to us because the atonement causes it to; but the reverse. The love of God is the cause of God arranging that there will be an atonement; which itself is the effect. God has not left us without a witness because Christ died for us – it is the other way about. Christ died for us because God loved and always did love us.

#2 Those who had been exposed to this mistaken idea of cause and effect have a mistaken view of what is demanded of their faith. But it is not the true doctrine of the atonement which repels them!
#3 Others ask another question: “Why must there be an atonement at all?” Why not pardon sin without it?
47#1 These do not despair of God's forgiveness - but what they don't understand is his holiness and righteousness.

#2 And it is light that is visiting a man when he begins to speak of his own sinfulness and deserts for sin.
#3 And where that is clear to the man, a forgiveness simply based on the clemency and mercy of God finds no help to him, it fails to bring peace and hope. But presenting the atonement for the acceptance and faith does both.
48#1 And this is not because love and mercy are now credited to God, but on the basis that love presented as merely forgiving, and love seen as forgiving at such cost to itself, greatly enhances the love of God.

#2 There is an objection which anyone may bring – that while the love of God and the forgiveness offered through the Gospel seems sensible, that it is linked to the need for atonement unnecessarily complicates the matter.

#3 Campbell admits that this is a real difficulty. That the objection must be recognized that if God can do what He wants by the sovereign free act of His own power, why He should do it in such a way that atonement is made at such great cost, and self sacrifice to Himself could be a stumbling block to such an objector. Faith could find difficulties here. But nevertheless it must be met and handled, for it is the nature of the God we adore that He has acted this way.

#4 And yet these elements of the atonement are also the very issues that give it its power to affect the heart of men and women. For it is not a manifestation of power [in itself] which moves the heart, but a manifestation of love.
49#1 In proportion to which any act manifests love it is to be believed as an act of God Who is love.

They err who want external evidences of power, over internal evidences of love, in considering the claim that
anything is to be received as coming from God.

#2 The atonement reveals this heart of God in a way that providence and creation can not do. A high and deep argument for Christianity is located here: that the atonement is a paramount display of the love and tenderness of God.

#3 What we seek in our internal witness is that we come to know not only that God has desired to bridge this gulf between us, but that He has actually done so. That it is accomplished should find its own witness in our persons.

#4 But one does not die to simply show love. We have to ask, “How was so costly an expression of love as the atonement necessary?” There are some difficulties here:

1. The atonement presupposes the incarnation. And that God takes credit to Himself for the love that Christ manifests in dying for us.
2. Christ does not do what He does to receive a reward. If that were so then the reward has a sense of incentive to be earned. Rather, the reward which we can speak of Christ having is that the very Character of self sacrificing love that it shall have the satisfaction of seeing the cost of loving have its goal realized.

50. In considering why our redemption cost so much requires us to keep the two aspects before us:
1. retrospectively, which shows the condition in which grace found us, and
2. prospectively, the condition to which grace will raise us.

15. Need to emphasize the prospective aspect of the atonement

#3 In the writings of Paul, we see that the necessity of the atonement is shown both in retrospect and also in prospect – but especially the latter.

#4 Galatians 4.5, 1 Peter 3.18 People have been building there understanding of the nature of the atonement on the retrospective need for the atonement. In that sense the necessity of the atonement has been focused on in searching for an understanding associated with the fact that we were under law.

51. Campbell thinks that this emphasis is a departure from the Apostolic emphasis; but he concedes, even so, that it is true in fact. For, the necessity for the atonement can be said to be because

[a] we were sinners under the condemnation of a broken law. Campbell understands “law” here as not Mosaic ritual but as the inward law of the heart.
[b] No modification of the law as a law, in accommodation to man as a sinner, could give assurance of pardon, or quicken us with new life.
[c] If the gulf is to be bridged it will require a moral and spiritual issue apart from law; quite other than law.

52. Campbell concedes: The justice and righteousness of God constitute difficulties to our salvation without atonement. And also the love of God, as the moral ruler and governor of the universe also demands atonement. And not only the universe's principles require the love of God expressed as consistent with them; the salvation of men and women also requires the lover of God expressed for them.

BUT on the other hand, the justice, righteousness and mercy of God all crave man's salvation, appearing as intercessors for him.

[a] Justice testifies that sin requires its due, and righteousness that sin should be miserable.
But Justice, not looking at a sinner as a fit subject for punishment, also sees him as existing in a moral condition which is opposite to righteous and wants to see him cease from that place and become righteousness. There is a righteousness in God, which craving for the righteousness in man which is only satisfied with that righteousness in man.

[b] So also holiness. In one view it would repel the sinner, banishing him to outer darkness, because of its repugnance to sin. But it also is pained by the continuing in unholiness and desires that this situation cease.

16. The righteousness, as well as the love of God, as a ground for hope.

There is a dual aspect to our conscience's witness. To the man who is able to interpret the voice of God within him to say, “There is a cause for fear in men when I see the righteousness and holiness in God” should also say, “There is room for hope for me in the holiness and righteousness of God”.

Campbell is pleading not for a balance of seeming opposites: in the sense of “a just God and a Saviour” but, rather, a harmony of understanding God as “A Saviour, because a just God”.

#2 The prospective aspects of the atonement are seen as the most important aspects as respects the demands of righteousness and holiness. It is these which instruct us best in seeing the reason and nature of the atonement. And the retrospective aspects are equally important for the law is love, after all.
Part 2 - Luther

1 - What was it that Luther saw?

#53 Luther shows clearly:
[a] the evil of our condition which led to the need for our salvation
[b] the great excellence of our salvation which Christ has given us
[c] the great difficulties which stood in the way of our salvation which Jesus had to encounter.

Luther, in Campbell’s estimation, doesn’t bring us much light about what the atonement is in itself. However, he has great spiritual insight into justification by faith. He also shows the connection between [a] peace in believing and [b] seeing the Father through the Son.

2 - Luther’s powerful experience made it no academic matter.

#2 Campbell has been speaking of the experience of deeply awakened sinners. This was a matter for Luther as well, for his own deep experience really went to make him what he was. The depths of Luther’s own struggle is what makes his understanding of justification by faith so arresting. For his handling of the law and of the Gospel – of righteousness by works as opposed to a righteousness of faith – is not something academic: as if he is simply drawing conclusions, or working out a systematic theology.

Luther portrays the Law as that which worked in his spirit to bring him to utter despair; and, in this hell of his experience, the Gospel as that which raised him to heaven. And when he thinks of being justified by works he remembers the horrors of pursuing that path himself. So anyone who puts people on that path makes Luther very indignant; for they are really sending them to spiritual death. [Hence his strong language against them.]

#54 Conversely, when he thinks of the Gospel, it is a renewing of the joy of his entry into that new world of peace. A world of faith, where there is no law to condemn, no sin, no remorse or bad conscience and no death. Just a place of joy, grace, peace, life, salvation and joy.

In the region of law he had agonised and despairoed, in the region of peace he found triumph and joy. His life was no longer controlled by the former; he lived by faith in the experience of the latter. The intensity and power of his experience gave to Luther’s preaching vivid, picturesque, language to convey his message with richness.

#2 Campbell is going to give us, as best he understands it, Luther’s way of thinking about the atonement. He is going to draw his information from Luther’s commentary on Paul to the Galatians.

3 - Luther was contending against human additions to God’s provisions for peace

#3 Just as Paul was dealing with the Judaizers, who were attempting to return the Galatians to living by law, so Luther and the Reformers were engaged with a similar struggle against the errors they saw in the church of Rome of their day. Luther was not up against those who were denying the doctrine of the atonement. What he was contending with were the human additions to the gospel; to God’s provision of peace for the conscience and of hope towards God. It is as we pay attention to what Luther is saying about justification by faith alone, that we learn also what he thinks of the atonement.

4 – The moral and spiritual victory which was needed.

#4 Luther saw the deep difficulties which, from God’s side, had to be overcome for us to have peace with God. For us to be redeemed required dealing with matters God could not simply put aside. There are issues of law, sin, death and the devil. And since the Son of God had so triumphantly dealt with these matters, and at such cost, Luther thought it dishonouring to Christ to add anything extra to this. He hardly has language strong enough to set out [a] what Christ accomplished and [b] how He did it.

#55 Further, it is not that God simply overcame by brute power and force. This was a moral and spiritual victory – the triumph of good [as good stays true to itself] over evil as evil; righteousness and life have overcome sin and death. And this moral victory has implications which follow on from it.

5 – The triumph takes place in the Person of Christ – retrospectively bearing our sins.

#2 Nevertheless, in saying what he does Luther leaves us with some questions still. For example, he speaks of Christ bearing our sins but doesn’t help us further with that picture. Yet, when dealing with the understanding of Christ being “made sin for us” [2 Cor 5.21] he doesn’t stop with saying that it means that He was a sacrifice for sin, but goes further to see in it an identification of Christ with us and our sin. Christ identifies with us in our sin that there is a parallel in that we may be identified with Him in our righteousness.

In the person of Christ then, there is a meeting place between sin and righteousness, such that sin is overcome. And in it being overcome we get to share in that triumph.

It is in the Person that this overcoming of sin has taken place. Luther sees this as a fact – something which has happened. And it is this fact which is the basis for the Scripture using such expressions as “the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all” and that, “he bore our sins in his own body on the tree” [1 Peter].

#56 This understanding of the fact of what happened in Christ is opposed to what Campbell calls a “legal
fiction’. That is, in the Person of Christ something has been transacted in space and time, in history. We are not relating to God on the basis of a way of explaining how to think of it transacting; and specifically Campbell has in mind a legal transaction explaining how God is satisfied. [This had been used by scholastic Calvinism]. That would be to put our trust in a doctrine, or less, a pictorial explanation. Rather, we are called to trust a Person. We are to look to this One as the object of our faith [trust].

Further, Luther’s quotation used by Campbell suggests that as a man feels these things he is truly made sin as Christ was. Campbell points out that Luther is emphasising feeling and the registering of these matters in the human heart; not to say that is the basis of having it, but as to state that it is really absolutely only done in Christ; but that we do have an experience on that basis.

6 – Christ’s identifying with us – prospectively understood – gift of eternal life.

#3 From Christ identifying with us and winning the victory over law, sin and death and the devil now flow positive fruits. What Christ has as a freedom and a righteousness of his own life – now flow to us. These come out of the conflict with evil matters not in any way despoiled. We are called to recognise these as ours and to think of ourselves as having them, so as to use them. We are to live in them and by them; for they are the elements of our new divine life. They are all ours because Christ is ours [1 Cor 1.30; 2.16].

7 – Faith lifts us into Christ.

57#1 Christ is our life then, and He is “presented to our faith’. This expression of Campbell’s is a careful one. In saying that someone is ‘presented to our faith’ we are emphasising that who/what is presented is a gift given before we are called to trust in them/it. They are a present/gift first, and then to receive the presented One is to have faith in them, it is to trust that who is presented is yours; and of course, all that comes with them.

This guards us from the error of thinking that because we trust them they are presented to us. Faith apprehends what is given, and so gives glory to God by accepting what is given in the One who is given.

Faith is the means of coming into this harmony with God. It is not the grounds of the Harmony itself – that is the love of God shown in Christ and His work.

Faith then, lifts us into Christ and makes us one with Him. And this is true both in our own consciousness [our experience] and also in God’s judgement of us. We were already this in God’s desire and purpose before faith – now we know it and He makes us to know his judgement of us as well.

8 – Faith’s own nature; and its connection with righteousness

#2 Luther understands God is justified when he “justifies the ungodly who believe”. We shall learn how this is so by considering [a] what Faith is in itself, and [b] the results of the living relation we have in Christ; what is brought to us.

[1] About Faith’s own nature. It is the highest duty, it is what we owe God. It is the highest service we can give to Him, and it brings Him glory. Because it counts Him to be true, wise, righteous, almighty and the author of all goodness. Reason cannot do this; only faith does.

It makes us a divine people, because it does not make God to be God, but it brings His divine life to be ours. For if we did not trust Him God would lose [in us] the glory and wisdom etc which is His. That is, it would not be found in us, as it takes the form of response to what is in Him, which is trust. This is the chief way we glorify Him.

Faith is the highest of righteousnesses, wisdoms and sacrifices.

#3 [2] It is important to understand that this faith is in us as a germ [seed- with respect to the full plant][dawn – with respect to the full noonday]; it is the beginning of the life of Christ within us. In this respect, God imputes [reckons, counts] to us faith as righteousness; that is He counts the full-grown plant to us because we have the seed, He attributes to us the full noon day because the dawn has broken in on us.

Faith then begins righteousness; God’s imputation makes it perfect until the day of Christ.

So Romans 4.3 “…Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness” means that Christian righteousness:

[a] is a faith and confidence in the Son of God [or rather a confidence of the heart in God through Jesus Christ] [b] and this faith and confidence is counted righteousness for Christ’s sake.

58#1 Now, because I live in the flesh then sin is truly in me; but, because I am covered under the shadow of Christ’s wings, as a chicken under the hen, and dwell under that large forgiveness of sins spread over me, God covers and pardons the remnant of sin in me. This means that because of the faith through which I began to lay hold of Christ; God accepts my imperfect righteousness even for perfect righteousness, and counts my sin for no sin, which is sin indeed.

#2 The distinctive difference between law and gospel for Luther would be this:

[a] that the law reveals to a man what he is himself; and so brings him to self despair
[b] the gospel reveals God to man, in such a way as the despair known through law may now drive a man to
have faith and hope in God.
So, it is in the gospel, not in the law, that God is seen [revealed] and known [embraced].

9 – Law and Gospel in Luther

#3 Campbell sees this as substantially true.
He shows that although the law is the law of love, and it can truly be seen that way, yet it is a demand for love rather than a revelation of love. Also, with understanding that is not fallen, it could be said that only love could demand love; yet that is not the way that it works with sinners. Their experience is that the law brings a “knowledge of sin” [Romans 7.7a] and that the law works, for them, “wrath.”

It is otherwise with the Gospel; for the first thing to hit us there is a revelation of love of God towards us. Then, after that comes a knowledge of the goal of that love, which is the awakening of love within us, the fulfillment of the righteousness of the law in us [Romans 8.4]. But the instrument which brings about this fulfillment of the law is not the law, but the grace of God.

10 – Gospel reveals God as He is in Himself.

#4 The gospel then is a revelation of what God is, rather than what He requires; although it implies what He calls for and also provides for its accomplishment.
59#1 Luther, understanding this, does not rest on God’s plan of redemption. Even though he analyses and can use the work of Christ in his exchanges with God, he does not rest on the work of Christ viewed simply as a work. But in both the plan, and the work, he sees God, showing Himself to Luther as He is in Himself. It is to this heavenly vision Luther yields his heart.

#2 It wasn’t that the law did not speak true things about God; the will of God for what man should be, the terror of conscience when sin is done, the wrath of God it showed. But the law left untold, for it wasn’t its function to tell, that there was, in regard to sin, a deeper matter in God than wrath, which was His mercy.

11 – Not wise to curiously search for God’s majesty

60#1 The gospel takes us beyond the light of law, and the light of reason into the deep secrets of faith. Christian teaching sets before us not God in his majesty, but His will for us in Christ. If you search this you will be overwhelmed by His glory. There is no other God besides this man Christ Jesus, who mediates to us the Father. [Matt 11.27-28, Colossians 2.3 and John 14.8-9].

#3 The power of such texts as 1 John 5.20-21.

12 –Luther on personally appropriating the atonement

61#1 It is not that God has done all this in Christ that we might, perhaps, appropriate it. Rather, appropriation is the very essence of faith. Luther saw this and so urged people to do so. There is an obligation of grace to so receive.

13 – The power and the difficulty of faith

#3 “Who gave Himself for our sins”- it is not for sins generally, nor for sins of others only, but for our sins personally. The difficulty in believing in forgiveness of sins comes to be strongest when we are clearest about our need of forgiveness – because then we see them as invincible sins. One’s that we cannot deal with, either as to forgiveness or power.

62#1 We need to beware of general confessions of sins unawakened sinners make. They need to know that is my sins, my own sins, which are at stake.

14 – Luther’s contribution

#2 Campbell lists some of the features of the gospel Luther really makes clear in his commentary on Galatians.
As to our redemption:
[1] how we are under law
[2] how we are “unjust” persons
[3] the grace in which we stand
As to the fact that we are now redeemed:
[4] the glory which God has in our faith
[5] the peace and confidence we have towards God which is in faith; how it is related to the perfection of the revelation of the Father and the Son
[6] The personal interest in Christ, possessed by all men, and revealed to faith in the Gospel
[7] The importance of responding

#3 As to the atonement, Luther states the opposites found in Christ but does not give us help in understanding them. Luther shows that there was a powerful meeting place of great struggle in Christ for us, but did not make them clear to us.

15 – Luther not dealing with an explanation of mind, but a struggle within Person.

#18 Yet Luther in expressing the conflict which centred in Christ’s Person, alerts us to these as being consciously present to Christ Himself. Luther's emphasis on Christ's nearness to our sin has offended many. But the imputation
of our sins to Christ is not a matter of a legal fiction, but was a deep reality to His own mind; and the victory of righteousness in Christ was not a thing awarded to Him, but a living divine power within Himself. No legal fiction here would help – this would be a delusive consciousness.

#19 The words Luther uses are not strictly grammatically clear to warrant their defence. But there must be a true sense to discover about how Christ in his spirit did bear the weight of our sins, and all our evils, and did deal with the law of God as so bearing them. We need to know these matters. Luther’s discussion of justification by faith does not reveal the basis of these things – but if they are not truly so, in a way we must discover, then his justification by faith alone is a superstructure without a foundation.
Reading 3: Atonement Goals/Luther: pages 35-63
How we should expect to understand the Atonement: Luther’s teaching
1- Calvinism a stronghold in Scotland:

65 If Luther’s teaching had been sustained by the Reformed Church we should not need to now take a deviation from our main theme - the nature of the Atonement. But it is necessary because Scotland at the time of JMC was pre-occupied with a form of Calvinism which JMC had to speak about.

#2 The Calvinism took two forms at the time:
[a] As that taught by Dr. Owen [1616-1683] and President - of Princeton University, USA - Jonathan Edwards [1703-1758] and Thomas Chalmers [1780-1847], who recognised Edwards as his mentor.
[b] Then there were modifications to [a] which had been put forward in the teaching of Dr. John Pye Smith [1774-1851] a Congregational theologian and tutor, Dr Payne and Dr Thomas William Jenkyn [1794-1858] in England, and Dr. Ralph Wardlaw [1779-1853] in Scotland. These are dealt with later.

The writings of Edwards and Owen had influence on the Presbyterian section of the Church of Scotland, and also in England and America. They were men of acute intellect and godly disposition.

2- Luther tells us to attend to the incarnate Son of God for knowledge of God:

66 JMC reminds us of the soundness of Luther’s teaching that it is important to not search into God’s majesty, rather it is better to attend to Jesus Christ so that we might see and embrace God come in the flesh. We need to check our ‘systematic theology’ by returning to the look at Jesus.

67 Rather than the proposed questions they were occupied with, Edwards and Owen might have used the life of Christ more as their light.

True philosophical thought can aid Christian understanding. But the apostle John directs us to the training we recieve in following in the steps of Jesus [1 John 1.1-3].

JMC is not going to look at the Divine Attributes as discussed by Owen and Edwards because he reckons they have imposed their system on the Gospel rather than looking at Christ first. JMC’s objections to Calvinism is not that it is a philosophy. He has no objections to thinking; but whether it is a true philosohpy. He thinks Owen and Edwards have left out of their account basic first principles.

3 - Fundamental defects in Owen and Edwards: [1] Limited Atonement

68 #1 Limited atonement is the idea that the atonement has reference only to a certain elected portion of humanity.
[a] Owen and Edwards start with the issue of divine justice. They think of this as an attribute of God’s nature and so a necessary matter which must come to be expressed in the Gospel.
[b] Justice is expressed as eternal misery to being awarded to sin, and eternal blessedness awarded to righteousness.

db Behind this idea is the view that justice is the awarding [rewarding] of men’s actions by either punishment or blessedness. It is a distributing of rewards that are appropriate - distributive justice.
[c] For the sinner to be saved from this misery he must, in the person of Christ, endure the misery, and then fulfill the righteousness of which this blessedness is the due reward. What follows from this is that: you can only be punished once. If it has been endured in the person of Christ, then the very justice of God means that he, the sinner, cannot eventually be punished himself. And, having, in the same way, fulfilled all righteousness must in justice receive the reward of of that righteousness.

All the pain in the life of the Lord is thus conceived of as penal suffering - the enduring of a penalty for sins done - for the elect. And all the beauty and holiness of the Lord’s life is conceived of as accomplishing the perfect righteousness so as to endow the elect with the legal title to eternal blessedness.

db The pre-occupation all the while being from the point of view of the saved; what benefits them.
[d] The grace of God, thought of in this way, locates the gift in the person of Christ, and so all that He does is to faithfully act out the details for the sake of the elect.

4 - Fundamental defects in Owen and Edwards: [2] Justice punishes as sin deserves?

69 Building on his assumption of a fixed relation between sin and its due punishment, Owen thinks of the punishment endured by Christ as that which the sinner would have to endure, and which the elect, in Christ, escape. Owen uses words like “satisfaction”, “compensation” which are made to the justice of God.

JMC asks: What was the punishment which the elect are to undergo? Edwards speaks of “Christ suffering the wrath of God for men’s sins in a way that he is capable of...” but

Reading 4: Calvinism - Owen/Edwards: pages 65-80

Assessment of their understanding of the Atonement

JMC, in looking at the elements of suffering that Edwards specifies, cannot think of them as punishments that are applicable to the men themselves.

✈️ 70 The important point that Edwards and Owen assume is that it would be unjust for those for whom Christ suffered, to eventually suffer punishment; just as it would be unjust that they should not inherit eternal blessedness procured for them by Christ's work.

JMC indicates that, once you accept the two axioms, 'God is just' and 'God is immutable [unchangeable]' and then build your systematic understanding of the atonement on them, you are not likely to listen carefully to anyone who thinks that Christ died for all men and women. And the texts they bring forth to show such a thought to be true. JMC quotes Owen as dealing, in a convoluted way, with his opponents.

✈️ 71 If the presupposition is accepted, then, in the light of Owen's poor dealing with Mark 10.45 ...“to give his life a ransom for many”, then who can answer such a thing. The only way is to deny the premise. JMC makes this clear, "it cannot be true conception of the nature of the atonement which implies that Christ died only for an election from among men."

5 - Two weighty objections to limited atonement

[1] The man hearing the gospel cannot think that “Christ died for me”.

Owen accepts this to be true but denies that the first act of faith is to accept that Christ died for them in particular. He proposes 4 steps to faith which eventually cements them in the fact that Christ died for them in particular.

✈️ 72 JMC says this makes practically dealing with awakened sinners difficult, and show that men of a previous generation made a bridge doctrine to alleviate that issue. Thomas Chalmers also conceded the difficulty which is inherent here, making clear that each person should have a conviction that Christ died for him.

✈️ 73 Paul obviously knew that Christ gave himself for him [Galatians 2.20]

[2] It makes the work of Christ to be no longer a revelation of the name of God, no longer a work revealing that God is love.

Owen and Edwards, in emphasising that justice is the necessary attribute of God's nature, go on to represent mercy and love as arbitrary, applying to only some men. They think of justice alone being expressed in the history of all men and women, while mercy and love only in the history of the elect. If they had used the light of the life of Christ as their guide they would have avoided this deep imbalance.

✈️ 74 An arbitrary act cannot reveal character, and the confinement of the love and mercy to the elect only means that the atonement ceases to reveal to all men that God is love. We cannot have arbitrariness and revelation - they are mutually exclusive. An arbitrary god is an unknown god. This even robs the elect of understanding their experience to be one of a loving God.

✈️ 75 Is it fair to ask men to put their trust in God whom we cannot tell them whether He loves them or not? This leads to a justifiable irritation in the hearers - interestingly, often contradicted by the loving style of those who advance such a doctrine.

Those who know that God loves them, yet advance this doctrine, are inclined to leave it all as a mystery; feeling that it is irreverent to submit it to logical analysis. This produces a contradiction between the faith of the head and the love of the heart - a dualistic approach.

✈️ 76 In all this their consciences help them; and so, for example, David Brainerd, with such a contradictory ideas in his head, nevertheless pours out this heart for the American Indian sinners he is among.

6 - Fundamental defects: [3] Substitutes a legal standing for a filial standing as the gift of God to men in Christ

Galatians 4.1-5 speaks of the goal of redemption as bringing us to a mature sonship. Christ did not honor the Law as a way to bring us to a legal standing before God, but to a filial relationship - sonship.

✈️ 77 These are two, very different relational positions.

JMC states how Edwards concentrates on the perfect obedience of Christ as a legal matter, for which God justified him. Then, in the way that his obedience is imputed to us, Edwards focusses upon the legal work of Christ. Consequently, the life of sonship is left out of view. Yet this is ust what should be prominent, and the fulfilling of law is to be understood as a demonstration of the virtue and power which is sonship.

And the eternal blessedness for men and women, is not some reward for completing a legal requirement, but is a participation into that life of sonship which is given us in the Son of God. This is surely a higher matter and a deeper entry into the shared life of God? [Romans 8.2-4].

✈️ 78 Dr. Chalmers speaks of difficulties that men have when they are naturally law abiding. This
“natural legalism” gives them conscientious difficulties in considering the gospel.

Chalmers thinks that we avoid a sentimental approach to God if we concentrate men’s minds on the Lawgiver. JMC thinks that when we sink the Law giver in the Father we err. And if anyone thinks the Lawgiver is a higher idea they also err. While the gospel recognises law and honours it, it lifts us above law. For it is only as we know God as Father that we are soft towards his Law. This is the higher calling of realising the longings of our Father’s heart.

It is the goal which the atonement contemplates that has us actually realising the longings of our Father’s heart - it is this that declares his love towards us.

Hence the Lord’s constant reminder that perfect obedience is the doing of the Father’s will by his Son.

JMC recapitulates:

1. limited atonement robs the grace of God as the gift of Christ who reveals the name of God - that he is love.
2. In dwelling upon of the righteousness of Christ as intended to give us a legal standing as righteous through imputation to us, this mars the efficiency of Christ’s work as in itself a revelation of the Father by the Son.
3. So it comes about that, the Lord fulfilled the law of love towards all me, and yet Edwards and Owen have not recognised that in doing so it is as the revelation of the love of God to all.

The error seems to be that Owen and Edwards have looked at the righteousness of Christ as the meeting of the demand for a righteousness which the law makes on a man, rather than a righteousness which is a revelation of the heart of the Father by the Son.

This error effects our doctrine of the Atonement and so, also that of Justification. But we need to postpone that matter until we have taken into consideration the modifications of the more recent Calvinists of JMC’s time.
Reading 4: Calvinism - Owen/Edwards: pages 65-80
Assessment of their understanding of the Atonement
1- In dealing with the Calvinism which was a stronghold in Scotland:

81 We saw last reading that the Calvinism which JMC was fluent with had taken two forms. He listed the main teachers of these forms as follows:

[a] The older Calvinism as that taught by Dr. Owen [1616-1683] and President - of Princeton University, USA - Jonathan Edwards [1703-1758] and Thomas Chalmers [1780-1847], who recognised Edwards as his mentor.

[b] Then there were modifications to [a] which had been put forward in the teaching of Dr. John Pye Smith [1774-1851] a Congregational theologian and tutor, Dr Payne, Dr Thomas William Jenkyn [1794-1858] in England and Dr. Ralph Wardlaw [1779-1853] in Scotland.

2- The modifications as JMC understood them:

[1] They held that the atonement was for all men and women
[2] The need for the atonement was not arising out of a distributive and individual justice - which required that each man should receive his just desert according to the eternal necessity of the divine nature. This was Owen and Edward's teaching. Rather the need for atonement arose from a rectoral and public justice, which necessitated God, as the moral Governor of the universe that, if he was to extend mercy to sinners, could do so only in a way that will preserve intact the interests of his moral government.

[3] As to the nature of the atonement, Christ's sufferings for our sins was not held to be the endurance of the same punishment [or an equivalent suffering] to which men and women were exposed through sins done. They were seen to be the substitution of other sufferings for the threatened punishment seen as equivalent in God's moral government.

Similarly, Christ's obedience was not a fulfilling of the law in our place and stead, so by providing us with a righteousness imputed to us, and therefore with a right to the reward of righteousness. It was seen as a moral excellence which gave a moral virtue to the atonement and so gave a grounds for acts of grace and mercy towards sinners and all other favours.

[4] The results of the atonement, it does not of itself, by its own nature secure salvation to any, but only as an adequate provision for the salvation for all, free to all, effectual to salvation in the case of those who are disposed by sovereign grace of God to avail themselves of it.

JMC reminds us that these points of difference implied some underlying ideas.

1. The imputation of guilt and righteousness - our guilt to Christ and Christ's righteousness to us - as it was held by Owen and Edwards was thought to be untenable because guilt and righteousness are not transferable properties; only their results/consequences are transferable.

2. A legal claim was thought to be destructive of the gracious character of the gospel dispensation.

3. The relation of the atonement to the divinity of Christ is thought of differently

82 Edwards and and Owen had used the divinity of Christ to imply an eternal suffering, here the divinity of Christ was thought of as giving infinite value to the sufferings of Christ, even of the amount of suffering was quite small.

3 - The perceived advantages of the modifications as JMC understood them were:

[2] Rectoral and public justice appears less repulsive than the former distributive justice.
[3] The idea of the Son of God as being perceived as a criminal - through imputed sins - and undergoing punishment is avoided and also the 'legal fiction' that guilt can be imputed to an innocent being or righteousness to a guilty one.

Socinianism is derived from the heretical tenets of Faustus Socinius, a 16th-century Italian theologian, denying the divinity of Christ, the existence of Satan, original sin, the atonement, and eternal punishment, and explaining sin and salvation in rationalistic terms; in this case, as “merits”.
4 - The perceived disadvantages of the modifications as JMC understood them:

83 JMC, in following the re-thinking that these modifications imply, finds himself in sympathy with why they were attempted. But he has a lot more sympathy with their difficulties than satisfaction in the way they have been answered; he admits the problems they see as real problems, but is not satisfied with their answers.

5 - The use they make of rectoral justice

He takes issue with the use they make of rectoral justice. It still rests upon the idea of distributive justice anyway. It is a delusion to think that atonement might be the satisfaction of the one, but not the other. Also, rectoral justice, with its inherent “deterrence value” is not what is found in Scripture - there, the wages of sin is death [Romans 3.23] and this is a terrible affair departing from God’s holiness.


In thinking that there can be an atonement for all, and yet still to hold that the punishment of the ungodly is still to come as a penalty - does not get us over the difficulty of being punished twice.

6 - In regard to punishment

We still have the idea, despite modifications, that Christ was somehow punished for our sin. Owen’s understanding of 2 Corinthians 5.21 “made a sin-offering for us” is that it = Christ was punished for us.

85 JMC thinks the distinction between “being punished”, and “enduring sufferings which are a punishment” as removing the difficulties is not a solution.

[1] What is the relation of the Father to this “punishment”? Did the Father punish the Son?

86 The language of the modifiers is not that different from Owen/Edwards.

87 [2] There is a oneness of character in the elements of suffering that they specify.

What are the “revenges of divine justice” and its “terrible executions” which Edwards speaks of? JMC sees here a ‘negative wrath’ in that the elements of suffering would act with unmitigated power. By which is meant that:

[a] God hid Himself from Christ that He might feel the full burden of the sins laid upon him. But how laid upon Him?

[b] God dealt with Christ, that “He might suffer God’s wrath”. JMC asks How?

88 After a long quotation of Edwards, JMC summarises the two main ideas upon which this view of ‘suffering the revenges of God’ is built:

[a] vivid perception of the hatefulness of sin

[b] greatness of the wrath to which sinners are exposed.

JMC points out that in his explanation Edwards is dealing with the language of legal fiction, but this good man actually leaves us with no impression that Christ’s actual experience, when He spoke of it, Edwards did not conceive of the Father as looking on Him in wrath, nor is it the fact that Jesus thought He did.

It is of no weight to speak of “enduring the punishment of sins” as being any different from “being punished for our sins”; it is still a penal idea at the back of both.

In fact the Father did not despise Him, and was not angry with Him as He hung on the cross. Wardlaw makes this point and then goes on to tell us that the sufferings of Christ were not a punishment. He can say something of what they are not, but cannot tell us what they were.

7 - The things the modifiers have not considered, as JMC understood them:

90 When he has weighed the Calvinists, JMC notes what they have not considered; he asks:

[1] They have not looked into the consciousness of Christ in suffering

[2] Nor have they considered the mind of the Father towards Him

[3] Why did it please the Father to bruise Him?

[4] In the Father dealing with our sins, and as Christ is dealing with our sins, What is Christ’s apprehension of the light in which the Father saw Him?
Campbell doesn’t think that the sufferings these writers describe accord with the penal character ascribed to them.

He finds the idea of public or rectoral justice leads to an erroneous view as to what the atonement was intended to accomplish. If we have already appreciated JMC’s objections to the merely legal nature of the atonement as stated towards the elder Calvinists, then the modern ones fall under the same objections.

91 Retrospectively, they simply meet the demands of God as seen merely as a Lawgiver and prospectively, it is related to the mercy that God may manifest only in making such an attitude of mercy as they are consistent with God’s own interests of promiting His own moral government.

But the problem that the work of Christ solves, goes far beyond these considerations. The issue is not, “how we sinners could be pardoned and reconciled, and mercy extended to us;” but “how it could happen that we, God’s offspring, being dead, should be alive again, being lost, should be found.” These are deeper issues.

It has to be taken into account that it was because God was bringing many sons to glory that it was necessary that the Captain of our salvation should be made perfect through sufferings.

92 JMC, quoting Wardlaw, states that the atonement is reduced to a grand moral display, which illustrates God’s condemnation of sin and his delight in holiness. It is this, but far more. Quoting Romans 8.3 he shows that God was dealing with was the weakness of the flesh in man, in sending his own Son as a propitiation.

8 - The relation of atonement to justification.

JMC takes Edwards as an example of the older Calvinism, and Dr. Payne as a representative of the new, modern Calvinism. Both of them, he says:

[a] regard the work of Christ as meritorious for justification
[b] regard faith as that by which the individual is connected with Christ’s justifying work
[c] exclude faith as being any ground for being justified
[d] regard faith as that which is right in itself
[e] regard faith as due from a man. It is a right reception of the gospel

9 - The idea that guilt and innocence are transferrable in themselves.

Where they differ is with respect to imputation- [the way God reckons this work to us].

[a] Edwards thinks that the guilt of man has been imputed to Christ as He suffered for sin; so he sees the imputation of Christ’s righteousness as imputed to believers. This makes them personally righteous in His sight.

93 Payne rejects the concept of imputed guilt - and therefore of imputed righteousness also. He thinks God now treats us as if we were just.

JMC comments that, notwithstanding these differences, the basic idea of modern Calvinism is; that guilt and innocence are transferrable in themselves. And this is only tenable if we exclude from our consideration all the important effects of sin and guilt. Such effects as:

[a] the displeasure awakened in God’s mind. Of which there is not a hint of displeasure towards Christ by God - if we read the Scriptures. Indeed, Dr. Payne is aware that displeasure of God towards Christ did not exist.
[b] Can the Lord’s sufferings be be rightly spoken of as ‘transferred effects of sin’. Were not the Lord’s sufferings in their nature determined by who He is? And His sufferings were in reality sufferings that came about by virtue of his holiness and love - these considerations specify the elements in his sufferings - not transferrable effects of sin.

94 [c] The same goes for transferrable righteousness. The basic idea here is God’s favour [as in the former case of sin, God’s displeasure]. Is any fruit of righteousness transferrable? Matters such as: [i] the experience of the human spirit in relation to God; [ii] inward peace and harmony. Are these to be separated from righteousness itself. A justification that did not introduce us into divine favour, would be no justification at all.

[d] If we are to speak, as Scripture does, that God grants us things “for Christ’s sake” - a matter Edwards seized on to think transferrably - then these must pertain to higher matters that than these analogies furnish.

10 - Faith and justification are connected - by a true knowing of God.

95 Abraham believed God, he was called the friend of God, and his descendants received many favours for his sake; but, asks JMC, were they for his sake “friends of God” or “treated as friends of God” apart from their own participation in that reality in respect of which Abraham was a friend of God. “They who are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham. [Galatians].
Edwards says of faith - in relation to justification - that it connects the individual with Christ. Payne thinks of faith as requisite - otherwise we have the justification of all men. This lands him in the dilemma that it begins to look like faith is work, a new rule, and a new law! JMC is with Edwards - for he makes the ground clear, and that is the work of Christ; and he thinks of faith connecting us with Christ - without trying to say how.

96 In the proportion that faith is made a requisite - then this appeals to it as a basis for a judgment (ie whether the requisite, necessary thing is there); then we are lead into self-righteousness. While it is an error to think of the connection between faith and justification as arbitrary; it is a greater error not to see that faith excludes boasting, not by arrangement of a scheme, but by its being the knowledge of the true God.

If the atonement had been thought of prospectively, this need - to guard against self-righteousness - would never have to be a problem.

Something less than the gift of life that God has given us, which is eternal sonship, could not satisfy the father of our spirits. And the faith that apprehends this gift as given, excludes boasting, because it occupies the spirit, not with itself, but with the gift which it apprehends - it looks away from itself to Christ.

11- There is much in Edwards that JMC admires and wishes Edwards had not thought in such legal terms.

97 When JMC describes the state of affairs in the heart of a child of God, he cannot but think that Edwards - who understands that Christ's righteousness invests with its own dignity and worth, not only the persons, but the feeblest graces of those who are in Christ by faith - as saying something essentially true although not by way of imputation and a legal fiction ["as if we were..."]. If only Edwards had not thought of it in legal terms, but rather, from the point of view of the father of our spirits bridging the gulf between us and him, and them as reconciled children, reposing in the love of their father, then Edwards would have come closer to where Luther was.

98 Payne has to cull his language to state a minimum relationship between faith and justification. But he doesn't escape saying anything different than that the atonement conveys to us legal rights. Also, faith is seen as an arbitrary matter.

99 The truth of the matter is that faith is related to justification - and sanctification as well - as one with the nature of things. For it is God's purpose, as Luther saw, to have glory for Himself in the matter of justifying the ungodly by faith. And it is faith that draws us into this life of joy and sonship.

100 Payne teaches that the awareness of this justification and faith is arbitrary. But this is contrary to the experience of those who know it. God does assure us of his acceptance of us in our own hearts [Roman 8.16]. If we find that we can draw near to God only because the legal requirements have furnished a ground whereby God can be merciful towards us, and not in the light of the fact that we have been redeemed from the law, and have received adoption as sons, then

101 we shall find that our experience is not to be drawn into his life of sonship. JMC admits he has given this modified Calvinism a lot of space even though they [1] do not shed light on the nature of the atonement and [2] Still less have they freed it from the its exclusively legal character as the older representatives of this teaching had it.

12 - Even where Calvinistic principles hinder the intellect; there is still witness of their conscience & Scripture

102 What is known through this Calvinism is [1] evil seriousness of sin, and [2] the pure and free nature and greatness of the love of God.

103 There is also the fact that, even if their doctrine is clouded, rays of light do reach men's spirits. And while the legalism in their views actually hindered them; nevertheless the purpose of God that we were to be sons of God was still taught in the Scriptures and they saw it. Christian history gives us many examples of error mixed with truth.

104 What light men have to know [1] arise as a matter of their conscience and [2] their reading of the Scriptures. This is true even though their experience would contradict the idea that Christ only died for some.
Chapter 5 - The atonement is to be seen in its own light

1 - What was the atoning element in the sufferings of Christ?

105#1 Rather than seeing the divinity of the Lord as a prerequisite for being able to endure infinite penal sufferings, it has been thought better to think of the personal dignity of Christ as giving the infinite value to His sufferings. [The principle being that the person qualifies the work.] The sufferings of Christ arise out of who He is.

#2 But this is not an attempt to weaken the sufferings of the Saviour, as the witness of the Gospels make clear.

#3 And it is not just that we want to be faithful to the text of Scripture. It is also true that whenever people have thought of the Saviour's sufferings they have always connected this with the wrath of God against sin. So to lessen the value of the sufferings would be thought to minimize the importance of sin.

And although his sufferings do show to us our preciousness to the heart of God; nevertheless, even the Calvinists recognise that the holiness and love in Christ is what made the sources of pain specific to him. And if the sinfulness and misery of sinners was painful to Christ because of his holiness and love then it must have been in proportion to his holiness and love.

2 - The Calvinistic writers held that the issue in the atoning sufferings was pain, viewed simply as pain.

106#1 What surprised Campbell as he read the Edwards and Owen, was that they take the value of pain to arise simply from the fact that it is pain simply as pain, and likewise, agony as agony. What lead them, he thinks, to make of this the prominent issue was their connection in understanding these sufferings as punishment. This does not surprise Campbell, because there is pain involved in penalty. What surprises him is that it is not the holiness and love, taking the form of suffering, which are to be seen as the atoning elements. For the essence and the adequacy of the atonement upon which our faith must rest requires such holiness and love to be central.

3 – Edwards: holiness and love the conditions for pain.

#2 Pain endured by holiness through being holiness, and by love through being love - this is how Jonathan Edwards sees God using the infinite holiness of Christ to cause Him to feel the awful weight of sins. Similarly, Christ would have a weight press in upon Him proportional to his hatred of sin and love towards sinners.

#3 This not only means that God was punishing the innocent for the guilty; but that He was using for that purpose the capacity for enduring pain, found in the holiness and love, as the vehicle for punishment.

4 – Distinction between an atoning sacrifice for sins and a substituted punishment.

107#1 But it is hard to understand this as penal suffering; just because the sufferer suffers what he suffers just through seeing the sin and sinners with God's eyes, and feeling for them with God's heart. Is a suffering like this punishment? Is God, in causing such a divine experience in humanity inflicting a punishment? Campbell obviously thinks not.

#2 This forces a distinction - between an atoning sacrifice for sin and the enduring as substitute the punishment due to sin. So that, while Christ suffered as an atoning sacrifice, what he suffered was not - because from its nature it could not be - a punishment. Campbell thinks that this distinction should have been seen by such writers, particularly insofar that they had seen the connection between the atonement and the eternal holiness and love of God which was being felt so powerfully in the real humanity of Christ.

#3 Where has Campbell led our minds, but to this? The question is not about the:


[3] imputation of our sins to Christ in the strictest sense: for no one thinks there is any consciousness in Christ that he was the object of wrath for the Father.

The question is whether it is pain as pain - as a penal infliction; OR pain as a condition and form of holiness and love under pressure of our sin and misery? It is the latter, in JMC's estimation, which is presented to our faith as the essence of the sacrifice and its atoning virtue.

108#1 This is the central question in thinking of the nature of the atonement. It will be the spiritual essence and nature of the sufferings of Christ which will help us to know what the atonement was in itself; and not that they were a penalty.

#2 And we need to look at a way of studying the atonement in its own light, [1] to actually see one, [2]
made in real life, and [3], to see one revealed to our faith which God accepted.

#3 There is a recorded event in the Old Testament which sheds some light on the matter.

5 - The halting of the plague by Phinehas affords us light.

#4 Numbers 25:10-13 is recording not a type [pattern] of the atonement, but an actual atonement. Phinehas had no command to act on, no promise. It was simply a spontaneous feeling of jealousy for the Lord which was his motivation. But it was a motivation, so in accord with the mind of God, that God acknowledged what he did as an atonement.

#5 Phinehas turns away the wrath of God - and the plague which was a manifestation of the wrath - by an act which amounted to

[a] a condemnation of sin and  
[b] zeal for the glory of the Lord.

This act was immediately taken hold of in mercy by the God of Israel as a basis [justification] for the turning away of his wrath from the children of Israel [= an atonement for Israel].

 Connie 109#1 There can be no uncertainty about the atoning element here. It was not the mere death of the subjects of his act. It was the moral element, the mind of Phinehas, his zeal for God, his sympathy in God’s judgment on sin. This was the essence of the atonement.

As a result, God gives to him

[a] my covenant of peace  
[b] an everlasting priesthood

And this prepares our hearts to understand the foundation laid in the atonement for the everlasting covenant of peace and the everlasting priesthood of Christ.

It will be the moral and spiritual elements in the sufferings of Christ, who tasted death for every man because of the condemnation of sin in His spirit, and atonement for the sin of the whole world.

6 - Light is to be sought not in the type [the pattern prefigured, shadow] but in the antitype [the actual deed done, the reality].

#2 It is important to see here that the light comes from the fact that an atonement was accomplished, not pre-figured in a type. The typical sacrifices of Mosaic institutions showed

[a] the necessity for an atonement  
[b] and, in some sense, their form  
but they could not reveal the nature of the atonement.

In the type all was arbitrary [i.e. the reason for doing everything was not clear] and it was a mere institution [it set up a possibility as something foreshadowed].

[1] The perfection required in the victim, had no relation to the sin, but to the moral and spiritual perfection of the antitype; of which sin is the negation and opposite.

[2] The confession of sins over the victim and the laying of hands on the animal, did not connect them with it in any real sense, for in no sense could it bear them. So the confession foretold that sins would be laid on Christ; but gave no indication what the confession expressed. Nor was light shed on the capacity for bearing sins which is found in Christ because of his moral and spiritual perfection; nor in the reality of him coming under their weight as an offering for sin.

[3] The shedding of blood declared that without it there was no remission of sins. Yet the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins, so how that connection worked would have to wait for the antitype to show.

 Connie 110#1 So often the agreement between the types and the antitype has been dwelt on. As if that makes all things clear. But indeed, all the questions we have come to see as central are not answered by the types, JMC lists a few:

[1] Why must the One who atones be the Holy One of God?  
[2] How does his holiness qualify Him for the bearing of our sins?  
[3] In what sense could they be, and how have they been, laid on Him?  
[4] Being laid on Him, how is the shedding of His blood an atonement for them?  
[5] What is the connection between His moral and spiritual perfection, connected with and present in His bearing of sins, and the fact that we have redemption through his blood because He offered Himself without spot to God, through the eternal Spirit? Why “because”?

7 - Epistle to the Hebrews allows us to see true method.

#2 The questions are not answered by tracing the points of agreement between type and antitype but
on the places where they differ. So we see in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where this comparing and contrasting is carried out on the basis that the writer has seen that the antitype has the atoning efficacy which the type so manifestly did not.

In apprehending the atonement in Christ, he had clear discernment as to its adequacy. For the writer knows that Christ’s blood takes away sins, and the blood of bulls and goats does not.

8 - Consideration of Hebrews 10.4-10, Psalm 40.7-11 and John 17.26.

#3 The essence and first principle of his reasoning is found in Hebrews 10.4-10.

[1] the preparation of the body of the Lord was prepared by God.

[2] This one comes to do the will of God. This will is expressed as:
  [a] not wanting sacrifice and offering according to law
  [b] having no pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin
  [c] desiring our sanctification through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ
  [d] this offering would be once for all
  [e] the taking away of the first [the types] is done for the establishment of the second [the antitype] which is efficacious.

[111#2] [3] The quotation of Psalm 40 stresses who God is, it states His character. This means that the “will of God” here is not so much a method, or a plan He wants to execute. A plan would declare his intention, but without shedding any light on what the nature of the atonement is. Rather, it is that in the work of Christ offering himself represents the will of God done, i.e. the mind of God revealed, the name of the Father declared by the Son.

[“Will” here does not simply express a plan, but the heart, the nature of the mind of God, and so His Character.]

9 – What was meant by the fulfillment of this purpose?

#4 The purpose of Christ was to come and do the will of the Father.

[1] As the Lord partook humanity, in what relation to God and man was He placed by this?


[3] How did it imply having all men’s sins placed upon Him?

[4] And that he bore them, and redeemed us?

10 - Love to God and love to man, united in Christ.

[112 #1] The first commandment has a second which is “like it”. The spirit of sonship which is expressed in the doing of the first commandment, is also the spirit of brotherhood which is expressed in the doing of the second. Christ is the perfect elder brother, [Hebrews 2.10-18, 4.14].

#2 Edwards had seen that in being our Mediator, Christ had an interest in the glory of the Father to Whom He was to intercede; and also had a great love for those for whom He would intercede; in such a way as what He touched also touched them. Christ’s love was not simply his fitness for the office, it was also the impulsion, or drive, behind the office. And this love is towards all men, and so led to Him being the Saviour of all men.

#3 To send him in the likeness of sinful flesh [Romans 8.3] was to make Him a sacrifice for sin, for it was to lay the burden of our sins upon Him. He is related to us, by love identified with us, the Son of God came under our burden - sin.

And this “laying of our sins upon Him”, Campbell means not in the limited sense of Edwards, that the evil of our sins oppressed His Holy Spirit, nor that through love to us He would be exposed to pain. Campbell understands it to imply the loving of all humanity. In this way He cares for all so as to condemn the life of sinful self and being devoted to delivering mankind, whatever the cost.

[113#1] So, moved by love the Saviour took our whole burden to obtain our redemption.

#25 This going out - out going from His person - of the self sacrificing love of the Son of God worked our redemption

[1] in dealing with men on the part of God [retrospectively - in relation to us being sinners under the condemnation of a broken law]. This will deal with providing an adequate ground for us to be taken from under law; but in such a way as consistently upholds the law and character of the Law giver.

[2] dealing with God on behalf of men [prospectively - in reference to God wanting to bestow on us adoption as sons].

#2To break it up into these two sections will not destroy the unity of the life that was in Christ as love to God and love to men.
Reading 5: Mod Calvinism/Own Light pages 81-113
Assessment of Modifications to Edwards/Owen; Looking at Atonement itself
Chapter 6 - The Retrospective Aspect of the Atonement

I - CHRIST’S DEALINGS WITH MEN ON GOD’S BEHALF = CHRIST’S HONOURING THE FATHER IN THE SIGHT OF MEN.

114 #1 The natural outflow of the Lord’s love for the Father and for us means that

[1] He will show us the Father. [2] He will vindicate the Father’s Name. [3] He will bear witness to the excellence of the will of God for us. Against this will we were rebelling (“I have given Him for a witness to the people” Isaiah 55.4). [4] He will witness to the trustworthiness of the Father’s heart in which we were refusing to put our confidence. [5] He will bear witness to the unchanging character of that love in which there was hope for us, though we had destroyed ourselves.

#2 This witness bearing for God will be done through the personal perfection which was in Christ.

This human perfection is seen in Christ’s

[a] following the Father as a dear child, [love and trust] and
[b] his perfect brotherly love in his walk [love and long-suffering] with men.

1- There is both joy and sorrow had a place in Christ’s bearing witness.

#3 Bearing witness for the Father was part of the self sacrifice of Christ. There was a pressure in Christ’s spirit because of our sins. This pressure was great through Him being brought into the flesh, into constant living contact with the carnal mind.

In being a living letter of the Father before men, His honouring of the Father caused men to dishonour Him. His manifestation of brotherly love was repaid with hatred. He found that the reproach broke his heart [Psalm 69.20].

# 4 Nevertheless, in the experience of sorrows there was also joy and peace found in his walk with the Father. He spoke to the disciples of the constant experience of “my joy” and “my peace”. John 16.33, 20.21.24, 17.13. This joy and peace was part of bearing witness to the Father.

2 - This sorrow is part of the atonement

115 #1 There is an intersection of two elements of honouring the Father’s name and the condemnation of the sin of man, in the God-Man:

[1] The Lord’s honouring [vindicating] of the Father before all men, His outgoing zeal for God, is an element in the atonement for the arresting [halting] of the course of judgment.

[2] The Lord’s sympathy with the Father in his condemnation of sin also is an element in the atonement. 116#1 Both [1] and [2] are found in the example of Phinehas. So the place and value of these “witness-bearing” elements in His life are clear to us as part of the atoning the work.

It is important that we see the way in which these sufferings entered into the atonement; not simply that they did. For they certainly did so: But were they penal?

3 - But these sorrows are not to be regarded as penal suffering

There is a distinction between penal sufferings endured in meeting the demand of divine justice, and sufferings which are themselves the expression of God’s mind regarding our sins. It is through the manifestation by the Son we are presented with what our sins mean to the Father’s heart. [Psalm 119.136]: it is through these sufferings of Christ that we see a manifestation in humanity as to what our sins mean to God.

There is a habit of mind, which Campbell is addressing in the Calvinism if his day, which would more readily associate the sufferings of Christ with meeting a penal demand for justice.

It is not that this is requirement of a penalty that there should be suffering; the infliction of a punishment does not declare the full revelation of God that God’s love is willing to suffer. It is that the suffering is the suffering of divine love suffering from our sins according to its own nature. A suffering in relation to which the sufferer could say, “He who has seen me has seen the Father”.

II - CHRIST’S DEALINGS WITH GOD ON MEN’S BEHALF.

117#1 It is in this aspect of Christ’s mediatorial work we might expect to meet the area where penal suffering should come into its own. A satisfying of God’s own justice.

4 - God’s wrath against sin is a reality

The wrath of God against sin is a reality, whatever we say about the way it is to be appeased.
There is a satisfaction due to the divine justice. So we shall need to consider that Christ in dealing with God on behalf of men is dealing with the righteous wrath of God against sin, and as according to it that which was due; and all this satisfaction would precede His intercession for us.

5 - Christ’s perfect response to God’s condemnation of sin

Content:

- Christ’s own condemnation of our sins, and his holy sorrow because of them, indicate the direction of dealing with God’s mind concerning sin. It is this which will be the basis for the intercession of Christ.
  
  Christ has, as a human, a oneness of mind with the Father concerning sins, in the light of this mind the exceeding weight of the sins of men are realised.

  - He who so responds to the divine wrath against sin in saying that “You are righteous, O Lord, who judges so” is receiving the full apprehension of what that sin means, as well as what that wrath means. This would be a perfect confession of our sins. It is the proper reply to God’s judgment on our sins. It says, “this is right;” it is a perfect Amen.”

  - He receives that sin which comes into himself as divine humanity, and in that perfect response He absorbs it.

  - That response is perfect - having a perfect in humanity for all the sin of man. It is a perfect repentance. It has the perfect sorrow, perfect contrition. Has all this except the personal consciousness of sin.

  - This response is due to God, and alone satisfies His wrath.

  - So He, bearing us and our sins on his heart before the Father, confronting the judgment of God upon us, confesses our sins as to their evil as well as of the righteous judgment of God against them, and a holy sorrow because of them. All this was due from us though we couldn’t render it, He rendered it for us as in our nature as our true brother.

6 - Edwards’ alternative: equivalent punishment or equivalent repentance

Content:

- Edwards had outlined two alternatives which he thought would be required to God’s wrath; either an equivalent punishment or an equivalent sorrow and repentance. Either would, in Campbell’s view, be considered by Edwards as securing the vindication of God’s majesty in pardoning sin. The latter alternative is morally higher.

  - Indeed, the incarnation not only made equivalent sorrow and repentance possible as an alternative, it made it the one which must be so.

  - Campbell states that this understanding of the problem of atonement stresses the nature of the atonement as a confession of sins, rather than the intensity of the suffering to the soul of Christ which it required.

7 - Sorrow for another’s sin is not penal

Content:

- Thinking on this capacity of suffering flesh is a different thing from weighing the sufferings of Christ in the scales of the suffering of the damned. That idea is a result of thinking of the atonement as the Son of God suffering the punishment of our sins. And is penal.

  - Rather it is the understanding of the Son of God suffering in suffering flesh what is the perfect response of the divine holiness and divine love in humanity to the aspect of the divine mind in the Father towards the sins of men.

  - Those who argue for the penal understanding say that there is no other reasons for the sufferings of Christ if they are not penal. But here we see suffering as generated by the sorrow over our sins as seen from within the holy Father and the Son’s perception.

8 - Seeing sin as God sees it. The grief of God over sin.

Content:

- For if we think of the meaning of our sins from the point of view of our own concept of being punished, then we simply attribute to God what is the meaning of our sins to us, rather than seeing it as He sees it.

  - The grieving of God over our sins is not so readily received into the heart as the idea that God punishes sin. That He punishes sin is important, and it can terrify us; and yet the faith that He grieves is infinitely more important, for it has the power to work holiness in us; it alone can purify us.

  - Don’t need so much spiritual apprehension to have faith that He punishes sin, as we do to have faith that our sins grieve God. Men more easily believe that Christ’s sufferings show how God punishes sin than that these sufferings are the divine feelings in relation to sin, made visible to us by being present in suffering.
The entrance of sin has been the entrance of sorrow - not only to the sinful who are punished, but also to the holy and the loving, who feel what holiness and love feel at the presence of sin. If we are to be able to glorify God in that suffering then we see it not as penal. Yet it was for sin, for the sin of others rather than for the sufferer, for He was without sin; so it is vicarious, expiatory, an atonement - an atonement for sin as distinguished from the punishment of sin.

9 - God’s love suffering in the atonement.

We then see:

[1] that the suffering we are watching is divine, while it is human.
[2] God then, is revealed in it and not merely in connection with it.
[a] God’s righteousness and condemnation of sin, being in the suffering, and not merely demanding it
[b] God’s love also being in the suffering, and not merely submitting to it.
[3] Christ’s suffering then is the form which the divine life within Him took in connection to the circumstances in which he was placed - not a penal infliction coming from outside Him. So such texts make sense:

Isaiah 53.10 - He made his soul an offering for sin
Heb 9.26 He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself
Heb. 1.3 he purged our sins

10 - Luther: sin and righteousness meet in the Christ

Luther’s understanding of how all the sin of man, calling for judgment, and all the righteousness of God, calling for life, met in the Christ. Only righteousness can prevail here, it being divine and eternal.

Luther thought of Christ having a consciousness of sin in relation to man’s sin. Campbell thinks that what he has put forward expresses something akin to Luther’s understanding. The divine, eternal righteousness in Christ used the confession of the sinfulness of sin in its conflict with sin calling for judgment; and so prevailed.

Even if this is not what Luther had in mind, it is the truth which Campbell wants to put forward. This meets the “equivalent sorrow and repentance” idea of Edwards which Campbell noticed in his thinking. Campbell commends Edwards as the great teacher of the absolute justice of God needing to be met. This is much better than the demand for “rectoral [public] justice” being satisfied in the atonement. The issue with sin is only God, and it is only against Him that we have sinned – it is His justice which has to be met.

11 - Relation between repentance for sin and the expiation of guilt

True repentance before God would be very effective for dealing with sin, if only there could be such a repentance could be found; for most are efforts at self preservation and do not contain a true godly sorrow for sin or a pure condemnation of it as something evil in itself. Nothing is found in men and women which judges sin and confesses it in true sympathy with the divine judgment on it.

[Whitfield: “our repentance needs to be repented of…”]

Campbell thinks of true repentance [as found in Christ] as a truer and more proper satisfaction to God than any eternal punishment.

Sees, Jesus Christ as the “one sinner” [Luther] who, “meeting the cry of these sins for judgment, and the wrath due to them, absorbing and exhausting the divine wrath in that adequate confession and perfect response on the part of man, which was possible only to the infinite and eternal righteousness in humanity.”

12 - The personal identity of the guilty and the righteous

The only difference, in the case of Campbell’s hypothetical repentant One, is the difference between the personal identity of the guilty and the righteous. And if the issue is one of imputed guilt and substituted punishment that difference of identity is a serious problem in thinking the atonement out.

But not if it is a matter of adequate sorrow and adequate confession of the sin; for then the only matter would be that He shares their nature and has become their brother. He can confess as we might but could not for He feels as sorrow for our sins and can confess them adequately before the Father since He knows and shares the grief over them as well.

13 - Christ’s expiatory confession is followed by His intercession for us, and is connected to it.

Part of the full response of the mind of the Son to the mind of the Father in His righteous
condemnation of sin, was the following up of the confession the Son of God with the ministry of His intercession. The intercession is part of that utterance in humanity which propitiates the divine mercy by the righteous way in which it laid hold of the hope for man which was in God. Isaiah 53.12b “He bear the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors”

His intercession

1] is not an attempt to change the heart of the Father,
2] but a confession which combined
   [a] acknowledgment of the righteousness of God against sin;
   [b] hope for man from that love of God which is deeper than that wrath - in truth originating in it - determining also its nature, and justifying the confidence that,
      [i] its righteousness being responded to,
      [ii] and the mind which it expresses shared in, that wrath must be appeased.

14 - Both retrospective and prospective views of atonement needed to be satisfied

For His sacrifice is a sweet smelling savour to God not only

[a] because it is a response to the divine condemnation of sin [retrospectively]
[b] but also the response to the divine love in its yearnings over sinners [prospectively].

The intercession was the perfected expression of that forgiveness which He cherished toward those who were returning hatred for His love. But it was also an intercession full of the sorrow and suffering of the Saviour. Its power for atonement lay in that it was a voice from humanity, offering for man a pure intercession according to the will of God; of love to god and love for man as seen and felt by the Son of God and our brother.

126#1 He is One who acting for us

1] Sufficiently One with us [form of the servant]
2] sufficiently separated from our sin to feel in sinless humanity what our sinful humanity, if it could in sinlessness look back on its sins, would feel of godly condemnation of them and sorrow for them [form of the son of God]
3] so confessing them before God
4] one sufficiently near to our need of mercy to be able to plead for mercy for us according to that need, [form of the servant]
5] and yet, at the same time, so abiding in the bosom of the Father, in the light of His love and the secret of His heart, that His intercession for us can take full and perfect advantage of all that is there that is on our side, and wills our salvation,[form of the Son of God].

The retrospective view will not be enough for the consideration of the atonement without the prospective view. We now go on to look at that.

Chapter 7 - The Prospective Aspect of the Atonement

1 - Atonement rightly understood from prospective view

127#1 The retrospective issues of the atonement do not show us what God had in view from the beginning. Looking back can only show us from what we have escaped, and then only what was to be feared because of what it might do to us. Looking forward can show us to what God had intended to for us. [This also constitutes the link between creation and redemption; otherwise creation is simply a backdrop to explain the fall.]

1] Intercession for transgressors [Is 53] as an element in the atonement; yet it cannot be limited to just the remission of past sins. It must have some reference to what Christ in his love desired for us to come to.
2] Confession of our sin, in response to the divine condemnation of it, must have looked forward to our sharing in the confession as an element of the actual redemption from sin.
3] Witnessing of Christ for the Father in the sight of men is as connected with the righteousness of God in the extension of divine mercy to rebels. Yet not only as a condemning of our darkness but as an intended light of life for us.

2 - That its ultimate reference is prospective, all admit

128#1 Need however, not just to consider the results not as a things which have a retrospective interest only. eg. For the justification of God accepting the atonement is then only considered as a substituted
punishment.

Need to take the results into account as declaring the mind of God from the beginning - as to what He intended to do with us. ie it takes the results into account as something which is a basis for God accepting the atonement. ie although the moral and spiritual excellence of the work of Christ would have been acceptable to God viewed simply in itself; yet its acceptableness in connection with the remission of sins is only fully understood light of the result which is contemplated. ie our sharing / participation in the divine life. That is the justification of God “redeeming” us who were “under the law” is seen in that He contemplated us “receiving adoption as sons”. Explains such Scriptures as:

“Christ gave himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity”

“redeemed from the futile way of life of our forefathers” 1 Thess 1.10

* Christ suffered the just for the unjust, that He might brings us to God” 1 Peter 3.18

3 - But, in truth its results are directly connected with itself.

These forward looking results are not remote but immediate. eg pardon for sin is seen in direct/immediate relation to harmony with God. The remission of sins past, is in direct relation to the eternal life of God experienced now.

This is the drift of Romans 5.1-3: we have peace with God - now!

4 - Error in regard to imputed and imparted righteousness

129#1 The perfect righteousness of the son of God is ours by participation - by sharing of his life - not by imputation [as conferred because we now have a legal title to it]. In the High Calvinist system, a righteousness imputed becomes the (legal) basis for a righteousness imparted. It leads to considering eternal life as future, endless blessedness; and as something we have a right to (again legal imagery) rather than as a share in the life of another by union.

The divine righteousness which is in Christ - a matte of union with Him by the Spirit - must be higher than any benefit that it can be supposed to purchase. It would be dishonouring to choose a benefit over the “shared life”. That would be to desire something external to the divine life in favour of sharing in that life. He is made unto us “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption” [1 Corinthians 1.30].

130#1 But to think of a righteousness imputed, as conveying a right to heaven regardless of whether we are fit for heaven, which, after all needs a holiness to enjoy heaven itself this complicares the simplicity of the fact that God has given us etgernal life, it is in his Son and it is ours already.

So imputed righteousness - at least in the first instance - turns our minds away from the direct contemplation of the life, which is salvation, given in Christ. This separates the favour of God and the actual condition we have before Him - as a gift already ours. gthis leads to confusion andcomplexity.

ab This is what is at the back of so much separation that we have in Christains from the gift of being ‘legally right with God’ and the disconnection of ‘trying’ now to live that out.

The simplicity of being in union with One who is our righteousness is lost in all this added complexity.

131#1 [JMC make an aside here about the dilemma that the theory of divine justice draws up for us the necessity to punish and also to reward and to do this forever!]

JMC notes that when the gift of eternal life given to us in Christ, imparted by union with Him, is understood then there is an awareness that Christ’s confession of our sin and that this was accounted to us, this is not JMC using the idea of imputation, against which he has said so much. For Christ does not confess them - by dying - as a legal transaction; but simply because in His nature, as life and love for us, such a confession was present in his intercession for us. This is just the same as thinking that God identifies Christ with us, which is what makes his righteousness ours.

132#1 Christ, as the one man, bearing the weight of all men's sins upon his spirit, atones for them by confessing them before the Father in a divine righteousness in humanity. The Father received this on behalf of all men as the righteousness of humanity. This is understood only in the light of the relation of the atonement to the gift of eternal life.

As we consider the light shed upon humanity by the life fo Christ in humanity, we not only see the great evil of the human condition possessed by sinners; we also see the great preciousness hidden in humanity. This is hidden from the sinful humanity itself; but it was not to God, and is now brought forth by the Son of God.

Christ reveals the hidden capacity for good in humankind; but it is a capacity that remained hidden to humanity under sin. There was then, no premise for humanness in the righteousness of Christ apart from his
ability to impart to all flesh this eternal life. So there must be a relation between the Son of God and the sons of men according to the Spirit. The second Adam must be a quickening - an enlivening - Spirit, and the head of every man in Christ.

But of we see this double relation existing between Christ and men; as Lord of their spirits as well as partaker in their flesh, then that air of legal fiction - being an external matter - passes away as inadequate to carry such a truth.

\[133\#1\] The legal imagery seems to preserve our deep dependance on God - as those who have nothing of our own. JMC concedes this, but also recognises that people hold it - even though it intellectually violates their thinking - because they sometimes perceive other alternatives to seem self -righteous. JMC point out that, if he were to disturb their penal theory, he assures them he would not by touching their life at all.

5 - Two aspects of the life of love in the Son of God in making his soul and offering for sin.

A. - Christ’s witnessing for - and so honouring - the Father before men

Phinehas has prepared us to recognise that the vindication of divine righteousness in the Son’s honouring of the Father in the sight of men as a necessary step in the manifestation of mercy.

In studying the life of Christ we see this presentation of the life of Sonship is with a view to us sharing in that sonship. Which is the sharing in the knowledge and enjoyment of the Father as the father.

1- His hope for humanity was closely connected with His suffering.

\[134\#1\] These were his brothers who were coming forward in hatred against him - yet he had hope for them that He would bring them to God. This is the joy of hope which underlaid his sorrow.

Yet, “for the joy which was set before Him” [Isaiah 53] and “the world has not known thee, but I know thee” [John 17.25] and “father forgive them...” [Luke 23.34].

The implication of “they know not what they do” is the foundation for their forgiveness ie. had the full light dawned, and without result, they would have been doomed. “I have declared thee name and I will declare it...” [John 17.32].

\[135\#1\] See also Philip’s partial understanding [John 14.5-6] and also [1 John 2.11].

He was contented to be made perfect as the Captain of our salvation through suffering, He being the channel for us of eternal life [John 17.19]. He welcomed the ordering of his path by the Father.

2 - Our hope ought to have the same foundation as His.

\[136\#1\] The atonement has a right interest for us, and makes us alive in the way that it should, according to us having the hope that He had according to the mind He had when making atonement. o do that we must be in the light of all that He did in presenting humanity to the Father:

“I do nothing of myself; as I hear I judge... Jn

“My words are not mine but His who sent Me

“My Father is working  Jn 5

“The Father who dwells within Me does His works” John 14

“This deep honouring of the Father in humanity by the Son.

Apart from Christ we know not our God, nor do we know ourselves. We are as slow to see man in Christ as we are slow to see God in Christ. The revelation of what man is as seen in the life of the Son is the measure of the redemption into which we participate, of which we are capable and which we have in Christ.

\[137\#1\] Is this the ground of our interest in which we regard the divine righteousness in humanity, and the father’s testimony to the Son.

4 - The life of sonship is eternal life: filial not legal

General feelings of God’s mercy towards us, so that He is conceived of giving his son so that we may escape misery and have happiness, partaking in everlasting bliss, although they are true conceptions as far as they go, come altogether short of the love of God to us in Christ Jesus.

For the element of fatherliness is wanting - which its the focus of the Gospels. While God has a father’s heart is true, we may not be so sure of our capacity for sonship: but what proves that is that Christ is the light of life for us.

Only the Son can reveal the Father; we need to make sure that the grounds for our interest in the righteousness of humanity does not stray out of the circle fo the Son’s life and relation to the Father.
138#1 We must not lead elsewhere. Nor must we excuse, because of our sinfulness, the difficulty of believing the capacity for good which Christ shows is there in humanity. Because we don’t know, of ourselves, the good in humanity until the Son of God appears and shows us. Not until He offers Himself through His eternal Spirit to God.

We have difficulty in believing that God is love towards us. And further, to think just that God is having mercy on us and pity because of our misery, are true ideas as far as they go, but they are a long way short of the love of God for us as it is in Christ Jesus.

139#1 For one thing, the element of fatherliness is wanting - so central to the Gospel.

“Let us not think of Christ therefore, simply as revealing how kind and compassionate God is, and how forgiving to our sins, as those who have broken His law. Let us think of Christ as the Son who reveals the Father, that we may know the Father’s heart against whom we have sinned, that we may see how sin, in making us godless, has made us orphans, and understand God’s grace which is at once the remission of past sin, and the gift of eternal life, restores our orphan spirits to their Father and to the Father of spirits his lost children.” p. 139

There is a contradiction
[1] in coming to God with a legal confidence as righteous in his sight, because clothed with a legal righteousness, or at least accepted on the grounds of this legal righteousness
[2] and coming to God in the spirit of sonship, with the confidence which the faith of the Father’s heart sustains.

140#1 1 John 1.3 indicates the Person with which the fellowship experienced. John 17.3, 14.23
[e] How we ought to think of the righteousness of Christ

Romans 1.4 focuses not on the legal righteousness of Christ but on His sonship, “declared to be Son of God with power” that righteousness is not the past fact of a legal obligation discharged, but the mind of sonship towards the Father.

8. Christ’s dealing with the Father on behalf of men

1 - Right ideas about Christ pleading his own merits on our behalf

141#1 What Christ pleads for us, what He desires for us, was the fellowship which He himself was in humanity. He abode in his father’s love and so His own righteousness would be presented along with the confession of our sins when he asked for us remission of sins and eternal life.

In this way the confession and the intercession harmonize.

2 - The full light of the Atonement shines in Christ’s life

In the life of Christ, as the revelation of the Father by the Son, we see the love of God to man - the will of God for man - the eternal life which the father has given us in the Son - that eternal life which the apostle knew when he spoke of fellowship with the Father and the Son.

Considering the Son before the Father then, dealing with the Father on our behalf,
[1] bearing us and the miseries of our sin on his heart
[2] uttering all the sorrow in his heart he feels regarding us
[3] all that He admits is against us

Nevertheless He asks for us
[1] with his own human consciousness

142#1 [2] in his following the Father as a dear child, walking in love, which justifies his hope in making such intercession

He intercedes with conscious righteousness, and conscious compassion and love - Here we have the elements of the atonement - the perfect doing of His will.

The will of God [Hebrews 10.7.9] is the ultimate ground for the atonement.

3 - Three important points made clear

[1] In this divine transaction in humanity, through which we have remission of sins and eternal life, there is nothing arbitrary.

We see a righteous and necessary relation between the remission of sins and Christ’s expiatory confession as the due and necessary confession of them. Perfect expiation in that it was divine, perfect in relation to us because it is human.

We see a righteous and necessary relation between the gift of eternal life and Christ’s righteousness: God’s delight in that righteousness in humanity justifying to us the Son’s offering of it, and the father accepting it on behalf of man to be the righteousness of man.
What is offered on our behalf is so offered by the Son, and so accepted by the Father, with the prospective purpose that it is to be reproduced in us. What God has accepted for us in Christ, is also what God has given to us in Christ.

As to our past sins:

[a] what is presented to our faith as offered is far more honoring to the righteous law of God against which we had sinned than any penal infliction for our sins [whether endured by another for us, or by ourselves in abiding in misery] could have been.

[b] We also accept the power to confess our sins with an Amen to the confession which Christ has made; true and deep in the measure which we partake in His Spirit.

We are contented to begin our new life by partaking of the mind of Christ concerning our old life, we feel the confession of sins to be the side on which the life of holiness is nearest to us; [the form in which it naturally becomes ours] and in which it must first be tasted of by us.

For holiness, truth, love and righteousness first dawn in us by the confession of our sins. 1 John 1.9 “cleanse us” see what follows

4 - Fitness for worship the true goal of the Levitical sacrifices

The picture of God’s kingdom [given by the Levitical sacrifices] is that of a temple and a worship. Participation in the worship is the good set forth, and the evil is the disqualification from the worship, sacrifices, and participation in the sacrifices is the means for the deliverance from the evil and participation in the good. Not to deliver from punishment, but to cleanse and purify for worship, was the blood of the victim shed. It is to this that the sprinkling with blood and the remission of sins is related.

Worship, in spirit and truth [Jn 3], is what the Father craves - that worship which is sonship. That worship which is sonship the response of the heart of the Son to the heart of the Father.

The disqualification from worship is not simply guilt, but the carnal mind which is enmity against God - the law in man’s members [Romans 7]. When the Son of God came to be the needed victim, He said He came to do they will [Heb 10.7,9] it is this will which has provided the victim through which the conscience is cleansed to serve the living God [Heb 9.14, 10.2-3, 22].

So we are taught the strictly moral and spiritual relation of the sacrifice to worship. And the mind of Christ, which is in that blood, to be the mind in the light of which in the fellowship of which the worshipper will cry Abba Father - He is their High Priest in that He is their life.

5 - Need a fatherly atonement. [Not a moral Governor]

The Father’s heart demands a atonement, for it is to rebellious children [children of wrath Eph 2] that the Father of spirits is addressing.

The difference between a legal standing and the filial standing is becoming more and more pressing upon us.

The pardon we need is the pardon of of the Father of our spirits - the way into the holiest that we need is the way into the Father’s heart. So the blood of Christ must have power to cleanse our spirit’s from the spiritual pollution which defiles rebellious children. It must contain the new mind that pertains to rebellious children returning to their Father. [There is no real fitness to atone for sin by penal sufferings here].

Is this talk of fatherliness introducing some sort of easiness, some moral weakness into the discussion?

[1] Father’s heart asked for atonement for our sin simply on the basis that it desired us back to itself.

[2] And therefore desired a living way back for us

[3] And a return which was related to the nature of our departure, so that our return might be a real return

[4] such a way could only be opened for us by the Son of God

[5] when He confessed the sins of God’s rebellious children to the father, as only He
could who dwelt in the bosom of the Father

[6] For He alone could know the exceeding sinfulness of our sins, and feel regarding them in that mind, the fellowship of which would be to us the purgation from them.

[7] But this returning for us is impossible without the Fatherly feelings demanding the expiation. Otherwise there can be no welcome and acknowledgment - if coming by an other path than the fellowship of that expiation.

[8] Our blessedness as redeemed sinners means that our future is not cut off from our past. Nor is our highest life of sonship without the element of remembrance [Rev 1.5-6].

[9] Without the shedding of His blood the father could not receive back his rebellious children; and without the shedding of blood it as morally and spiritually impossible for them to return.

[10] The atonement which is due is that which is die to the fatherly heart. The filial spirit of the confession is what gives the expiation its perfection; for it is the confession of a Son [who is leading many sons to glory.] The pardon which we need is the pardon of the father of our spirits - the way into the holiest which we need is the way into the father’s heart.
And access into the holy place = access to the father’s heart.

[11] So the blood of Christ, which has consecrated a way for us, must have the power to cleanse our spirits from the pollution which rebellious children have = it must contain the new mind in which it pertains to rebellious children to return to the Father.

6 - Fatherliness and righteous severity of God not opposed

God as a moral Governor is dependant upon Him being a Father. And a Lawgiver can be seen as less exacting than a Father. For a father can only receive his offspring as coming to Him in the spirit of sonship. The way into the holiest can only have its nature determined by the nature of holiness; so the way to the father can only be determined by the nature of fatherliness.

Superiority of a moral and spiritual Atonement as an expiation for sin

7 - Man is encompassed with spiritual necessities.

In that lower moral region where men are dealing with the moral governor of the universe, we may be occupied with
[a] punishment of sin,
[b] rewards for righteousness
[c] escaping punishment and achieving happiness
But in dealing with a Father; we shall come to a place where the atonement of itself tells us what we need. It is here that the punishment for sin falls into its proper place as testifying to an evil greater than itself, which is sin itself. It is from this greater evil that the atonement is directed at delivering us - deliverance from punishment being the secondary result.
And so the reward of righteousness is raised from ideas of something a merciful judge extends to its true dignity which is the glorifying and enjoying of God of which righteousness alone is the capacity; this no title, name or arrangement can confer.
The atonement, seen in its own light is not what we, in our darknesss, desired. Indeed, it would have lead to a salvation which would have violated man - it would have been a destruction of man. Rather, we are encompasssed by necessities, which reconcile us to God. With the gift of his Son to us is the living way to the Father - we are shut up to so great a salvation.
Reading 6: Retro/Prospective View pages 114-150

Christ dealing: with us on behalf of God & with God on our behalf
Chapter 8 - Further Illustrations from Scripture

1 - Mosaic sacrifices a preparation for worship, so by the blood of Jesus we enter the holiest

If we had looked carefully at the Mosaic sacrifices, or paid attention to epistle to the Hebrews we would have seen that there is

[1] no direct connection between the atonement and the rewards and punishments, and further,

[2] no connection between forgiveness through the blood of Christ and exemption from punishment

This is so because the blood of the victim was for cleansing, and thus access to worship.

John 14.6 fixes the attention of the apostles on what He was - the revealer of the Father by the manifested life of sonship. [He who has seen Me has seen the Father* 14.9] Speaks of the same thing as Hebrews 10.19.

151 #1 Once the apostles had seen:
[a] that the true worship [of which their temple service had been a type] was that worship which is sonship,
[b] and that the heart of the Father was the holy of holies then they were prepared to know the Son of God as both sacrifice and High Priest.

2 - Considering 1 John 1.5-2.6

152 #2
[a] fellowship with the Father and the Son is salvation

The apostle claims to have fellowship with the God of which he speaks. He claims through the knowledge of Christ both to know that God is light and that he is making His own experience in this spiritual region known to us: and this is with the purpose and hope of us coming into that fellowship, and so being saved.

"If we walk in the light, as He is in the light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.”

[1] This is not a cleansing because of exposure to punishment, but a reference to the pollution of sin itself.

153 #2 [2] Not a cleansing spoken of in a legal sense, but of a cleansing which has an effect in that fellowship. And which is referred to as explaining that fellowship. Explaining in a way which give the glory of that fellowship to the blood of Jesus Christ in which such cleansing power is found. cf Hebrews 9.13-14.

[3] Hence the incongruity of saying, "If we say that we have no sin..." for those who have their very fellowship with God on the grounds of the blood.

154 #4 1 John 2.1-6. He reminds them “if any man sin...He is the propitiation for our sins”
[a] the thought of an Advocate immediately raises the issue of pardon; but that is implied here rather than directly expressed.
[b] What is directly contemplated is His value to those who are called "not to sin"; and so it is the righteousness of the Advocate on which the value falls. Righteousness is in Him for us as the sap is in the vine for the branch.

3 - Christ Himself the propitiation for our sins

[c] “He is the propitiation” - the propitiation is not a thing accomplished and to which we thrown back on as a past fact. He is it - propitiation - reconciliation [oneness with God] abides in Christ, who is the propitiation for our sins The apostle is writing that they may sin not - so he reminds them of the propitiation, not a work of Christ, but of Christ Himself - and then proceeds to “keeping His commandments”. That is, the direct effect of knowing Christ the propitiation for sin is the keeping of Christ's commandments.

[d] Because of the power to keep Christ's commandments, which is ours in Christ as the propitiation for our sins the apostle goes on [as he did in reference to "light"] to say that he who says he knows Him, and does not keep his commandments is a liar. And we know we are in Him, for he who abides in Him walks the way He walked.

This means that the righteousness of the Advocate is thought of as to mean abiding in Christ - an abiding in which the sap received from the vine brings forth clear and certain fruit.

There is a directness in this matter which doesn't sit well with thinking of propitiation as the standing in for punishment, and the motive for gratitude evoked. It is too direct in relation for that.

4 - Meaning of “making reconciliation” in Hebrews 2.17-18

155 #2 [1] To “succour us when we are tempted” deals with the same issue as that which we have seen in 1 John - as the present service of the Advocate so that we may “sin not”.
[2] Here, in Hebrews Christ is represented as fitted, in that He himself has suffered, being tempted: in the
same way as he was in 1 John as being righteous.

[3] Both thoughts are combined in “tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin”.

[4] Verse 18 “for” indicates that 18 provides the justification for the conformation in Christ which is promised in verse 17. So it is clear that “making reconciliation for he sins of the people” [v17] = succouring us when we are tempted” [v.18].

5 - Ephesians 2.14 - “Christ is our peace”

[E] 156 #1 (1) to be “our peace” = the only way to the Father.

[2] He could speak his own peace to them John 14.27, 16.33, 20.19, for this was one of the forms of life with the father as a son which He made known to them - it was part of his witness to them. The peace of a son following the Father as a dear child.

[3] “Grace to you and peace, from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ”

[4] Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill to all men”

[E] 157 #1 (5) Parallel passage to the one here in Ephesians 2 is that of Hebrews 10

[a] The parallel is not so much with the temple as it is there, but here it is in terms of citizenship and household etc.

[E] 158 #1 (b) what is common is that the spiritual distance from God is overcome and that salvation is revealed as nearness to God. In this it is said that the peace of Christ has come to be.

See parallel applied to Jew and Gentile in Galatians 2.16-17.

6 - This peace first spiritual and then, by consequence, legal.

[E] 159 #3 See the order of John 5.24

[E] 158 - 165 See the difficulties answered of the penal advocates on p.158-165.]

Really a subordination of the gospel to law.

7 - An atonement which is morally and spiritually adequate, will be legally adequate as well.

[E] 160 The opponents are really committing to a subordination of the gospel to law.

8 - “He suffered, therefore I shall not suffer” - considering this view.

[E] 161 #1 There is a state of mind that requires a settlement based on the idea that “if Christ suffered then I shall not”. JMC points out that if Christ suffered as the just for the unjust then surely the direct end in view was tha the unjust should not suffer. But the reason was that the unjust should be brought to God - that is, bringing the unjust to the obedience of the just.

Also, we see when Christ makes clear that “no one comes to the Father but by me” how could it be otherwise. How could we think of being delivered from wrath in any other way than being returned to the Father. Mercy takes the form of opening a way to return.

9 - Reconciliation to “the Father of spirits” the essence of salvation.

[E] 162 The penal view seeks to dispel the terror of the moral Governor so as to allow us to enter a security from his wrath. The understanding of the Father of our spirits has given us a deep desire to not see one token of his displeasure and wrath against sin to be removed - for the atonement has opened to us just what a dastardly thing sin is in His sight - and we are now drawn into thinking of it as He does. Pardon for sin is now undesirable to us unless it leads to the life of fellowship without Father. This is the essence of salvation.

[E] 163 Some think that this is too high a way for them - being still cast down in terror by contemplating the penal, as they see it, wrath of God. JMC makes clear that we must forbid all direct dealing with wrath and judgment as if these must first be disposed of, and then attention directed to other matters. Rather in dealing with persons - the Father of our spirits and his offspring - these are to each other more than all things and circumstances. We must be unoccupied with other things and concentrate on the character of the father towards us is Christ.

[E] 164 #1 To be called to be reconciled to God is a reasonable call in respect of the grace manifested and a gracious invitation to benefit from that grace. They amount to a call to “Be saved, receive salvation”. Wrath and terror have not directly to do with this. They are not the main issue in comparison to this dealing with persons.

The power of the blood of Christ to speak peace has to do with its direct effect on the spirit of a person in relation to their Father. For it reveals the heart of the Father and then the way into that heart. The same blood that reveals this also imparts peace making perfect the conscience - purging it from dead works.
to serve the living God. This is to have the peace; those who are terrified by judgment, and who put their confidence in the fact that because He suffered I won't are looking to a peace which is forst legal and then they may walk without fear. The fear is the real issue that drives this understanding.

It also smothers our orphan cry to the Father - because it makes us concentrate on the moral Governor and His punishment - and fails to see that life consists in the favour of our Father and knowing his feeling for his offspring.

10- We cannot too soon present the Father to awakened sinners

165 We cannot too soon put people in touch with the Father - we should present Him to them right from the start. Jesus teaches us that the promised rest will be found in the knowledge of the Father

11 - Galatians 3.17 accords with this view

166 This asserts a subordination of the law to the gospel. See also Galatians 3.21 where the assertion that if there had been a law which could make alive, then righteousness would have been through law” indicates that the end to which God was aiming was to “make alive”; He was aiming as a goal to the giving of life. And so that our being which was under law, has been taken and placed under grace, that we should be alive to God.

[2] Righteousness would not have been by faith any more than it could be by law had it not been of the life which in faith is quicked in us. “He that believeth a has passed out of death into life”. The justifying element in faith is by this understanding not only NOT imputation, but its exact opposite, life from the dead.

12 - Faith is highest righteousness because in it glory is given to God

Luther’s teaching alone understands that it is faith itself which God recognises as righteousness. Luther works from Romans 4.20. That condition of the human spirit in which most glory is given to God is , to Luther, self evidently the highest righteousness. And that condition is faith.

But the glory given to God in faith is in proportion to the apprehension / revelation which faith embraces, and to which it responds. So faith is the highest righteousness.

He that sees the Father through the Son, attains to the highest form of faith - a faith which is the apprehension of the fellowship of the Son’s knowledge of the Father - indeed, that is sonship - and utters its cry “abba”. This is its nature, whatever its measure.

167 When we think of justification by faith in these terms, then we have no difficulty in recognising faith as the highest form of righteousness. For how else can we conceive of that which is the fellowship if Christ’s righteousness than He “who is made of God unto us wisdom....”

JMC has tried throughout this discussion to get the right point of view when considering man’s well-being. Thagth is, where God is seen as the fountain of life and so the question of salvation is the participation in the elove of His Father’s heart. JMC insists he has not lost the distinction between justification and sanctification.

13 - A common error as to 1 Corinthians 1.30

The righteousness as a part of which Christ is said to be “made of God unto us” has been dealt with on a principle entirely distinct from the rest. That is, righteousness has been thought of as something distinctly dealt with legally. Whereas it is part of the rest of those shared matters we have in union with Christ where he is our righteousness, wisdom, sanctification and redemption. Such an error is only possible because it has not been seen that all elements alike are the eternal life we have in Christ.

168 This is because justification has been seen as that which comes between us and the punishment of sin; instead of seeking in it the secret and the power of returning to God [recognising that sin and misery are what are left behind in returning to God].

When righteousness is understood to be the righteousness of faith, therefore, by which the life of sonship is quickened and sustained, - this demand for a legal perfection is seen to be altogether foreign to that with which we are occupied.

169 Why should the divine demand for righteousness be met on other grounds than the demand for holiness? All these demands are fully met in Christ. [Eph 4.15] 170 [1] The knowledge of misery which is known and apprehended in Romans 7 is not more known than the “law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus” of chapter Romans 8.2.

[2] So the freedom from condemnation spoken of [Romans 8.1], ie the justification of being in Christ Jesus,
[5.2] is clearly one with the purging of conscience [Heb 9,10] which we have spoken of.

[3] the freedom of no condemnation, is so subjectively described here as being too broad to simply accord with some legal imputation of righteousness.

14 - Faith as righteousness

171 [4] That God recognises faith as righteousness is seen in Abraham [4.22] and it will be reckoned to us as well [4.23-24] This is the thing in God which we must bring glory to God as we apprehend it in trust - that He was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification [4.25 see also 5.10].

Faith is the Amen we give to the that deep, multiform, all embracing, harmonious Amen of humanity, in the person of the Son of God, to the mind and heart of the Father, in relation to man - the divine wrath and the divine mercy, which is atonement.

Chapter 9 - Intercession was an element in the atonement considered as Prayer.

173 So far in thinking about why there is a need for the atonement we have:

[a] distinguished between the feelings in awakened sinners which are sound and true, and those which come from their continuing darkness.

[b] been seeing how to learn from the atonement itself both why it was needed and how it accomplished what was needed.

1 - The will of God [His heart] seen, and the Name of God declared in the Atonement. It is itself a revelation.

The error of thinking that the atonement is the Son's work which brings an influence to bear on the Father to make Him gracious towards us we have already seen. And this error is still there wherever people seek in the atonement a confidence towards God apart from what the atonement itself has revealed to us of God's mind towards man.

What exposed this error was how the atonement fulfilled the purpose of the Son when He said,

[a] I have come to do your will ... [Hebrews 10] and

[b] his declaring of the Father's Name [John]

This means that in the atonement we have seen what was the Father's will, and Who is his Name. The atoning work of Christ has made these matters clear. [1 Peter 1.21]

2 - Need for a closer consideration of Christ's intercession.

When we have cleared the error mentioned above. We still have to deal with the aspect of the atonement where the Son deals with the Father on our behalf. We have already spoken of

[a] the nature and ground for this intercession

[b] its combination with the confession of our sins

[c] its relation to our Lord's consciousness in humanity i.e. His constant experience of abiding in the Father's favor as a Man.

Closer consideration of His intercession would need to look at:

[a] the hope He had for man when He offered Himself as an atonement for sin and

[b] how that hope was based upon a hope in God, sustained by faith and prayer.

3 - Christ's life not a pre-arranged plan; a real life lived

174 This enquiry is not helped if we think of Christ's work as a working out of a pre-arranged plan. Such a view robs us of seeing the character of Christ's work as a natural progress and development; in which one thing arises out of another and is caused by it.

If we view Christ's life as a pre-arranged scenic plan then the light of the life disappears for us. For it has to be a real life, an actual life lived, and not the mere acting of a pre assigned part.

4 - Christ's deep love for us in Himself, while He loved the Father.

Unless we know that Christ loved us Himself we cannot know the depth He felt to in regard to our sins and our misery as sinners. At the same time his love to us Himself, was the love of One who loved the father with all his heart and mind and strength; and this gives us an awareness of

[a] the burden which our sins were for Him.
5 - How Christ was encouraged and sustained in His work

We need to see his faith in:
[a] the deep yearnings of the Father's heart over us
[b] and his own conscious human experience that these yearnings could be satisfied.

Because if we see these, then we shall see how these took the form of prayer where He laid hold of that hope for man which was already in God. Unless we hear the intercession there, and the ground of his prayer, then we cannot know what is made known to us of the Name of God by the fact that the prayer succeeded. We cannot see how this pleading to the Father on our behalf, when it comes off, is at the same time the revelation of the Father's heart to us.

In proportion that we apprehend
[a] the nature and the grounds of that intercession, and
[b] realize that it has been perfectly responded to
then we know the grace in which we stand, what that faith is to which we are called, and the grounds upon which we are to put our trust in Him.

175 Faith makes us aware of the progress of our redemption as well as its result. Because it is this understanding of the progress which gives to faith:
[a] to know the difficulties which love encounters
[b] and the way it deals with them
[c] the salvation which it accomplishes
All these shed light on our spirits and are to us the light of life.

6 - Christ's hope take the form of intercession; Why does God use prayer at all?

It is at the point where we see that the Christ's hope for man takes the form of intercession that we are aware:
[a] it does not mean that He should simply be inactive. i.e. to simply wait in expectation that all would simply be as the father wills eventually.
[b] this knowledge actually moves Him to earnest prayer and entreaty of God. For the hope cherished seeks to realize itself by laying hold, in prayerful trust, of the Father's heart by which it is encouraged.

Raisers for us the question; "Why does God interpose prayer between his own loving desires for us and the fulfillment of that desire? Why doesn't he simply fulfill it without waiting for that entreaty. This is the most difficult place for us to see this problem which we encounter in our own life. For here we have the divine love in Christ pleading with the divine love in the Father, and thus obtaining for us that eternal life, which, in giving the Son to be our Savior the Father is truly said to have given.

This same difficulty haunts us in our own prayers - if we can deal rightly with it here it will release a practical freedom in our own life's walk.

7 – Son's intercession answers to the Father's heart; so reveals Father. Intercession expresses his desire for forgiving love of the Father to be expressed.

In looking at the atonement by its own light, that is the light of life which it was taking according to he words "in Him was life, and the life was the light of men"[John 1.4]. In this way the intercession of Christ has presented itself as the form his love must naturally take. The form of desiring for us what His intercession asked for us. It was asked in weakness and dependence on the Father, but also in oneness with the Father. It comes to us in the form of uttering itself to the Father in prayer.

176 With the weight of our need upon His spirit [in this way bearing our burden] notice that He casts his burden on the Father. In this way we have a revelation of the perfect sonship toward the Father and also of a perfect brotherhood towards us.
Just as this is the natural form of the love of Christ for us to take; so it is a sweet sacrifice in the Father’s eyes. It would be so welcome to the heart of the Father which is welcomed there by the Father’s love to all men.

Remember that it is the intercession of a Brother for brethren who are enemies. He is making the intercession to be the perfection of forgiving love.

Powerful picture of any father who has experienced one child pleading for forgiveness to another child for an offence which has been the unkindness to the pleading child has here some help to his faith arising out of his own experience.

8 - Prayer as the powerful expression of the goodness of God as Father.

Picking up the question of [7] above; if we meditate on the fact that Christ is the gift of the Father to us; and that Christ’s feeling, as enacted in his interceding for us is informed by the fact that the Father is already desiring to impart what He is asking for; why should Christ have felt it necessary?

Rather than prayer being an expression of want of faith in God’s goodness, it is the reverse; it is the highest expression of faith in God’s goodness. Christ came to make known the highest goodness of God towards men, viz fatherliness. He was distinguished by the depth and intensity of his praying. It is one of his potent witnesses to the fatherhood of God that by his own action of praying he speaks of God as the hearer and the answerer of prayer.

Knowledge of the Father’s will not supercede prayer; it will move to prayer, giving strength for it.

9 - Christ’s intercession for transgressors is a fitting form of him bearing our burdens – for in the light of our knowledge of God as Father this is the way it must take.

177 Any idea that it was a pre-arranged part [as in [4] above], acted out would destroy our understanding of this.

1. Approaching it from God’s side, there is a hope for man in the heart of God before the atonement.

2. The Son has come forth to reveal it, the knowledge of the Father’s heart is brought within the reach of his offspring - destroyed by the lack of this knowledge but to whom this knowledge will be salvation.

3. We are considering in this way the Son of God bearing in his humanity upon his spirit our burden, and dealing with the Father concerning it. Our need is visible to us in Christ’s feeling it. His prayers show us what the Father feels about this need we have. So, both our need and how in the Father that need is met; both of these are revealed to us.

Without the cry of the Son to the Father the mind that was in Christ would have failed to reveal the Father’s name.

10 – Prayer seen as responding to our knowledge of the heart of God. It is our own moral choice; not a matter of fate.

178 Tendency to deal with God as fate, and thinking of his grace as the coming to pass if some great design through predetermined events which is the real source of our difficulty in regard to prayer as a law and a power ion the kingdom of God. In this way, asking “according to the will of God” comes to sound like asking God to do what He intended to do – a manner of prayer for which we have no light.

God is not revealed to us in this way as a fate; connected to some predetermined course of events – but as a moral and spiritual choice in relation to us his offspring to which our prayer is to respond in what will be in us a cry of a moral and spiritual choice.

The knowledge of the Father which the prayer of Christ implied – the knowledge of a Son who dwells in the bosom of the Father – is not the knowledge of a certain future, predestined and sure to be accomplished, but was the knowledge of the unchanging will of the Father towards man – a will in which all rebellion is resisted, in all obedience of love is fulfilled.

If we can see this distinction then the dealing of the Son with the Father on our behalf is that response to the mind of the Father in relation to us which we will have in our own prayers as we share in the Spirit of the Son.

11 – Intense praying, not because desperate, but because convinced of the will [heart] of God about the matter.

Explains the intensity of the prayers. It was an intensity arising out of the oneness of mind he had with the Father [not out of some desperation to impact, or convince, a remote God whose heart He does not know].
This helps us to see our own prayers in the spirit of sonship and the great original intercession of the Son on behalf of humanity. We cry to God for that holiness and truth and love in our life. And it can only be intense for us because we have resisted the temptation to deal with God as with fate, and know His heart for us to be this way. Rather than just be passive, it assists us to lay hold of His heart with faith, knowing that the link between his will for us, and the fulfillment of it is the believing mediation of the place which prayer had in the work of Christ in accomplishing our redemption.

See similar theme, developed by Denney on 2 Cor 1.15-20 Expositor's Bible page 45-6 Promises to Israel fulfilled by Christ entirely. All prayer is simply and Amen to a promise given i.e. revelation.

Our own prayers are informed by this. It directs us to the nature of our prayers. That we may be found praying according to the will of God – according to the light of the Gospel - according to the knowledge true worshippers have in spirit and truth - these are those the Father seeks to worship Him. Small as the amount of prayer is, what is sadder is the nature of the praying. Dealing with God simply as a Sovereign Lord, a Governor, a Judge, and so little dealing with Him as Father of our spirits.

People can speak much about the "power of prayer" and that God is "powerful" as well as "merciful"; and in this light they may put in much sustained prayer. But it may not be enlightened by the knowing of God as Father, and that our true well being is something all embraced in the sonship we have in Christ. [Read the last two para's of the text here.]
Reading 7: Illustrations/Intercession pages 151-180

Christ dealing: with us on behalf of God & with God on our behalf
Chapter 10 - The earlier period of the Saviour’s life prepares us to consider the latter, shorter period.

1 The outward course of the Saviour’s life

osis 181 #1 From the manger to the cross, according to the divine ordering of the path. The history can only be understood in the light of the inward life of Christ; nevertheless it does take an outward form. And our looking at the outward form helps us to see the inward life. Any understanding of the atonement we espouse must be vindicated by looking at that outward form.

2 - Christ’s inward life developed through outward circumstances.

The outward form of the life was conditioned by:

[a] fulfilling the purpose of doing the Father’s will
[b] bearing witness to/for the Father. In this way, whatever our understanding, it should sit with the fact that the Father also bears witness to the Son as well. The Son’s witness to the Father would have been incomplete without the Father’s seal to it.

We are thinking here of the words of the angel to Mary, the voice from heaven at the Baptism, and Transfiguration; to say nothing of the testimony of the Father which comes to us in our own human experience. It is on these testimonies of the Father to the Son, that faith in the Son comes to life. They give our faith a sure ground.

osis 182 These testimonies, of the Son to the Father and the Father to the Son, should fit into the ordering of the Lord’s path. Even though, when looked at according to the flesh, it would seem to contradict that Father was well pleased with Him.

3 - What the private life of the Lord means to us

As our Lord increased in “wisdom and stature”, the elements of the atonement developed themselves with this gradual development of His humanity. And this movement also corresponds to the development of the eternal life that is being laid down for us in his humanity. Sonship in Him was always perfect sonship and it was capable of progressive development since it is being laid down for us.

Christ’s inward life of love to Father and also towards his brethren was constantly being acted upon by the occasions appointed for Him by His father.

Before He entered his public ministry, we are not told a lot about the Lord’s life. “Increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man” Luke 2.51

db: When we think of Jesus “increasing” and “growing in stature we mean this ‘increase’ in the sense of an internal advance and not an outward promotion – See Athanasius NPNF [2] vol 4, p. 331 footnote.

“His doing the Father’s will, His following God as a dear child, had then the attraction in the eyes of men which goodness often has while it commends itself to men’s consciences without making any positive command upon themselves” Campbell p.182

4 - His public ministry had a mixed reception of favour and dishonour.

However, when our Lord entered upon his public ministry, the words he spoke and the miracles he did forced men to attend to, and consider, the demand he made on them for his Father. Further, the condemnation on them that this righteous demand implied, means that we understand that the darkness within them is soon disturbed by the light.

osis 183 Yet, not everyone was stirred up to hatred. It was not universal, it came forth in the midst of others who welcomed his teaching. The expression of the hatred was kept at bay by the ‘fear of the people’ for a time.

The superficial hearing of the Sermon on the Mount meant that He would have to remind them of the cost of discipleship [Luke 14.25-33], which He saw they were not counting.

Before the welcoming ‘Hosanna’ gave place to ‘crucify’, there were different measures of reverence and rebellion expressed. Some “forsook all and followed”; others plotted against him.

The public ministry of the Lord, with its mixed reception of favour and dishonour, nevertheless saw the power of evil come forth with measure. This was monitored and ordered by God for a time; “no man could lay hands on Him for His hour had not yet come”.

5 - The life of Sonship presented in His ministry
On the whole, the last days and hours were a very brief time. Much briefer than the time of growing in favour and stature, and briefer than the period of growth to mature manhood, and briefer than the distinct period when the mixed response to the public ministry was growing and coming to a head.

“This last is much the briefest division of our Lord's life on earth; and its darkest portion is to be measured by days, or rather by hours: as if He who spared not His own Son, but gave Him to death for us, yet spared Him as much as possible, making the bitterest portion the briefest.” Campbell p.183

6 - Christ’s life before his suffering was an outcome of his authoritative sonship.

184 All through his life on earth, the Son knew that He came ‘to do your will’ [Hebrews 10.7]: and He knew this, in his private life, before He began his ministry.

Don’t be put off that we have so little record of this: rather consider the life as lived by the Man, rather than the record of the life we have written. Look to the Spirit, the Comforter who is the Revealer of the humanity of our Lord: and He can reveal to us what no written record is capable of revealing.

A child looking to Jesus for help in following God as a dear child, does not lack because he has little which is written of “the gospel of the infancy of Jesus”. He finds that his trust is met every day.

Let the first portion of our Lord’s life sanctify our own private life, which is, after all, the largest portion of the life of all persons. And let us see that portion as a part of his life on which the favour of God rested. Looked at in this way, it is a storehouse from which to receive all that pertains to life and godliness as we live as individual Christians. This is as truly a place to follow, as it is to preach for Him, or to make a good confession under duress as He did before Pilate.

Our Lord’s ministry was the “outcoming of the life of sonship”. This is what distinguished Him from all those who were just teachers of God: He spoke as no man spoke.

It is this evident authority which was the witness in his hearers [Mark 1.22,27] as it is for us in the way the Holy Spirit bears witness to us of the word of Christ.

185 Unless we know this was what was presented to men’s faith, if they could receive it, then we cannot take part in that presenting of Jesus as being Gospel by what he was in Himself.

7 - Christ’s sufferings belong to the life of sonship. The agony in the garden.

The knowledge of the Lord calling on us to take up our cross was a corollary of His being a Son of God; it was taken up in response to the Father’s will. He was tempted as we are, so He knows what it is to ask others to enter into that demand of the Father which He obeyed.

186 But it is the power of that life which cannot be revealed except by the agony of the weight of the cross born in suffering flesh.

Matthew 20.17-19 These agonies are given for us, not that we would not venture into them, but that they are recorded for our instruction as belonging to the life of Christ which is a light to us.

Luke 12.50 John 12.27 the pleading of the Lord to the father in this hour demonstrates that He did not deal with fate, but with a living will and heart, which blessed are those who can truly respond to.

187 Mark 14.33-36 Luke 22.44 There is a prayer of natural desire, and then here is a prayer of perfectly subordinated sonship. Mark 14.41-43 John 18.10-11 Luke 22.53

188 The hour, the cup and the baptism are different to the agony of the garden. For the garden exchange still has that cross as an anticipated matter “being still the subject of prayer, if it were possible, that it should not be, as well as the prayer that if the father so willed, it should be.”

This is what prepares us to look at the history of the hour and power of darkness that follows.

Chapter 11 - Thinking of Christ’s sufferings in that closing period of His life, when suffering was uppermost

1 - Two opposite ways of approaching these sufferings.

189 [1] The sufferings have been considered simply as physical suffering, and so as an aid to representing to us the measure of the evil of our sins and the obligations of the Saviour. JMC thinks this is to know them after the flesh - for the don’t impart a true knowledge of sin, certainly not as they are regarded in God’s sight and heart. Strong feelings of thankfulness are aroused by the physical sufferings but there is no spiritual light to our understanding when considering them simply in this way.

[2] For apologetic reasons, so that people would not sneer at them, the sufferings have been compared to the sufferings of other men; where cruel tortures have been endured with patience and
fortitude.

190 This way of thinking takes no account of the garden episode, where the Lord is anticipating the “cup” that the Father would give him. It also serves to disconnect the mind of the sufferer from the sufferings themselves. Further, we notice that the prayer of Christ in Gethsemane is followed by the answer to his prayer, and then the sufferings begin almost immediately. The point being that we must connect this “cup” with the meaning of the sufferings that follow.

John records the words given to Peter about the “cup which my Father gives me to drink...” But Matthew adds the statement of the Lord that He could summon twelve legions of angels if He wished. This suggests that the issue for the Lord was not wrath coming forth from the Father, but an evil power that the Father permitted to run its course. Certainly, after the event of the cross, as the two disciples on the Emmaus Rd tried to understand these things, the Lord opened their minds to consider how Moses and the prophets had foreseen these sufferings and their necessity [Luke 24.17-27].

2 - Both errors result from considering them as penal - and so as merely suffering.

191 Both of these, [1] and [2] above, ways of looking at the sufferings of Christ locate the bitterness of the cup given to the Son as the wrath of the Father. They have their origin in the root idea of the penal view of the atonement. They are thinking of suffering in a shallow way, as being merely sufferings due to endured pain. They fail to consider the moral and spiritual sacrifice being presented here, and so the sufferings as being required in the fullness of the perfection of sacrifice.

3 - Christ’s sufferings as: [a] related to the life of sonship.

The disciples heard Him speak of the sufferings He would endure [Matthew 16.21]. And, when Peter remonstrated about this, the Lord made it clear to that they were thinking as men think, not as God does. He then went on to call them to understand that they would be drawn into such a life as his - a suffering life. Such a life was what He presented to the faith of the disciples to embrace.

4 - Christ’s sufferings: [b] as intended to be shared in by his disciples.

He also made clear, in answer to the two Zebedee sons, that they would share in the baptism which he was to be baptised. These, along with Peter, had been those who knew, from the conversations on the mount of Transfiguration, that he would accomplish an “exodus” at Jerusalem. They, of course, had not dwelt on the sufferings. Their minds had gone on to the being raised up and they desired to sit in place of glory. Nevertheless, we must register that the Lord did teach about the continuing sufferings which would attend the lives of his disciples. He obviously saw that sufferings were part and parcel of the development of the life that was in Him for them.

192 What He made clear was that it would be the case for the disciples as it was for Him. That they too, would bear a cross, and drink the cup He drank. This would be in their minds even as they came to think about the intense hour and power of darkness which He was to undergo - there would have been no separation for them of the two ideas. They had been prepared by Jesus to see, and associate, his cross with their own.

JMC thinks that this perspective should be ours as we look at the last intense suffering of the Lord; there is an unbroken continuity of the life of sonship which we need to take into our consideration of the passion. The Father’s dealings with the Son are unchanged. We are to take that reference of the Lord, to our sharing in the sufferings he was to undergo, as the perspective that will shed light on the meaning of his sufferings. It gives us an understanding of the depth of the call to fellowship with Him that we have been given. It is a high hope that has been set before us.

The faithfulness of the Lord’s ministry is a realisation in humanity of the loving trust in the Father and forgiveness towards men and women. But the extent to which this Son could trust the Father and the extent to which He could forgive his brothers was to be shown in this Life by further development. For Him to be exposed to suffer at the hands of wicked men would be the measure of the rejection of God by man; at the same time it would be a measure of the forgiving love He had for his brethren.

193 So, in the passion, we are to expect to see the depths of the revelation of the Father that is to take place in the life of sonship - Jesus’ trust in the Father throughout his passion is the revelation par excellence of what a Son’s life entails. It will declare the oneness of mind with the Father which can be found in the strength of the life which knows the Father’s favour.

5 - The life in the Father’s favour was untouched by the permitted sufferings.

So, when we approach the suffering of Jesus, we are not to expect any contradiction to the Father’s favour...
of Him, even as He goes through the hour and power of darkness. All should be in accord to the words, “This is my beloved Son”. When Satan was permitted to try Job, there was a reservation God put upon that trial; it was “but save his life”. In the Lord’s case, what we are prepared to see untouched in this passion, is His higher life - a life live in the favour of the Father.

That the Lord would die - by the grace of God tasting death for every man and so dying that he would destroy him who had the power of death, the devil [Hebrews 2.8,14] - we can understand this, seeing it as a triumph of the eternal life. Because nothing in the divine allowance, nothing external to this shared life with God, could touch or reach that life which was lived in God’s favour, or suspend its flow from God.

But the wrath of God coming to engage Christ in these sufferings - as a cup from the Father’s hand - would touch that life of Christ lived in the Father’s favour. The excellence and power of that life would then be proved at great cost.

That it was a cup “from the Father’s hand” was the truth that Jesus had used to answer Peter’s protestations about engaging such suffering. And further, we know the strength in which the great trial was met; it was met - when all the disciples would be scattered and Jesus was left alone - in the knowledge that He was not alone, “...because the Father is with me” [John 16.31-32].

So we can understand how there can be the permission of an hour and power of darkness as an event that could only prove the might of the eternal life presented to our faith in the Son of God. We don’t find the measure of the proof so easy to understand. [It is just at this point that the comparisons between the suffering of Jesus and those of other men fall far short.]

6 - The importance of the mind in which He suffered.

That our Lord suffered physically is not in doubt and is one of the elements in his suffering; but the other element, which is far more valuable, is that of the mind with which He endured such indignities and suffering. For the mind which made Him equal to what He had to bear was the might of eternal life lived in the favour of God. This was not a matter of mere power, nor a life which is insensible to the humanity He took up, nor the fact that the light of God He had on the matter made it a mere nothing to endure.

It is the exact opposite of all these things. It was not a power of might at all but of the realised mind in insensibility, but with the most tender sensitiveness proper to humanity; the sort that is found in living humanly truly - this was the sensitiveness that was open to all who came to wound it.

Nor is He so far above these things in the life He lived - rather, it is in the knowledge of life lived with Father that He knows the darkness and the true import of sin and hatred of God - he knows them as they are estimated by God’s own love. Accordingly, as was the love - the love He had to God and to man - so was the strength in which He was able to drink that cup - so was the bitterness of the cup. And according to our humanity He had taken up in our cause, so was the sensistivity that was open to all who came to wound it.

7 - The cross as implying shame.

People in this life often meet unbrotherliness in the same spirit in which it is offered - in a proud, self-relying spirit. It is said that the offence does not touch them; but it is really a meeting of unlove and unbrotherliness with the same hardness. This is no victory - just an insensibility.

But such unkindness affects a meek, loving spirit in quite a different way. If we live in the reality of love, which sees the disappointing hatred in response to love offered, then unkindness to us is measured by the life of love in us. The affect of the one on the other is the measure of the suffering and trial such unlove is capable of inflicting.

This directs us not to the amount of suffering the Lord felt, but to the nature of the suffering He endured - it was the form of response of hatred to love. So that when Paul speaks of the shame of the cross, we are to understand the form of indignity which the Lord was dealing with. His faith and joy are victorious over that shame - a shame that would touch the life of a man who has favour with man - this shame strikes deeper than the body. It wounds the spirit. It is the most distinguishing feature of the evil use made by sinful men of the power that they had received over the Son of God when he was betrayed into the hands of evil sinners.

All along in his life and teaching the relation of the cross to shame was constantly in the Lord’s mind. The consequences of being ashamed of Him and his words before men is always opposed to confessing him before men. He understood in his own confessing of the Father before men that the reproaches offered to the Father fell on Himself. Similarly his teaching to the Pharisees in John 5.44.

Such an element as shame would not have the place in that cup He was given to drink if it where not the...
peculiarly the occasion of the suffering to the suffering Saviour. The shame to which the Lord was subjected was to his Spirit. This is the case partly because our own spirit never has approval of our conscience when we seek the approval of men and women. The shame of the cross is an undeniable element in the Saviour’s suffering.

8 - In what sense the cup was “bitter” - favour of man was to be desired.

197 The first commandment, to love God with all our heart, prepares us for the second, to love our neighbour as ourself. As we have capacity for the life of the first commandment, so we are prepared for the command about the second. A command which concerns a life “like” the first, a life in favour with man [Proverbs 3:4].

As it is proper then, to the life of sonship - the perfect love to God as the father of our spirits - to desire his favour, and know that favour as the light of life, so it is appropriate and proper to the life of brotherhood - which is the perfect love to our neighbour - to desire our brother’s favour, to desire that living oneness with him which is only possible in the unity of spirit. [This is what favour - as a spiritual reality - implies.]

So our Lord, the true brother of every man, desired this response from the heart of every man. The refusal to give it, the contempt instead of the favour, the scorn instead of the accord of true brotherhood which would have esteemed him, was due to Him. All this was as death to that life which desired the favour that was thus denied. It was peculiarly an element in the bitter cup He was enabled to drink in the strength of sonship to the Father; but it was not the less bitter to the heart of perfect brotherhood. He was able to bear the the loss of life that is in man’s favour in the strength of the higher life which is in the Father’s favour. But that loss was bitter in proportion to the pure capacity He had for the life of perfect brotherhood which was in Him.

In giving us two commandments, God has not given us two masters. The first commandment leaves nothing for man that it does not claim for God. The second is like unto it; obedience to the second flows out of the obedience to the first. So the strength to obey the second must be in that love which is the obeying of the first. So if there is not a response of love to fellow man - such as Christ endured - it must be in the obeying of the first that the spirit is maintained. It is painful in proportion to the measure of that love which is put to to such grief.

9 - Christ sought men’s good more than their favour.

198 We, of course, in our bondage, desire the favour of men out of self interest. Not so the Saviour. He, having true brotherhood, seeks their favour, but even more so seeks their good still more than their favour. So his forgiveness is a forgiving of injuries which were, in the strictest sense against itself - injuries sustained by love as love, and not merely touching him in some lower sense.

10 - The physical aspect of Christ’s sufferings.

199 The suffering of martyrs is something done in the strength of the Lord’s atoning work. It is not a direct comparison. They are often granted deep sufferings and also some comforts in the midst of these.

We are given to know the baptism and suffering of our Lord in that we too, must endure. However, it is a solemn thing that of the many who would be found prepared to die rather than deny the Lord, few might be found so partaking of the life of Christ as that dying would be to them the true fellowship of His cross - the fellowship of His love to those who crucified Him. And yet such a victory of love is what Christ is calling us to daily - to take up His cross and follow Him.
Reading 8: Illustrations/Suffering  
**pages 181-199**

The earlier Gospel period: the latter, closing period of the Lord’s life
Chapter 12 - The atonement considered as a witness for God to men;

1 The suffering permitted was a trial of the Saviour's faith in the Father

200 The trial of the Lord's love for men and women triumphed with his prayer from the cross “Father forgive them for they know not what they do”. The trial of his love for the Father triumphed in the prayer “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”

The sense He had of his Father’s fatherliness was the power to manifest the perfection of his brotherhood. It was the outcome of following the Father as a dear child; it is within the light of the Father’s love that He could utter the prayer “Father forgive them...” This was where He was abiding as He suffered and interceded, with no other strength than the strength of faith.

The Gospel’s don’t give us much information from Christ’s side of that hour of suffering. But Psalm 22 supports the view taken here that the cup given our Lord to drink was a permitted trial of faith of the Son in the Father.

2 - The trial of faith, in utter weakness, of the Son as seen from Psalm 22 [Hebrews 5.7].

201 Psalm 22.1, quoted by Matthew 27.46 and Mk 15.34, have been taken to be the expression of the Son’s sense of the Father’s wrath endured under the imputation of our sins. But this is opposed to the character of the Psalm as a whole, particularly the concluding passages of verses 22-32 which connect the Psalm with the trial of brotherhood found in Christ.

The first part of the psalm, verses 1-21 place before us the individual sufferer, drinking the bitter cup that is given Him to drink and speaking of the trial of faith in drinking it. And while he appeals to God of the sense of aloneness He has, He will not consider that there is any variation in God [verse 3-5].

The immediate help the cry of the ancient father’s was received, but is delayed for this One who is undergoing the contempt and scorn of his fellow men. Nevertheless he trusts in in God who drew him from his mother’s womb [verse 6-10].

202 Trouble is hard at hand 0 He asks God to not go from him. The outer circle of his life is surrounded by his enemies [verse 11-12]. All He feels is the weakness of his utter humanity. He can count his bones [John 19.24] and his soul [Heb 2.2] is afflicted [verse 14-22].

God answers Him and has saved his life for Himself [v.31] and there is a purpose to declare to men what in this great trial of faith He has been experiencing God's faithfulness. He prophesies universal trust in God [ v.28].

203 The Psalm points us to understand the sufferings of Christ as a trial of faith. There is the vindication that the Father's favour has not been cut off. There is no awareness at all that the Father imputed in to Him or treated Him as a sinner in any way. There is no trace of negative wrath - rather the language of the Psalm leads us to consider the faithfulness of the Father to Christ, not a hiding of his face from Him when He cried to Him.

There is a great freedom in the pleading of the suffering one while drinking the bitter cup. There is no break int he communion as He pleads. He is not alone but the Father is with Him - this never fails no matter what a wide meaning we give to the “hour and power of darkness”.

205 Certainly there is nothing here consistent with a penal suffering.

This psalm, in helping us to conceive of the trial of the faith of the Christ, also allows us to appreciate the victory of the final prayer from the cross where He commits his spirit into the Father’s hands.

The closing section of the Psalm [v.23-32], takes us into the realm of the meaning of the suffering for those for whom He suffered. His relation to all men and women is opened before us along the lines that he would “draw all men” to Himself [John 12.32]. No matter how the Psalm illustrates that He was heard and that He was succoured in his hour of need, nevertheless the meaning of the event is conveyed through the fact that how he was occupied was on behalf of others and that sin need not exclude anyone.

206 It enlivens the faith of any sinner that God will meet him in his hour of need because here we see that the Son of God revealed the faithfulness of God and revealed it by trusting it.

3 - The simplicity of trust is often rejected by those who want to commend themselves to God

Often we invite others to share in the joy of the Lord. And we are met with the reply that “you are so much better than I am”. When answered that the secret of our peace is the free grace of God in which we trust it is often taken that this explanation shows our humility in the matter, rather than as a gospel matter, open to trust. What is important is to understand and show that the Lord simply trusted in the fatherliness of the Father.

207 The central unity of the sonship of Christ with the Father, and of our participation in the same
sonship has been central to the presentation of the atonement all along.

... and Christ’s dealing with God on behalf of men.

The second half of our consideration here is that of the dealing of Christ with the Father on our behalf. This concentrates on His confession of our sins and the perfect development of love and faith seen in the intercession for sinners according to the will of God.

4 - The gospel to us is that we may trust the Father also.

The fact that God has not despised or turned away from the affliction of the afflicted [Psalm 22.25] really preaches to us the gospel that God has given to us eternal life in His Son. For, it declares that the knowledge of the Son's trust in the Father will introduce us into the fellowship of that trust.

5 - Christ bears the contradiction of sinners against God

But we need to know that it was in making his soul an offering for sin that this terrible trial of the faith of sonship came to Christ. He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities [Isaiah 53.5]. What He suffered was the chastisement that was to issue in peace for us. For He suffered, the just for the injust, that He might bring us to God, bearing our sins in his own body on the cross that we, being dead to sins, should live to righteousness [1 Peter 2.24].

Neither should we neglect the element of the Son dealing with the Father on our behalf by confessing our sins and making intercession for us according to the will of God.

408 In saying, “Father forgive them...” we see the expression of Christ’s own righteousness but also the part of his testimony to the Father who instructs us to pray for our enemies and bless them...that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven [Matthew 5.43-48].

In bearing on his spirit this contradiction of sinners to God, this agony of spirit forces Christ further and further into dealing with the Father on our behalf - this increases the depth of his response ot the divine condemnation of our sin, causing that response to be brought in deep agony of spirit.

6 - The wisdom of God as shown in the sufferings of Christ.

Staying with the understanding of the progressive deepening consciousness of our Lord's human awareness we see the divine wisdom in the cross as the carrying forward this development of the hatred of the carnal mind to God to which our Lord was subjected.

Without this He could never have proved, in human consciousness,

1 the forgiveness that is in love,

2 nor the strength to overcome evil with good - which brotherly love can exercise - sustained by the love of the Father,

3 nor the sufficiency of the Father’s favour for the life of sonship.

Without what the Father appointed for Him there could not have been the adequate confession of the sin of man offered to God in humanity in propitiation for man's sin, nor intercession have been made to the extent of man's need of forgiveness.

These painful experiences of Christ bearing our sins in his body on the tree are not so much matters of penal suffering being satisfied, but as matters essential to the living reality of a moral and spiritual atonement for sin.

409 There is a terrible reality here endured, which corresponds to the necessary proportion that was between our sins and the wounding to which Christ submitted in making his soul an offering for sin.

7 - Christ made peace through the blood of his cross.

The peace-making, between God and man, which was perfected by our Lord on the cross required, for it to be real, the elements of alienation as well as that eternal righteousness in which was the virtue to make peace.

The soul was filled with the awareness of the father's wrath against sin that was so needing a confession of its righteousness. It was also filled with the pain proper to the perfect heart of sonship, so in sympathy with the perfect heart of fatherhood, as He interceded for us, his brethren who had sinned.

Surely the soul that was filled with the consciousness of these thoughts imply that it was made a sacrifice for sin. In this great peace-making there is an awful coming together in the inner man of the Son of
God moral and spiritual elements. The harmonising of these elements result in the peace between God and man.

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perfect but there is a development in the humanity of the Lord which came to pass.

215 Incarnation had not been accomplished before that – progressed in the father’s educating of Him as the captain of our salvation. True in his life; so it must be in the tasting of death, because He had always in his life said “father into your hands I commit my spirit.” In actual death He now said so.

What is the simplest idea of the glory for the Father in him saying this – in the nakedness of simple being, with all his possessions gone, except for that which is in the heart of the father, that was the place in which this faith was exercised. Simply God, not difficult to see the glory given – never has he uttered more to our hearts than in these words.

3 – In what sense did the Son of God taste death? And taste it “for us”?

[a] Death in our experience.


[a] it will break the ties of the world in which our loved ones are or
[b] there is a fear of conscience accusing, and they are filled with apprehension in entering the world to come.
Not [b], nor [a] in the sense of the evil world; it had no hold on Him. As to persons, the care of his mother he gave to John.

[b] Death for the Lord of life.

216 Distinct from these, our Lord tasted death in the truth which death is, as seen from God's perspective. See, our Lord had lived truly in humanity and possessed the gift of life in what it means truly for humanity; that is, the humanity which He had lived. Death is the withdrawal of that life of humanity which it closes.

There is no parallel with our experience, because in our human living we don't know life as God's gift. So in death we do not know the withdrawal if the gift. For as a man lives so he dies. That is to say, the meaning of death is fixed by what we understand the meaning of life to be.

For the Lord, his sinless awareness in humanity is to possess life as God's gift. Part of his sinless consciousness in humanity is to want to retain it. This desire of His is a true and sinless utterance of humanity. He would not want to spurn the gift of life given to Him.

[c] He alone understood what the wages of sin as death means.

Does it make death a nothing to Him? It enabled Him to perfectly to taste of death as it is possible in the strength of an eternal life. Since He alone truly tasted death – in Him alone; to understand it as the wages of sin, was there full entrance into the mind of God towards sin and the perfect unity with that mind. The perfect confession of our sins was only possible to perfect holiness.

Tasting of death then, in full realization of what it is that God who gave life should recall it is only possible for perfect holiness. In what is involved in Christ “tasting death for every man” we really cannot measure from our side of the equation. It is a mystery to us but clearly able to be envisaged, if not experienced.

4 – Christ honoured the Law of God

217 In dying Christ honored the righteous law of God; and in this the sentence of death was included; and what in the mind of God that sentence expressed. He redeemed those who were under the law so we might receive sonship. Sin brings men to death because of their human constitution. So there is not only sin to be dealt with, but also an existing law with its penalty of death; a penalty which had already been incurred.

What was in God's mind of thinking of death as the wages of sin would be dealt with – only Christ can know this – brought the curse to its fullest measure – He has redeemed from the curse of that Law. Despised the shame as he tasted death.

The cross is a fitting element of the atonement because it is appropriate to the man who is cursed. But He does this redeeming;

[a] not because He is a substitute, for He alone would have died then. (On the understanding that if he substitutes for us, then we do not have to die).

[b] Nor as a punishment, for He met death in the righteousness of God. Death to Him had no sting. [Explain this from Romans 8 and 1 Cor 15]

5 – Moral and spiritual sacrifice – freely laid down.

218 So we have to see it as a moral and spiritual sacrifice for sin – it is that which has been tasted by Christ. And it was passed through in the spirit of Sonship, which is what perfected the atonement. This accords with the difference of men and Christ. For men and women death comes as the wages of sin; it comes to all
men, for all have sinned. Death, as tasted by the Son of God, is tasted in the strength of eternal life, not as a punishment, but on behalf of men. And it is tasted as a perfect Amen to the judgment on sin, which as the wages of sin, death is the expression.

We see:
[a] the dark and terrible circumstances
[b] the peace with which He is tasting death illustrating the life of sonship in which He does it
[c] we learn how the spirit of sonship can trust the Father even in death
[d] how adequate the acceptance of the atonement for our sins
[e] makes sense of the way Psalm 22. [Which expresses a hope for men in connection with God hearing the cry of the afflicted and not hiding his face from them. Shows that the fatherliness in God, which the Sinless One is trusting, is a fatherliness in which the sinful may trust.]

Consistent with the pouring of the wrath of God upon the Son is the darkness over the land. While the word of the centurion recalls for us the Father's perfect testimony to the Son, as it was stated at His baptism, when He began this work. This testimony reached the spirit of the centurion despite the hour and the power of darkness.

[f] The Lord's personal freedom in relation to death
This is consistent with the fact that His life was freely laid down – not taken from Him [John 10.17-18] not incurred because of Sin. Into your hands … we connect those words with the personal freedom of Christ in relation to death [John 12.24]

Study these passages

6 – Righteousness through faith

The Lord had a hope for his death in humanity; a hope which his death was opening up for all men. And this hope must have been grounded on the atoning elements associated with that hope. We too, need that faith for, Romans 4.22-25 makes clear it will be imputed [credited, counted] to us for righteousness.

[g] Imputed to us for righteousness -

The faith in God by which we become righteous; requires us to see our sins in the light shed upon it by death of Christ. And if we are to see our justification in the light of the resurrection; then we can't understand the ground of confidence for us in his resurrection until you have understood the ground of confidence for us in regard to our sin which his death reveals. Response to which he tasted death for us.

It is the heart of the father – the death itself is an element of the Son's revelation of the father.

Our sin is seen as condemned in that expiatory confession of our sin perfected in the death of Christ. This is a revelation of the Father [as judging sin] and also is the grounds for our hope that we may enter the life of sonship which he chooses for us.

7 – Death understood before the resurrection can be.

We are first planted in the fellowship of Christ's death as a pre-requisite for having a fellowship in his resurrection [Romans 6.1-4]. In this way, His death is not a substitute for our death – superceding our necessity for dying – [read out para 24]; rather His death [remembering that it is a death differing from the wages of sin] as a propitiation for sin, death tasted in the spirit of sonship, in unity with the Father in his condemnation of sin, then death, as it was tasted by Christ, must not only be understood by our faith, but shared in by us. [ie we shall accept the condemnation of our sins, and God's righteous verdict upon them and so on.]

This will make sense of the those passages of 2 Cor 4.7-11 “fellowship of Christ's sufferings” esp.11; and Philippians 3.10.'conformed to his death’. In the light of the confession of our sins made by Christ in dying, the aspect of His life here that is closest to us, that we have grounds for hope. We can share in the mind that said “Father into your hands…” Taking to ourselves that confession, and saying Amen to it, entering by this path into the liberty of sonship, and into that liberty that is a meeting of life and a meeting of death we can say Galatians 6.4.

That we might live. The fleshly life is condemned by the death of Christ, and the spiritual life which Christ's hope in death commends to us helps us see that in looking at the death of Christ we might come to live. This is a choosing of life as 2 Cor 5.14-15 understands it; or 1 Peter 4.1-2. [But read para 31 about the knowing of it in the conscience].

222 All this leaves a deep impression on sinners of the divine wrath poured out, and the awful impression of sin as it is seen in the mind of God. But there is a deeper grasp of the evil of sin and the guilt of sin received by seeing the sufferings of Christ if we see in our minds not the measure of what God can inflict, but the revelation of what God feels.
Advantages:

[1] All this does not ask that we see the Father beholding the Son as by imputation unjust, or as if He were unjust. This is an intellectual relief.

[2] Morally and spiritually, it is a relief to not think of legal fictions having a place in these higher regions.

[3] All this is independent of the need to speak of imputation at all. 223 For, whatever is thought to be the nature of the link between Christ and our sins, what was needed on our behalf was to deal with the righteous wrath of God against sin in that way which was in accord with the eternal and unchanging truth of things.

Where the point of divergence came was when President Edwards realised that these two ways - infinite punishment or adequate repentence - of satisfying God's justice in relation to sin came into his mind. If he had dwelt on these he would have seen that the glory of God is met in the latter - for it brings a higher and more real satisfaction to the divine righteousness. The former, infinite punishment, would have been to God nothing but an unwelcome necessity.

But such an awareness was dependent on seeing the difference between Christ making, in his humanity, the due moral and spiritual atonement for sin, and Christ simply being a substitute in enduring the penalty for sin.

As a sequel to what he has presented, JMC now wants to look at all the passages of scripture that are identified in men's minds as Christ being a substitute for the penalty for sin, and seeing through the light brought forward how they much more naturally express the moral and spiritual atonement.

224 The passages that are uppermost in consideration are those in which the death of Christ may be the measure of the evil of sin. JMC desires that this measure might be the measure which impresses our own spirit and satisfies our feeling that it can never be so as God has intended, unless we are understanding our calling to die to sin in the fellowship of his death.

It is about “knowing Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable to his death.”
Chapter 14 - A comparative commendation of the view now taken of the Atonement

1 LIGHT - A comparison of light and relative darkness

JMC could leave it there; but will give some comparisons with the view uppermost in men's minds.

225 What has shed so much light, as a key in considering the atonement, is the expression “Lo, I have come to do your will, O God.” This has caused us to see that God is love, and that love was the law of the spirit of life that was in Jesus which led to outcomes consistent with its own nature. JMC hopes that his reader has the conviction - not in adopting his own view - but a conviction growing in the reader:

1. that the elements of the work of Christ as stated, were really present in that work.
2. that they are seen to arise from the life that was in Him
3. that the nature of these elements are understandable to our minds, though the appreciation of their full measure may be beyond our capacity.

226 Contra: This is in strong contrast to the conception of the atonement that would see Christ as being, in respect of the imputation of our sins, the object of the Father's wrath; and so bearing, as our substitute, the punishment of our sins. These does not enlighten the central fact of the atonement at all - it shrouds the rest of Christ's life in darkness.

But the light that has been brought by what JMC has presented, makes for an understanding to our minds of what our Lord was entering into in bearing our sins, and we can in some sense enter into his experience ourselves. And we do so more and more as the life of the Lord progresses. We see it as the presentation of the height, breadth and depth of the love of God which passes our knowledge. We also have some sense of the measure of the divine love in its sufferings as revealed in Christ.

2 - The difference between knowing in measure what passes knowledge and not knowing at all

This is a decisive matter when we consider that we need to have some awareness of the sufferings of Christ as we are also called to enter into them ourselves as we partake of the “fellowship of His sufferings”.

Contra: And if we are to think of that as being the assumed consciousness of our sins as being imputed to Him, and its punishment inflicted upon Him, then this just leads us to consider what must have been a horror of darkness and this is without one ray of light.

227 It also means that the “the Father's wrath” remains unknown and unconceived of in men's minds. The presentation of JMC makes the central point of the atonement not darkness but light - the light of the life of Christ concentrated in His death; or rather present in His death, in a fulness which sheds back light on His life.

3 - UNITY and SIMPLICITY.

JMC has had to consider the atonement: [1] In its aspects of dealing with man on the part of God & as dealing with God on behalf of man, and [2] the two references of retrospective relation to the remission of sins, and the prospective relation to the gift of eternal life. Nevertheless the unity and simplicity, as well as the natural character of the life has penetrated all that has been traced out. It is all grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life.

There is a deep harmony with the fact of the Son coming to do the Father's will for its natural development terminates in that accomplishment.

There is an unbroken consciousness of the Son as hearing the Father's voice, abiding in His life and favour and so able to drink the cup of suffering given to Him to drink because He is receiving it from the Father's hand, and the last utterance of his inner life in man's hearing being the words of death “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”

So, from first to last there is the Son, doing nothing of Himself; all His speaking is the result of hearing
inwardly the Father, all He works the doings of the Father within Him, all His strength the strength of faith, all His peace and joy is the conscious oneness with the Father. His bearing the heavy burden of sins was a pain to his heart as they were of the Father’s heart. What interest we were to His heart is the same interest we were to the Father’s heart; so His separating, in His intercession, of us from our sins, - Father forgive them .... - said in assurance of the Father’s mercy. All this has a simplicity, a unity and a harmony with the fact that He came to do the will of the Father.

228 The path He trod in coming to do the Father’s will was made clear to us step by step in its own light. We expected to find that it was a path trodden in the light of the Father’s favour, and it has been so.

Suffering and sorrow we should not anticipate, apart from the nature of sin, which the Son of God came to deal with in themight of eternal righteousness. But for suffering and sacrifice we understand that this is what love prepared Him for.

And if we have any difficulty in this suffering and sorrow, they pass away for us when we understand their nature, their unity with the Father’s will and love from which they spring, the unity with the Father by which they were born, and the justification of the Father in relation to them, in their divine fitness for accomplishing the ends which the Father’s love in sending His Son to do His will in humanity and reveal his name to men and women. All this we see in “Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say...for this cause I came to this hour. Father, glorify your Name.”

Contra: If we are to think of the Son as passing out of the Father’s favour in bearing the sins of the world, then the unity and simplicity is marred.

4 - The RELATION of the atonement TO CHRISTIANITY.

229 The Atonement is the form which the eternal life took in Christ. That eternal life which the Father has given to us in the Son then, as the atonement is the development of the Incarnation, so is Christianity the development of the atonement; and this is only what the words “I am the vine, you are the branches” express. For, the elements in the life of Christ which were present in his life when He made his soul an offering for sin, are also the elements which are to be present in the life of Christians.

Since Christ is our example, then these elements turn up in our lives according to our measure of faith. They become in us and necessarily reproduce in us the confession of our sin and the choice of holiness; the self despair which returns in trust to God. The atonement thus, through faith, reproduces its own elements within us and so we are raised to fellowship of that which descended in working out our salvation. “We are crucified with Christ” in actual consciousness, as we were in the death of Christ for us in the counsel and grace of the Father: “Nevertheless we live, yet not we but Christ lives in us”.

Contra: This natural relation of Christianity to the atonement is part of the simplicity of Christ is lost when we consider the penal view of the atonement. They separate what is here so clearly joined. Such a complexity is introduced into the teaching that practical difficulties follow.

230 [1] For example, we cannot share in his sufferings if He is our substitute in such a way that, by being so, He excludes us from them.

[2] How can Christ be understood as fulfilling all righteousness if, as He is supposed to be under law consciously meeting its demands and so working out a legal righteousness to be imputed to us? But this is not a consciousness that we are supposed to be called to share, being not under law but under grace. So while His righteousness is presented as a perfect legal righteousness, it is as such put into opposition to the righteousness contemplated for us, which is a righteousness of faith.

JMC points out that no doubt Christ did fulfill the law - did fulfill all righteousness - but not in a legal spirit, but as the Son of God following God as a dear child. Therefore, in the true conception of this matter there is no practical difficulty. Christ’s righteousness as the form of the law of the spirit of life that was in Him, being, in the strictest sense, is an example for us who have the life of sonship in Him and in whom the righteousness of the law is to be fulfilled in our walking in His Spirit under grace.

[3] The departure from simplicity is further increased when we add the complication, introduced by the penal view, to the assumed presence in Christ a sense of the imputation of sin, finding in us the presence of the sense of imputed righteousness: a consciousness which could have nothing corresponding with it in
5 - The HARMONY WITH DIVINE RIGHTeousNESS.

The above considerations are of little value if there is no accord with righteousness and a meeting of the demands of the kingdom of God. Certainly, as President Edwards thought of satisfying, not simply rectoral justice, but the absolute righteousness of God JMC is in accord. Further JMC makes the point that if the righteousness of God is satisfied, then certainly the lower issue - rectoral justice - will be.

[a] Example - is to be understood organically

− 232 The highest honouring of the law cannot be considered as an atonement for sin apart from the prospective result contemplated. Some are careful to guard against thinking of the atonement as simply leading to an example [An Abelardian view]. But JMC understands this jealousy, but thinks it can go too far. He makes clear that God intends us to participate in divine nature and to dwell in love - dwelling in God.

But the form of the eternal life in Christ led to the atonement, and so it will be reproduced in us, granted, not with the same personal consciousness of the Saviour, who did it that we might be raised to life. But the idea of example we must not baulk at for we are, after all, exhorted to be followers of God as dear children and to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.

− 233 But the use of the word example is misleading. For we are not called by our participation in the atonement to what the idea of “following an example” might mean. Ideas suggestive of individuality and individual independence.

The image we are presented with is an organic one - in that Christ is the vine and we are the branches. It is no depreciation to a single stem, to say that the same life is the contemplated life of the future branches. So neither is it a depreciation of the atonement to say that eternal life, which glorified God and worked redemption for man – in the personal life and work of Christ on earth - is the same that is to be seen bearing glory to God in us who participate in the redemption.

Such a consideration as this neither depreciates the atonement nor do they mean that we are not dependent on Christ. Indeed, the truth is that the discernment of this natural, organic relation becomes essential to our faithof the adequacy of the atonement in proportion as we see the subject of the atonement in the light of God.

The confession of Christ of our sins, and the expiation of our sins would hardly have been appropriate or adequate for our sins if it did not reproduce in us the contemplated result of its being so reproduced.

No doubt, the perfect righteousness of Christ - seen as the perfection of sonship in humanity- is a higher righteousness than any legal aspect of it. And if that righteousness can be dispensed to us [either with or without imputation!] on the ground of the righteousness of another, otherwise than the reproduction of that righteousness in ourselves, then here is the highest righteousness. But that righteousness could not be said to be “ours” apart from the capacity of partaking in it.

[b] The darkness that comes when the natural relation has been inverted.

We have tended to value a godly Christian life -the end in view - for the sake of the means - the death of Christ. Instead of valuing death of Christ for the ends it accomplished in us.

− 234 To understand the importance of this natural relation between the atonement and the Christian life we need to consider the relation in which the joy of God in Christians stands to his perfect delight in Christ.

When we look at the death of Christ, the excellency of the means overwhelms us. So when mercy is preached to us as coming through this holy and perfect channel, we readily accept the remission of our sins and the pardon for past sin and the prospective blessings. These are viewed as given to us “for Christ’s sake”. But due to our lack of spiritual discernment combined without lack of participation in the divine mind, we can understand ‘for Christ’s sake “ in a superficial and erroneous way. Only understading two great truths cansave us from this.

[1] We think that remission of sins and eternal life rest on the atonement; yet the ultimate ground for these rests on God who is understood, not to have been moved to remit our sins by the atonement but as always forgiving and having a mind to forgive us and graciously to bestow it; He has used the atonement as His means to do so.

− 235 So to stop at the atonement and to fail to ascend through it to that in God from which it proceeded - his love and forgiving nature - is to misunderstand the atonement as to its nature, place and goal. Just have men have perverted the creation, failing to use it to see God, and have made it conceal Him, so the greater work of redemption has been perverted. We have dfailed to see the Nature of the Father’s love which is the source of the atonement.

[2] So it is necessary, not to misunderstand the expression “for Christ’s sake”, that we ascend from the work of Christ, and go through it, to that nature of God for which the work has itself been and which is also the source
of it. It is just as necessary, to descend from the work of Christ to its results. In viewing its fruits, we see the work as a means to an end and as having its value to God because of the excellence of that end, and its adequacy to accomplish it.

This going forward to the results is as important as going back to the source of redemption which has its origin in the divine mind. We cannot stop in between. Seeing the perfection of sonship in Christ - like the perfection of fatherliness - as divine, eternal is to see the manifestation in Him alone. We need to consider that the Mind of God was that such a sonship should come into existence in our humanity as well.

So, these results are not to be regarded as as excellent in the sight of God, and so justified, because of the divine excellence in Christ's humanity. Rather the existence of that divine excellence in humanity is to be seen in the light of these results, and God's ultimate glory to be seen in them. This is no more than what Christ says “Herein is my Father glorified that you bear much fruit.”

This opens for us a way to personally appropriate the work of Christ by turning all our knowledge of it to account in our relationship to Him. This way, the atonement moves into our inner being, and accomplishes its result. This is one element of our faith.

Ascending up into the mind of God, into the light of which the atonement introduces us, and then descending into that ultimate fulfillment of the atonement which is in the minds of men and women washed in the forgiveness of their sin in the blood of Christ, and who are made kings and priests to God, and reigning with Christ, we feel the harmony, simplicity and beauty in the natural relation to Christianity; and we have also found a sure ground of our faith.

This character of such sure grounds can only belong to an atonement whose nature admits of its reproduction in us, so that the elements become a matter of consciousness to ourselves.
Chapter 15 - That God is the Father of our Spirits - the ultimate truth for faith to rest upon.

1 The nature in which our redemption stands is rooted in its relation to the fatherliness of God.

JMC could leave it there; but will give some comparisons with the view uppermost in men’s minds.

237 The natural relation of the atonement to Christianity is the full meeting of the demand of divine righteousness and that we may be sanctified. JMC has found only in Luther the setting for this excellent righteousness, viewed in itself as a faith that justifies.

To take care to exclude antinomianism simply indicates that we must see as central the truth that for God to justify us and for that justification not to lead to godliness, would leave God’s spiritual and moral government immoral.

Thinking in the language of John 15, it would mean that the great Husbandman values the fruitful branch, not because of His delight in the fruit that it bears - that is, its results - but because of the excellence of the Vine to which its is attached and shares the Life there. And this preoccupation of the Father with the Son is echoed in the Son’s preoccupation with the Father; so in Jesus' teaching we hear "Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit" (John 15.8).

So, it is only in the light of the fatherliness of God that the necessity for the a natural relation of the atonement to Christianity can be thought through. It is in God's fatherliness that we see the origin of the atonement and we see to what end He determined it to have. It is to this end that the demand for the elements of propitiation have been traced. It is about simple mercy proposing to save from evils and bestow blessings.

Contra: This is in strong contrast to the the conception of the atonement that would find it necessary to deal with justice as presenting obstacles to the realisation of these fatherly designs.

238 Rather, it is about the love of the Father of our spirits pursuing us, His aliened children who are lost to Him through sin and that He is desiring to say of each of us “My son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found” [Luke 15].

Further, we have found that the moral and spiritual expiation for sin which Christ has made has more than dealt with the justice of God - whether we think of it as absolute or rectoral - and in a way that glorifies the law of God and is more fitted to open a free channel for mercy to flow in that the enduring of penal sufferings by the Son of God as our substitute would have done.

What is at issue here is that the ultimate truth is not revealed in this penal way of thinking. It is to forget that it is the gospel, and not the law, that that brings as full light here. The law is subordinate to the gospel, as it is also true that our relation to God as our righteous Lord is subordinate to our relation to Him as the Father of our spirits. This is the original and root-relation, in which only all God’s dealings with us are to be understood.

This sees our relation to God as His offspring as primary. It then sees our relation to God as subjects of His righteous rule as subsequent - as secondary or subordinate - to that first relation. This has been made clear by the consideration of the fact that it is the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus - sonship - which alone has the power to accomplish the fulfillment of righteousness of the law in us. The fact that we are reconciled to God, whose law we have violated; and that this law is now written on our hearts as a law of liberty, simply means that the Father is our lawgiver - and that law has its fountain in the Father’s heart. We now follow God as dear children walking in His love.

2 - It is to the glory of God that our spirits are now responding to the revelation of what the Father is in Himself.

It is a special glory to God that it is His fatherliness which originates our salvation and also determines its nature. That nature is shown to be the life of sonship. And it is in that life of sonship that the saving power resides. For our Saviour has saved us through declaring to us the Father’s Name - which is to state what God is in Himself - and so is His highest glory.

239 No simple concentration upon the power, or Almightiness, could be the same glory as this Fatherly love which accomplishes in us the result that we now love Him. But the order was that “we love Him because He forst loved us”.

db This is a point that is so foundational in the teaching of Thomas F. Torrance - that what the Son has done is to so reveal to us the Father that by so doing He has taken us into the revelation of the inner relations of the Trinity. That is we have been drawn into a life of sonship such as is known within the inner relations of the Godhead.

The power to quicken love within us is ascribed to the love with which God loved us, considered simply as
love. For it is not by putting forth his power that He has worked the miracle within us - but by His love.

3 - Our sanctification is accomplished simply by the will of God, and nothing extraneous to that will

...I come to do your will O God” [Hebrews 10.7] is the difference between the efficacy of the blood of Christ and that of the blood of bulls and goats. And it is by this will of God done that we are sanctified [Hebrews 10.10]. Our sanctification is accomplished by the will of God as acting on our will by the moral and spiritual power of what that divine will is in itself - we welcome that will simply on the grounds of what and whose it is.

So that fear of punishment, hope of reward have no place here. Whatever place they did have in the history of our awakening that God’s will is important, now they go for nothing. Only the simple earnestness of sonship can lead us to value God’s will at its true value. Lesser considerations, extraneous to this will cannot generate anything better than itself.

In the light of God Himself, all that springs from the desire of safety and happiness is seen to continue except the desire of safety and happiness.

240 For, although as desires that are consistent with our instinct; and as such God acknowledges them and does address them - yet they are not holiness, and certainly are not a delight in God’s will. We can see that even a deep gratitude to God for his boon of safety and happiness is a long way from oneness with the will of God. President Edwards showed this in his analysis of spurious and delusive appearances of conversion which he had seen. The will of God must reconcile us to itself by the power of what it is or not at all. So the revealing of the Father was the only way to salvation.

4 - The greatness of the Love of God is not known until its manner and nature are understood.

1 John 4.14 speaks of “...and we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.” In the two forms of Calvinism we have considered, the divinity of the Saviour in relation to the atonement has been put forward, on the one hand, as implying a capacity for infinite suffering, adequate because infinite; and on the other hand as giving infinite value to any suffering because of the divinity of the sufferer. And both have neglected to consider the divinity of the sufferer as what determined the nature of his sufferings and to see that this is what gave them them their spiritual and moral fitness to expiate sin and purge it away.

241 It has been unwise to concentrate upon the simple divinity of the Saviour when the teaching of John directs us to see that in contemplating the Father as Father and the Son as Son sheds light on the whole scheme of redemption, its origin, its end and that by which that end is accomplished.

When we put an exclusive preoccupation on the personal dignity of the Saviour by the name “Son of God” it has the general result of causing us to lose the teaching contained in that name, so that it has suggested the greatness of the love of God to man and not the manner and the nature of that love. Yet, the simple fact is that its greatness is not known until its manner and nature are understood.

For God sent His Son “...that we might live through Him...” - so that He is both the nature of the life intended and it is through His life we will be taught it.

God “...sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins...” - this will tell us of the relation to the life of sonship and the atonement and so the revelation of the Father by the Son and how that is related to our being reconciled to God.

He came to his own and they did not receive Him, but “...to those who received Him He gave them authority to become children of God...” = the experience of orphans who have found their long lost Father.

For, corresponding to the yearning of the Father’s heart over us in our sins, is the working of the misery of our orphaned state as the ultimate contradiction to the original law of our being.

5 - That God is the Father of our spirits is an ultimate truth

242 Better to throw the atheist back on this root idea than to give him argument. Paul directs the Athenians to this root idea - that in God we live and move and have our being. “...we are His offspring.” Acts 17.28

JMC goes on to show that the relation of God to men as the Father of their spirits is antecedent to their relation to Him as their moral Governor. And if as the father of our spirits, God sees us in our sins, then it is in accord with this that He sends His Son to save us. This has a direct corollary in the fruits of salvation - our sonship towards God and our love toward our brother man. We come into a knowledge of the Father’s heart towards us and have a confidence in Him directly and intimately.

And this truth of sonship is in direct contrast to those other views of the atonement that think of the idea of “adoption” as something added to justification by faith.

It sees that there is (1) no element of sonship being present in the faith that justifies us, (2) nor...
exercise of fatherliness contemplated as an element in the divine acceptance of us. It thinks of the ‘adoption’ as a boon bestowed on us in connection with the imputation of Christ’s merits to us. This leads us thinking of the manner of our sonship in which we are to draw near to Him - thinking of ourselves as sons of God - in such a way that there is no direct trust in the Father’s heart at all, no trust in any feeling in God of which we are personally the objects as His offspring, but - in reality - it is a trust in the judicial grounds on which the title and place of sons is granted to us.

244 But if we are to come near to the Father we must come near in the Son, and that the life of sonship is the life to which we are called - this alone is in harmony with the truth of our relation to God.

JMC points out that he has anticipated this contrast between sonship towards God as quickened by the revelation to us of the Father by the Son, and sonship conceived of as added to our legal standing as justified persons. But to suppose that filial standing must rest on a legal standing - instead of recognising that communion itself is the highest fulfillment of moral government, and the ultimate and perfect justification of all the means which God has employed in bringing it to pass: these are thoughts that have no place in the light in which the Apostle says: “…It became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings…” [Hebrews 2.10].

245 We now have a consciousness of sonship, and a liberty to call God Father, and cannot but feel it, and must refer it to ourselves; for we have apprehended the fatherliness of the Father through the Son.

246 When the Father calls us to listen to the Son, we discern a fatherly interest in ourselves in this context. So the outward preaching of the kingdom, and the kingdom known within us are as one light and is a consistent revelation of truth. We are then exercising faith in which it is impossible for us to be disobedient to the Son, quickening the cry, Abba, Father, in our spirits.

6 - The life of sonship excludes boasting

[1] In relation to justification by faith, it excludes boasting because faith is itself the true righteousness, and that boasting is impossible in the light of the truth into which faith introduces us. For in faith we are beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and no flesh shall glory in His sight. The life of sonship excludes boasting.

247 [2] That faith is trust in God makes righteousness the opposite of self-righteousness. For it is the going back to the fountain of our being - a dealing with that interest in us which was before we did good or evil. Such trust deals with fatherliness as that which has survived our sins. Consequently, so far from being self righteous, this trust begins with the confession of our sins. This is to learn of Him who is meek and lowly in heart.

[3] We also are branches in the Vine of the Son’s life. Such dependency makes for no boasting.

[4] It is a continually growing trust in God. Progress in the life of sonship is not coming to have a new ground of confidence towards God, but an experience which enables us to “hold fast the beginning of our confidence” more and more firmly. Our experience of calling God Father, becomes a source of increased freedom in doing so, because we are constantly moving in increasing light in doing so. The same is true for our trust in Christ.

248 Eternal life must have a component of increasing personal experience.

7 - Luther

249 Luther preached a truer and stricter meaning of justification by faith. Even if he did not shed much light on the atonement, but nevertheless, he had no limited view of the election of men and called on all men and women to believe and enter in the enjoyment of what God had done for them.

JMC thinks that Luther is unbalanced in that he emphasised the fatherliness in which we are to trust more than he spoke of the sonship to which we care called. Luther is one who had deep difficulty of trusting in Christ at seasons of his Christian walk and life.

8 - “Offspring of God” is denied by the Calvinist treatment

250 Objection is raised to the idea of the gospel as being in relation to all men and women; on the grounds that did the Lord deny that the Jews had God as they Father when He distinguishes between the children of God and the children of the devil. On these grounds, the objectors cast the Gospel as simply expressing a willingness in God to become our father, and so a manifestation of the highest benevolence, but not the revelation of the interest of the Father of our spirits in us as His offspring.

So Matthew 5-7 are understood as not a claim made for God as being what men should believe God already to be but what He would become if they believed. In the same way the expression of the Lord that the “If you then, know how to give good gifts to your children...how much more...God give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him”; was not intended by the Lord to proclaim a will of God to impart His Spirit to all because He was the Father of spirits of all flesh, but only of such a will as to those who had become His children by faith.

251 The same spin is put on the Luke 15 where it is understood that the parable of the prodigal son is not a
preaching of the gospel to all, but only available to such as those who now have faith.

JMC understands that the expression “my son was dead, and is alive again...” accords with the great change that faith implies, vindicating the strongest language in which its important results are ever expressed, and fully recognises that our original and abiding relation to God as the Father of our spirits.

Increased freedom in living the Christian life. It is the record that God has given to us, - that is to man - eternal life, and that this life is in His Son, which he that believes has in himself. Therefore is the Christian a living Epistle of the grace of God.

Some have come to accept the universal application of the gospel and found it more satisfying to their own assurance that they are such a one for whom Christ died.

The statement that God has given the life in Christ, is now known in our experience to have come near to us. But it is for all, antecedent to their faith, and becomes known to us in the drawing near of our experience.

We have not caused this drawing of the Father to us, we have only yielded to it. So, recognising the nature of the grace of which we find ourselves objects, we recognise it as that glorious kingdom of God within us which the gospel proclaims. And in understanding that Christ died for all men and women, we now find the stability and depth of our peace to consist in that unindividual, and universal character of that testimony of the Father to the Son, and of that testimony of the Son to the Father, in which we are now rejoicing with an individual and personal hearing and obedience of faith. And if others refuse Christ, this in no way affects my peace in trusting in His death for me.

9 - Baptismal as simply an ordinance no sure grounds

Some have trusted in baptismal regeneration. What a sharp contrast it is to the use of an ordinance of the church to knowing the living link with Christ which is what is necessary to living by Him was something revealed in the preaching of the Gospel, and made known to us in our inner being by the divine teaching of the Spirit - a drawing of us to the Son by the Father.

The Name into which we are baptised is more significant than the baptism itself. It is by believing in that Name as the true name of God and in the light of which we see our true relations to God.

The doctrine of baptismal regeneration rightly recognises that there must be a sense of personal relation to God, but misdirects that truth to be found in the ordinance itself rather than in the gospel work of the Spirit.

10 - How we think of our sonship towards God sets the brotherhood of man to which we are called.

Since the light of truth in which I see God as my Father is the light in which I shall see men as my brethren then it is true that if the Gospel does not reveal to me that God is my Father then it cannot reveal that men are my brothers.

Previously JMC had indicated:

[1] that fulfillment of the righteousness of the law, which takes place in us when we walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit; which was the goal which God had contemplated with sending us his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh

[2] and that this fulfillment of the righteousness of the law was related to the the law of the spirit which was in Christ. It was in this law of the spirit that the power resided to make us free from the law of sin and death.

The righteousness of the law - seen in its two tables - was to love men as well as to love God. Both expressions of love are necessary to the laws fulfillment. So until we know God as our Father, we cannot love our brother. We are not to be found asking, “Who is my brother?” For unless I can see him with the eyes of a brother, I cannot love him as myself.

11 - The question, “What is the nature of the atonement?” is really the question, “What is Christianity?”

It is the case both with the Godward aspect of the eternal life and also with the manward aspect of that life also. In thinking of the eternal life in Christ as taking the form of the atonement - the coming out of love has been seen to be one and the same thing as sonship towards God and brotherhood towards man - a self-sacrifice which was at the same time a devotionedness to God and devotionedness to men.

The eternal Life being unchanged in its nature, means that what it was in Christ as atonement, it will be in us as salvation. Therefore Christ, as the Lord of our spirits and life, devotes us to God and devotes us to men in the fellowship of his self-sacrifice.

He does this in giving us to know GOD as our Father and men as our brethren. Our sinful life was solitary, because in it the true life of brotherhood is unknown. Now we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren [1 John 3.10,14]. Not to love one's brother abides in death. Christ gives us to not only possess God, but men as our riches.
12 - The self life and the death of self

256 So, in calling us to true riches, He calls us to poverty, to have nothing while possessing all things. To be rich in God is to devote myself to Him entirely in spirit, soul and body. To have my brother as riches, I need to love him as myself. These gifts are related, the bond between these two is the first and second commandment. By the second commandment Christ lays a burden of others upon me, by the first He lays our burden on God enabling us to cast our cares upon Him for He cares for us. It is a great comfort here to know that what ever burden we may incur with our brethren, as being truly born by us, becomes, at the same time, part of that burden we may cast upon God.

All this is really one grace which has two foci - if we refuse to be in Christ the brothers of men, then we cannot be in Christ the sons of God [1 John 4.7-21]. “If we will not forgive men their trespasses, neither will our heavenly father forgive us ours” [Matthew 6-14-15; Mark 11.26].

Chapter 16 - Conclusion

1 - No attempt has been made to go beyond the limits of the light God has revealed.

258 JMC has attempted to illustrate the atonement as really the application of “...In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” [John 1.4]. But he has written with distinct limits which he has kept before him.

2 - Reason and revelation are both gifts of God

He has not attempted to divest the atonement of all its mystery. He had not hoped nor desired to do so. For it is important not to elevate reason so that it explains away the mystery. Rather, he understands that reason and revelation go together - without subordinating reason to revelation nor revelation to reason. Both are gifts of God.

Reason has its mysteries as well as revelation and the important thing, as intelligent offspring of God, is to know the limit of light and darkness. Practically this means that we do not attempt to push beyond the limit given nor are we to be impatient of the fact that there is a limit. At the same time, it would also be wrong to fix the limit closer to us than it is in the truth of things. We must live up to the light that God has promised us and given. Otherwise we shall be found refusing the grace of God to us - burying a talent given.

259 So, in the light of this balance, JMC considers that he has laid out the elements of Christ’s work with regard to His participation in humanity, and then our participation in the divine nature through Him. Deeper and underlying facts of the relation of man to God the Father, His Son and the Holy Spirit in relation to Christ’s work, JMC has abstained from explanation or elucidation. He has not attempted to see the line of these deepest facts now, nor has attempted to say what they will be eternally. Nor has he passed judgment on the attempts of others to press further and closer to the line than he has done. He has studiously kept to the light side of the line.

3 - Where does the mystery in/of the atonement lie?

Both reason and revelation have their mysteries - what interests us most is the mysteries they have in common. Revelation carries us further into the mysteries - the sense of mystery in the mind is greater. But JMC has considered the atonement not in the area of mysteries, but as something considered simply as a transaction in humanity, looking at the results in man - by showing what is accomplished in the revelation of those elements in in the spirit of man, by showing what it mean for man to participate in them. Indeed it is not in this transaction - viewed simply in itself - that the mystery was to be expected. Rather, the mystery is found in the relation of the Son of God to man which this transaction presupposes, “this relation...
whether we contemplate it as participation in our flesh, or as that relation to us in the spirit in respect of which Christ is our life, having power over all flesh to this end, is indeed a mystery as to its nature and manner, and to be known by us only in its results. 

This is the case whether we contemplate:
1. the personal work of Christ in making his soul an offering for sin
2. or his work in us with respect of which it is true that when we live to God we must say, “Yet not we, but Christ lives in us”.

4 - Human side and the divine nature as humanity understandable; the God side is mysterious

260 The divine perfection of sonship in humanity - presented to our faith in Christ - in respect to its perfection, this is what leads us up to the mystery of the divinity of Christ in just the same way as His power to quicken and sustain sonship in spirit and truth in us does. It is our faith in the divinity of the Saviour that sheds light on these matters.

Because it is only as we believe in the divinity of Christ that we can see that the atonement:
3. is commensurate with the infinite evil of sin,
4. as an infinite excellence of righteousness which imparts to it its peace-giving power
5. we see that Christ is near to us in a way that accord with His being in our life and so makes us sure that we can through Christ do all things.

Looked at in itself, this faith has in it the deepest mystery; but mystery in a region where we would have expected and are prepared for it:
6. in the manner of the being of God
7. where the line of meeting is between God and man.

For here we are prepared for mystery and while we expect to understand the what pertains to the human side of this line and to the divine nature as humanity, we do not expect to understand what is on the divine side, and pertains to the acting of God as God - or within God. As to that faith we can only be called to study it in its manifestation in connection with man.

But to consider [1] and [2] above, this is the action of God, as God, and pertains to the divinity of the Son of God and in relation to God we are prepared here to find ourselves unable to understand.

Indeed, the faith of the divinity of the Saviour, while on the one hand does afford light and explanation as to the facts which constitute the gospel, in truth involves and deepens all the moral and spiritual mysteries of our existence now.

5 - Faith in the atonement and life in Christ is more easy when resting on faith of the divinity of Christ.

261 Remembering that [a] it is in God we live and move and have our being, we cannot believe in one who is our life if we cannot think of Him as God. So we are prepared for the understanding that we [b] live in and by the Son of God as our life.

Both of these revelations, [a] and [b], are related and yet we find that a great mystery, which combines our dependence and independence, as we see in our relation to God: In Him we live and move, and yet we may be the opposite of what God wills for us - this mystery is not removed, but only deepened by our thoughts as we contemplate how we are connected with our relation to the Son of God. It is harder to reconcile our thoughts with the fact of sin, than it is to know that we live and move in God. The existence of a contradiction between what man is, and what God wills him to be is a mystery.

When we consider that the will of God for us is shown in the gospel as the law of love and shows the demands for love to be the demand of love. Then, to realise that we are other than that love of God's Fatherliness desires, increases the difficulty. We are in a mystery here; both of revelation and also of reason.

Some would dissolve this mystery by saying that all contradiction between what God wills and what God is is simply how it appears. Nothing is other than God wills it to be, hatred and love are just like physical facts as much as cold and heat. Hatred may believe this but love certainly does not. Human beings can only come to be who they are in God by their loving.

None of these mysteries are so related to the atonement that we must first solve them before we can understand it.

6 - Question of the atonement is not “What must I think?” or “What must I believe?” but “What am I called to be?”

JMC has been at liberty to consider the atonement without considering the mysteries that encompass it. For his ultimate purpose was not to consider these mysteries but to practically consider the spiritual constitution of things in which, under grace we have a place; and to what we would be conformed if we would partake of this great salvation.

All enquiry as to truth is solemn because the question that belongs to the atonement is “What am I called to be?” Campbell has written to awaken a response in our inner being; as a man communing with his brother man, giving utterance to the deep convictions of his own heart about a common salvation.